

2. In verse 3a, what is it that Jeremiah may be counting on God to see? How does that play a part in his prayer?
3. What's behind Jeremiah's shocking language in verse 3b? In his eyes, what is the result of the wicked prospering? What is behind the people's behavior?
4. What injustices do you see today that you think God should be doing something about?
5. Do you sometimes wonder about God's justice and how he works that out? Do you feel free to get angry and question him about it? Do you think he can handle it or wants to hear it from you? Why or why not?
6. This week, take notice of something in the news that fits this category of "the wicked prospering". Journal your thoughts and talk honestly with God about it.

Read Jeremiah 14:1-9

Reflect:

1. Why does Judah mourn? Who is experiencing this problem?
2. Who does Jeremiah identify with in this passage? What does he acknowledge?
3. How does he describe God? What is his appeal and basis for demanding help?
4. In other prayers looked at thus far, Jeremiah felt free to call on God's judgment. Here he takes a different posture. What might be different?
5. What corporate sins might you feel called to acknowledge and request God's help with?
6. Now go on and read Jeremiah 14:10-16 to see God's response. [Remember this is judgment long in the making. God has warned Judah and given many chances for forgiveness. Some would argue

that the mere declaration of what God "will do" is in itself an invitation to repent, one that the people of God did not respond to.]

7. In 14:11 Jeremiah is told not to pray. What do you make of this? Skim the rest of chapter 14. Does Jeremiah heed this directive?
8. What is modeled here for us about prayer?

Read Jeremiah 20:7-18

Reflect:

1. What is Jeremiah experiencing? How has being a spokesperson for God set him apart? Have you ever felt in this position as a following of Christ?
2. What impresses you about Jeremiah's prayer here? How would you summarize the movements of this prayer? It might help to outline it or name the sections.
3. What do you think Jeremiah knows to be true about God and the world that allows him to pray as he does, specifically the words of judgment?
4. Similar to what we've seen before, Jeremiah's prayer consists of a range, or conflict, of emotions. Can you relate with his despair mixed with hope?
5. Have you ever questioned whether this life of faith and discipleship is worth it? Can you relate to his words of lament? If so, what do you do with those thoughts/feelings?
6. What part of Jeremiah's prayer needs to become your prayer today?

To close our study, read Jeremiah 32:1-25, which includes one of his final prayers recorded in the book. Final reflection: How will your prayer change as a result of this Lenten study? What have you learned about yourself? How has your image of God been affected? What is God calling you to?

A Lenten Journey

The Prayers of Jeremiah



I love the season of Lent. More than any other season in the Christian calendar, it is a time that forces me to ask some hard introspective questions such as, “How goes my walk with Christ?” (to use Covenant language) and “Am I willing to walk the road that He walked – a road marked with tears, grief and suffering?” Yes, there were parties and celebrations and great stories on that path too, but we know well that when Christ calls, He bids us to come and die.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” –Mark 8:34

Lent gives us permission to stop and evaluate, “Is this still the path I want to choose? And, what obstacles or rocks have I allowed to clutter the path?” The ashes of Ash Wednesday remind us of our finitude and sinfulness, and the following 6 weeks provide space to reflect on that reality and our utter need for a Savior.

I have long appreciated the prayers of Jeremiah: honest, unedited, raw, bold, and, at times, quite shocking. I thought it fitting to meditate on his prayers this season and see what they teach us about prayer, calling, and being human. Jeremiah had no easy life: called at a young age to be a prophet to Judah; told time and time again by God to declare destruction and the coming exile; not allowed to marry or have a family and constantly under threat of death by those who couldn’t accept the message. He certainly had a lot of words for God! Yet, in Jeremiah, we find a model of courage to “obey the Lord in spite of cost” (Marva Dawn).

I pray that this study provides a window through which you can view your heart condition – its desires, concerns,

complaints, sins – and by which you can renew your commitment to the passion and purpose of Christ.

With a text per week, there is no need to rush. Spend adequate time with each, paying attention to the model of prayer exhibited and listening for the word God has for you.

-Rev. Dawn Taloyo

Read Jeremiah 23:15-24

We begin not with a prayer of Jeremiah, but a description of the high call placed on a prophet, or spokesperson, of God. It helps to set the stage for understanding the significance of Jeremiah’s call.

Reflect:

1. What is a potential outcome for those who presume to speak for God?
2. What separates the false prophet from a prophet of God?
3. Reflect on verse 18 and how your commitment to “hearing his word” has been this year.
4. To what extent do you think of God as nearby or far away? What difference does it make?
5. What strikes you/impresses you about God in this text? Anything you wonder about? Talk about that with God.

Read Jeremiah 1:4-10

Reflect:

1. Does anything surprise you in this story? What do you make of Jeremiah’s conversation with God?
2. When did you know God’s call on your life? How has he shown you that he knows you?
3. A friend likes to speak of God’s call as her “assignment”. What is the assignment God has

given you in this season of your life? What is your response? Trepidation? Inadequacy? Eagerness? Can you talk with God about it?

4. Take time to listen for God’s response to you.
5. If you do not know your “assignment”, commit to asking and listening these 6 weeks for God to reveal it.

Read Jeremiah 8:18—9:2

This text may be a little confusing at first read. One possible reading is that verse 19a is what the Israelites are saying, verse 19b is God’s response, and verse 20 is again the people’s lament. What follows is Jeremiah’s added lament or complaint.

Reflect:

1. Who does Jeremiah identify with in this text?
2. What are the people saying? What is God’s response?
3. What is Jeremiah experiencing? How does he pray? Who does he pray to?
4. 9:2 seems to reveal some conflict in Jeremiah’s feelings. Have you experienced that before? Perhaps conflicting feelings about a situation or a tension between what you should be praying and what you feel/think in reality?
5. What does Jeremiah model here for us regarding intercessory prayer?
6. Conflicted feelings and all, who are “your people”? On who’s behalf are you called to identify with and cry out to God?

Read Jeremiah 12:1-4

Reflect:

1. What is Jeremiah’s complaint in verses 1-2? Do you know people who fit this description?