

Welcome

Announcements:

Giving Options-online, QR code, in envelope etc. This week we wrap up collections for the ARC; new special offering for September will be Jerome/Haven Food Bank. Bible study on Wednesdays at 5PM. New members class on Sunday, September 14th after worship.

Song

Call to Worship

L: Sing in exaltation, people of God.

P: The Lord fills us with good things.

L: Shout for joy, children of the Holy One.

P: God feeds us with finest wheat.

L: God satisfies us with the sweetest honey.

P: The Lord sustains us with living water.

Unison Prayer

Help us to show hospitality to strangers, Merciful One, for many have entertained angels unaware while doing so.

Move us to treat one another as we would have others treat us, lest we find ourselves tortured or imprisoned with no one to come to our aid.

May we always seek to do good and share from our abundance, for these things are pleasing in your sight. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

Offering/Song

Scripture

Jeremiah 2:4-13 NRSVue

⁴ Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.

--

⁵ Thus says the LORD: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me and went after worthless things and became worthless themselves?

--

⁶ They did not say, "Where is the LORD, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?"

--

⁷ I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.

--

⁸ The priests did not say, "Where is the LORD?" Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.

--

⁹ Therefore once more I accuse you, says the LORD, and I accuse your children's children.

--

¹⁰ Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look; send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing.

--

¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit.

--

¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked; be utterly desolate, says the LORD,

--

¹³ for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

Message: Worthless

I had a friend in seminary that I hung out with all the time. We had been in classes together in college before we were in seminary. It wasn't until seminary though that we started hanging out all the time. We were such good friends that when he wasn't there for a few days everyone was asking me where he was. (He happened to be sick at the time.) When

seminary was sending us on our cross-cultural experience, we went to Turkey for two weeks and Lebanon for one, we even roomed together for the trip.

It was on that trip that something happened that forever changed our relationship. This friend lost his temper with me. I don't even remember all the details, but I remember the friend drinking as being part of the issue. We did make up and continued to be friends for the remainder of our time in school together, but we were never as close as we were before then. Relationships can change in a snap. Sometimes you know the triggers, sometimes you only know that things have broken and won't ever be the same again.

When reading the prophets we need to remember that ultimately what we are dealing with is relationships. The prophets generally speak from God's perspective in the relationship, sometimes they even hold God accountable for God's part in the relationship. Most often they are pointing to what broke in the relationship, what went wrong, and what needs to be done about it. They talk about it so much that sometimes they come across as a broken record repeating the same litany of complaints again, and again. Jeremiah 2 is the start of that complaint.

To keep the prophets from sounding like a broken record what we need to do is look more closely at what is being said and try to understand what went wrong. The perspective of Jeremiah is of the Sinai covenant. As Christians we do not have the same perspective on this. The covenant that God made with the people of Israel on Mount Sinai was a legal agreement, God would be their God, and they would be God's people. When that relationship goes wrong, we have the following scenario: God, through the prophet, accusing the people in court.

Our entire scripture is a court drama played out for us (Look out Judge Judy). God is accusing the people of God using rhetorical questions, for breaking their side of the agreement. For pursuing other things or trying to replace God with other things. There is a problem here though from the legal perspective for the people of Israel, and that is that God is not a tame controllable God. God makes it clear in multiple places in scripture that God is jealous, that God wants all of you and doesn't want to share you with anyone or anything else. It kind of reminds me of the Chronicles of Narnia; It is a wonderful book and film. There is a spot where the child Lucy is talking to Mr. Tumnus about Aslan. Tumnus reminds Lucy "well he is kind,

but he is a wild lion.” If you didn’t know this, the author CS Lewis wrote the Chronicles of Narnia as a Christian allegory so Aslan the lion is Christ.

The problem in our relationship with God is we get too comfortable. We assume we know what God will do, and we assume that God will tolerate our waywardness. However, nothing could be further from the truth. God is not the one to be tamed, we are the ones to bend our wills to God—not the other way around. The problem is that this is difficult, just like any worthwhile relationship is. Because of this we as simple humans attempt to replace God with worthless things.

Verse 13 demonstrates this, it states “for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.” Now remember what I said, this is a relationship founded on the covenant at Mount Sinai. The people of Israel had wandered the desert and in the desert God provided them with fresh living water. Here God compares drinking fresh water from a spring to drinking water from a cistern. A cistern in the desert is prone to cracking in the sun and losing its water. A cistern is stagnant and, as we know today, more at risk of pathogens living in it. God accuses his people, God accuses us, of trading a living relationship for something that is completely worthless.

Now most of us aren’t going to trade our relationship with God for something worthless. Or so we think, but here’s the thing, it is very easy for us to trade our God for something else. Maybe for a stable bank account, a thriving stock market, political power, stability, or even prestige. Do you really think we are any different than the ancient Israelites? Do you really think we aren’t in danger of putting other things before God? I know I am at risk for that. Sometimes it is better to not say something that risks upsetting the apple cart. This can be a very real danger for me when I know something that God may want us to be paying attention to.

Listen to the words of Jeremiah this day. Remember that you are in a relationship with God, and God expects you to follow God first, not to trade God for worthless things. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer/ The Lord’s Prayer

Song

Benediction

Song

Message for Sunday, August 31, 2025

Title: Worthless

Scripture: Jeremiah 2: 4-13