

ONE GENERATION AWAY

*Week 2 | Renew | Teacher: Libin Abraham
Sermon Questions for 8.09.2026*

OPENER

In 1986, the space shuttle Challenger broke apart just seventy-three seconds after launch, and investigators later discovered the failure did not begin that morning. Small warning signs had been ignored launch after launch until the abnormal became familiar, the familiar became tolerable, and the tolerable became normal. Complacency works the same way in our spiritual lives. It is not always a decision to stop caring, but a slow drift into believing our compromises will never cost us anything, and often the cost is not paid by us but by the next generation. As Bent Tree approaches its fiftieth anniversary, we are not just looking back to remember, we are looking forward to renew, and the Old Testament king Josiah shows us what that renewal looks like.

READ

2 Kings 22-23; Jeremiah 31:33

MAIN POINTS

1. Renewal Returns to the Word of God

When Josiah's workers repaired the temple, they discovered the long lost Book of the Law, and when it was read aloud to him, Josiah tore his clothes in grief and repentance. He did not evaluate God's Word, he let God's Word evaluate him, choosing to let Scripture confront, correct, comfort, and change him rather than treating it as decoration in a religious life. Renewal always begins the same way, not by discovering something new, but by returning to the truth we have neglected.

2. Renewal Involves Removing and Restoring

Josiah's repentance did not stop with emotion. He gathered the people, read God's Word aloud, and then began removing every idol, altar, and false priest that did not belong, while restoring the Passover and true worship in their place. Renewal names the idols we have quietly built in our hearts and removes the compromises we have tolerated, even when the consequences have been delayed. As Bent Tree marks fifty years, we are asking God to renew not just our excitement but our surrender.

3. We Needed a Greater King

Josiah could remove idols from the temple, but he could not remove idols from the human heart. He could command outward reform, but he could not create inward transformation. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised a new covenant in which he would write his law on human hearts, a promise fulfilled in Jesus, who cleanses us not by external command but by giving us new hearts and his own Spirit. Josiah put God's truth in front of the people. Jesus puts God's truth within his people.

ENGAGE WITH GOD IN A GROUP

- Share about a time you noticed a small compromise in your life that you initially thought was "not a big deal." What made it feel safe to ignore at first?

- The sermon describes "the normalization of deviance," where the abnormal becomes familiar, the familiar becomes tolerable, and the tolerable becomes normal. Where do you see this pattern at work in culture, in the church, or in your own life?
- Hezekiah was relieved that judgment would not come "in his lifetime." Why is it tempting to accept a compromise as long as we personally do not face its consequences?
- Josiah's turning point came when God's Word was read aloud and he let it confront him rather than explaining it away. What keeps us from truly letting Scripture confront and correct us today?
- Renewal for Josiah involved both removing (idols, false worship) and restoring (Passover, true worship). What is one thing God may be inviting you to remove, and one thing he may be inviting you to restore?
- Read Jeremiah 31:33. How does knowing Jesus writes his law on our hearts, rather than simply handing us rules, change the way you pursue obedience?
- This week, what is one specific way you will open God's Word and ask him to reveal anything you have tolerated or forgotten, so that renewal in you can become a legacy for the next generation?

BOTTOM LINE

True renewal is not something we manufacture through willpower, it is the work of God's Spirit returning us to his Word and giving us, through Jesus, the new heart Josiah's reforms could never produce.