

## Lenten Devotional March 8, 2021

### Scripture

Jeremiah 7:1-15

*1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah, you that enter these gates to worship the LORD. 3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place. 4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD." 5 For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, 6 if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, 7 then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever. 8 Here you are, trusting in deceptive words to no avail. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, 10 and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, "We are safe!"—only to go on doing all these abominations? 11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight? You know, I too am watching, says the LORD. 12 Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. 13 And now, because you have done all these things, says the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently, you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, 14 therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your ancestors, just what I did to Shiloh. 15 And I will cast you out of my sight, just as I cast out all your kinsfolk, all the offspring of Ephraim.*

### Devotional

#### The Rev. Bernard Nti '17

The word of God through Jeremiah called the people of Judah to reevaluate their worship and spiritual practices. They worshiped God wholeheartedly in the temple, yet their deeds outside the temple were appalling. They lied and cheated. They oppressed the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. They shed innocent blood. Relegating their worship of God to within the four corners of the temple, they ignored the law of Moses' command to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:15).

Jeremiah reminded the Judahites that God was interested in their day-to-day lives. To God, receiving their worship was just as important as their loving the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow—just as important as the negotiations they made in their day-to-day lives in private and in public. God watches!

In this period of Lent, God is reminding us that he's concerned about the "mundane" aspects of our lives just as much as he's concerned the "sacred" aspects. For worshiping God is not one particular act—worshiping God is a *lifestyle* that should permeate all the areas of our lives. In Romans 12:1 Paul writes, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." The hymn *All to Jesus I Surrender* articulates one's personal commitment to enacting this verse.

To what areas of your life have you relegated God? Have you surrendered your all to God? God is calling us to reexamine and surrender fully to him everything about our lives.

### Prayer

Lord, teach me to surrender my soul, my body, and my spirit to you. Let me not hold back any area of my life from you lordship and control. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.