

July 27

## Jeremiah 5 and 6

In our reading today, we pick up in chapter 5 the continuing warning God is giving to the people in Judah through Jeremiah.

In the first few verses the Lord refers back to the words the people of that time were saying. They and their favorite prophets said "He will do nothing! No harm will come to us; we will never see sword or famine". At the time they were living in peace and comfort and reassured themselves that nothing would change. That sounds eerily like our present day! While there are a few prophetic voices of warning, the general feeling is that we will have continued peace and prosperity.

There are three main themes that stand out to me from these chapters.

The first one is the "fear of the Lord". Not many weeks ago as we read through Proverbs, we were told that the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. In these passages we are witnessing what happens when the fear of the Lord is absent. "Should you not fear me?" declares the Lord. "Should you not tremble in my presence?" It's as though he's surprised by their lack of respect and awe in the light of the power they can see in nature and his consistent provision for them. The concept of the fear of the Lord was totally absent from their thinking. The stubborn rebellion of the heart of man leaves no room for reverence for God. This results in behavior that is totally self centered. Money and power become more important than people. The rights of others are trampled and injustice takes over. The Lord has had enough, and he says "should I not punish them for this?" When we lose our fear and reverence for God, the results are not neutral. We then become the center of our universe. We make the rules at the expense of others. Injustice is ignored, as long as we get what we want,

This also leads to the next theme. Loss of the fear of the Lord leads to an insensitivity to evil. "Their ears are closed" is the description here. Their sin is deep like a gaping wound, but it is not taken seriously. Like putting a band aid on a broken arm. The condition of the health of the nation is worse than they can imagine, but they can't see it or feel it. There is no shame or embarrassment for their immorality. They have forgotten how to blush. I can't remember the last time I saw a person blush. I think we can say that immorality has so calloused our generation that the same thing can be said about us.

The third is the warning trumpet. To me, a good example of this in our day would be the warning sirens we have that alert us to oncoming storms. When they are tested on a clear Saturday morning, they seem pretty meaningless and are an annoying interruption of the tranquility of the day. The people regarded the prophetic warnings from Jeremiah in the same way. "We will not listen" they said. As a result, the city of Jerusalem, described as beautiful and delicate, will be destroyed. The trees that adorned the regions around the city would be chopped down to build ramps to invade it. The cruelty and destruction to come are unimaginable.

Let's apply these three thoughts today.

First, to fear the Lord. Lord we acknowledge you as the awesome God who created all things and holds our life in your hands. You give us breath, and supply everything we have and need.

Second, give us a sensitivity to sin, so that we can deal with it in obedience to you. Soften hard hearts. Make us excellent at what is good and innocent of evil.

Third, to heed God's word. Listen to his instruction, heed his warnings, and walk in his ways. To lean towards God with ears open to hear his instruction and warning.

Walk in the fear of the Lord today!