

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 6, 2015

Written by Rebecca Dix, senior MDiv student, and brought to you by the **Metro-Urban Institute** at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

JEREMIAH 5:1-9

- 1 Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,
look around and take note!
Search its squares and see
if you can find one person
who acts justly
and seeks truth —
so that I may pardon Jerusalem.
- 2 Although they say, “As the LORD lives,”
yet they swear falsely.
- 3 O LORD, do your eyes not look for truth?
You have struck them,
but they felt no anguish;
you have consumed them,
but they refused to take correction.
They have made their faces harder than rock;
they have refused to turn back.
- 4 Then I said, “These are only the poor, they have no sense;
for they do not know the way of the LORD,
the law of their God.
- 5 Let me go to the rich
and speak to them;
surely they know the way of the LORD,
the law of their God.”
But they all alike had broken the yoke,
they had burst the bonds.
- 6 Therefore a lion from the forest shall kill them,
a wolf from the desert shall destroy them.
A leopard is watching against their cities;
everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces —
because their transgressions are many,
their apostasies are great.
- 7 How can I pardon you?
Your children have forsaken me,
and have sworn by those who are no gods.
When I fed them to the full,

they committed adultery
and trooped to the houses of prostitutes.
8 They were well-fed lusty stallions,
each neighing for his neighbor's wife.
9 Shall I not punish them for these things?
says the LORD;
and shall I not bring retribution
on a nation such as this?

DEVOTIONAL

The questions at the end of today's lectionary text from the prophet Jeremiah quite literally pulled me up short. Throughout these verses we are shown a city of people who have turned from the LORD their God. They have done any number of transgressions. Jeremiah is running through the streets, frantic, trying to find someone, anyone who acts justly and seeks the truth. But he finds none. So in verse 9, the LORD asks "Shall I not punish them for these things? And shall I not bring retribution on a nation such as this?"

And then the scripture lesson ends. What a cliff hanger! Though we could read on, I think we are supposed to pause here and take a look around in order to answer the question. Take a good long look at the world around us—the injustice, the persecution, gentrification, violence, hunger, war. We should also look inside of us—the anger, the impatience, the hatred, the aggression, the apathy. In my own evaluation, my answer was that yeah, we have failed. After all these years, these many, many years, what redemption do we deserve to receive?

That's when the shocking reality sets in. I have already received it. We have already received it—God's act of faithfulness in and through Jesus the Messiah.

PRAYER

Almighty God, thank you for your faithfulness towards us. Help guide us to live into our call to be faithful and obedient witnesses to the Kingdom, in which all things will be made new through the One who cleanses us white as snow. Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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