

## Lent Devotional April 16, 2019

### SCRIPTURE

#### Jeremiah 15:10-21

<sup>10</sup>Woe is me, my mother, that you ever bore me, a man of strife and contention to the whole land! I have not lent, nor have I borrowed, yet all of them curse me. <sup>11</sup>The LORD said: Surely I have intervened in your life for good, surely I have imposed enemies on you in a time of trouble and in a time of distress. <sup>12</sup>Can iron and bronze break iron from the north? <sup>13</sup>Your wealth and your treasures I will give as plunder, without price, for all your sins, throughout all your territory. <sup>14</sup>I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn for ever.

<sup>15</sup> O LORD, you know;  
remember me and visit me,  
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance do not take me away;  
know that on your account I suffer insult.

<sup>16</sup> Your words were found, and I ate them,  
and your words became to me a joy  
and the delight of my heart;  
for I am called by your name,  
O LORD, God of hosts.

<sup>17</sup> I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,  
nor did I rejoice;  
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,  
for you had filled me with indignation.

<sup>18</sup> Why is my pain unceasing,  
my wound incurable,  
refusing to be healed?  
Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,  
like waters that fail.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, thus says the LORD:  
If you turn back, I will take you back,  
and you shall stand before me.  
If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,  
you shall serve as my mouth.  
It is they who will turn to you,  
not you who will turn to them.

<sup>20</sup> And I will make you to this people  
a fortified wall of bronze;  
they will fight against you,  
but they shall not prevail over you,  
for I am with you  
to save you and deliver you,  
says the LORD.

<sup>21</sup> I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,  
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

## **DEVOTIONAL**

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In this passage of Scripture we look into the window of Jeremiah's heart and see the suffering that is defining his life. Like a sharp stomach cramp, the suffering of Jeremiah demands our attention, as he begins his lament by saying, "Woe is me, my mother, that you ever bore me," and as, crippled with rejection, he cries, "all of them curse me." Yet God reminds Jeremiah that rejection, curses, and suffering will not have the last word. God has "intervened for the good" (v. 11).

In this season of Lent, we are preparing ourselves to remember God's intervention for our good. Throughout the history of the church, many Christians have prepared themselves through the ancient practices of fasting and repentance, among others. But to many of us, those particular practices can be intrusive. Perhaps what is most intrusive about fasting and repentance is their invitation to be attentive to and honest about the pain of our own hearts.

It takes great courage to open our places of pain before the Lord, and in Lent we are invited to do just that. Like Jeremiah experienced with God, we are invited to sit down at the table with the True Suffering Servant, Jesus, who offers us the bread and cup of healing—for the deepest wounds can never be healed with bandages, as Jeremiah knew well (v. 18). They can, however, rest safely entrusted in the scar-bearing hands of the One who knows our suffering, the One who says, "I am with you, to save you and deliver you."

## **PRAYER**

Loving Lord, you know the many wellsprings of each of our hearts. The springs of joy and hope. The springs of grace and mercy. The springs of life. You also know the deep wells of pain that we would much rather ignore than address. In this season of Lent, please be gentle with us; at the same time, do not let our fear hold us in bondage any longer. Please give us the courage, trust, and grace to open the wounds you desire to heal and to be patient when healing comes slowly. May you make your Church a bronze wall that will not be moved. To the Glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forevermore, amen.