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Scripture

Jeremiah 18:1-11

¹The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” ³So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. ⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. ⁹And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. ¹¹Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the LORD: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.

Devotional

I am a quilter. I love the creative process—working with color and line to craft something expressive and unique. The finished result is usually gratifying. But sometimes, oh sometimes, there is disappointment. Part-way through the process I end up with something quilters call UFOs or PIGS—Unfinished Objects or Projects in Grocery Sacks. These are the creations that just do not work: the colors do not blend, the seams are misaligned, the borders are wonky. So I stuff these creations into plastic bags and tuck them away out of sight. Once the fabric has been cut into pieces and then sewn together, salvaging these “mistakes” is often impossible. Fortunately, salvaging our mistakes is never impossible with God.

In Jeremiah’s oracle, the prophet observes the potter crafting a vessel at his wheel. When that vessel disappointed the craftsman, “he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.” God’s creative process did not end at the seventh day. God continues to create and re-create, bringing hope and new possibilities for us, and for this world.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, help us to amend our ways, which disappoint. Open our hearts to new possibilities as you form, reform, and transform us according to your good purposes. Our hope is in you. Amen.