

Lenten Devotional March 17, 2021

Scriptures

Jeremiah 18:1-11

1 The 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.” 3 So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. 4 The 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. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 6 Can 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. 7 At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, 8 but 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. 9 And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, 10 but 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. 11 Now, 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.

Romans 8:1-11

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Karen Anderson ’97

The reality of our existence is that we live in a world marred by sin. Sin, which is driven by seeking our own will rather than God’s. The great "I" in center of the word—s-l-n—reflects our constant need to be in control, to be our own god. Words such as self-will, self-interest, self-centered, and self-reliance come to mind.

Sin infects and harms individual lives, families, social constructs, political systems, and nations. All are the imperfect clay in the hands of our Lord and Creator, who works to shape and mold us to his good and perfect will in spite of our imperfections—our sin. The good news of the gospel is that “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:1-2).

In Christ we have hope, not just for ourselves but also for our world. Sin and death no longer rule. It is God’s will that all should come to know the love of God and the saving grace of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:4).

Where do we start? We start with ourselves by daily surrendering our will into the Potter's hands to do with us and build with us as he wills. From there we pray for the surrender to him of all those around us in the knowledge that his will, his way, his love are perfect—as demonstrated in the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In him we are a new creation, and through him we are given the power of the Holy Spirit to help bring change and hope to the world. Praise God! Praise the Potter.

Prayer

Lord, we confess our willfulness and pride. Even in prayer we often give you instructions instead of waiting to hear *your* instructions for *us*. Forgive us, Lord. Give us humble, compliant spirits that patiently listen and wait to know and do your will—spirits which know and trust that what you do can and will be better than anything we could ever conceive or imagine. We pray in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.