INTRODUCTION:
Previous sermons in this series: The Call of Jeremiah—Who we are, and what we are to do and say, all depend on God; The Ministry of Jeremiah—Our confidence comes by trusting God’s Word and following His will. This sermon is entitled, The Message of Jeremiah, and what the Scripture reading in Jeremiah today teaches us is that The benefits of following God are lost by forsaking Him.

I. The Sin of Forsaking God [repeated three times in the passage]
A. Most Christians never imagine that they are forsaking God, but it does happen in subtle ways, usually through neglect by being preoccupied with other things (we don’t pray, we don’t get quiet to meditate, we don’t listen for His voice in the Word or in life.)
B. We might be confessing what it says in Ps 36:9. For with you [Lord] is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. (But this truth about God is not just to be on our lips—it must be lived out on a daily basis.)
C. We can get sidetracked in seeking other resources for our spiritual refreshment, trying to quench the thirst of our inner life with entertainment, or hobbies, or go shopping. (But our soul’s true refreshment comes only from the presence of the One who made us and who is our “spring of living water.”)

II. The Sin of False Self-Sufficiency
A. [In ancient times, cisterns were dug in the ground to capture and store rainwater; they were a limited resource for water, especially if they leaked.] God says to His people that we should not only have the power of the spirit of life in us, but also the means to express it. He's out to get us. He doesn't want us to go out to find water and quench our thirst. He wants us to stay with Him and drink from the fountain of life; in your light we see light. (But this truth about God is not just to be on our lips—it must be lived out on a daily basis.)
B. God’s people basically get into trouble for two things: v.13, “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”
III. Sin Brings Its Own Punishment

v.17, 19. Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the LORD your God when he led you in the way?... Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

A. Turn off the light, and what do you get? Darkness. Take away the water, and what do you have? Desert. Abandon the truth, and what remains? Deception. (God has real benefits to offer merely by His presence in our lives, BUT without Him, everything’s a sham. It might have a nice paint job on the surface, but it’s empty, like a broken, leaking cistern that can’t hold what we need for survival.)

B. The advice of a caring God, the admonition of a loving God, the urgent appeal of a gracious God is for us to “consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe [no fear] of me.”

CONCLUSION:
–This is the message in the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet, and God recorded it for us, because the danger still persist today.
–This passage began with God calling upon heaven as a witness to this great human tragedy—v.12, Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror,” declares the LORD. The benefits of following God are so many! The Bible is full of so many wonderful promises that God wants us to believe in. But they become null and void when we neglect them in favor of the popular promises made to sound so convincing by this temporary world. The good things, the real things, the lasting things that God wants us to enjoy are lost by forsaking Him.

Jeremiah 2:12-19 (NIV)
12 Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror,” declares the LORD.
13 “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.
14 Is Israel a servant, a slave by birth? Why then has he become plunder?
15 Lions have roared; they have growled at him. They have laid waste his land; his towns are burned and deserted.
16 Also, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head.
17 Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the LORD your God when he led you in the way?
18 Now why go to Egypt to drink water from the Shihor? And why go to Assyria to drink water from the River?
19 Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.