

## Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world  
and grow disciples for Jesus



## Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

### Background:

This is early in Jehoiakim's reign. The Babylonians had defeated the Egyptians to assert authority over the entirety of ancient Near East. Judah is but a small state in a larger conflict (unfortunately having sided with Egypt), but it stands at a crossroads both geographically as well as historically. The King rejects the prophet's words and sets in motion Judah's doom. Like those who wield authority today, he was unimpressed by this messenger, and unwilling to change. The King believed he was God's anointed, and as King he knew best. Yet as we conclude with the passage from Chapter 31, we are assured that true authority rests in the anointing Word of God that is written upon our hearts. God knows best.

### Theology Connection:

As followers of Christ the King, we often read Jeremiah 31 as a promise of the Holy Spirit as well as the forgiveness of our sins. It is not the works of the law, but the faith and trust that emanates out of a relationship with God that is the source of our salvation (life). This is not a repudiation of the covenants that God established from of old, but points to a true change of our hearts thereby aligning us with Christ's mission as he initiates the Kingdom of God.

### Application:

Like King Jehoiakim we can become stubborn, believing we know best. We might believe we have done nothing wrong. Yet, if we are truly honest, we know that the grace that has been shown to us as well as the grace we show towards others that is key to truly living life at its best. If God chooses not to remember our sins any longer, can we be equally magnanimous toward our neighbor?

### **The Text: Jeremiah 36: 1-8, 21-23, 27-28, 31: 31-34**

**36** <sup>1</sup>In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: <sup>2</sup>"Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now. <sup>3</sup>Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster, I plan to inflict on them, they will each turn from their wicked ways; then I will forgive their wickedness and their sin."

<sup>4</sup>So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the Lord had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them on the scroll. <sup>5</sup>Then Jeremiah told Baruch, "I am restricted; I am not allowed to go to the Lord's temple. <sup>6</sup>So you go to the house of the Lord on a day of fasting and read to the people from the scroll the words of the Lord that you wrote as I dictated. Read them to all the people of Judah who come in from their towns. <sup>7</sup>Perhaps they will bring their petition before the Lord and will each turn from their wicked ways, for the anger and wrath pronounced against this people by the Lord are great."

<sup>8</sup>Baruch, son of Neriah did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do; at the Lord's temple he read the words of the Lord from the scroll.

<sup>21</sup>The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. <sup>22</sup>It was the ninth month, and the king was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning in the firepot in front of him. <sup>23</sup>Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire.

<sup>27</sup>After the king burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: <sup>28</sup>"Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up.

**31** <sup>31</sup>"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

<sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

<sup>33</sup>"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

<sup>34</sup>No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord.

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

## ADULT

An old joke goes, 'How many Lutherans does it take to change a lightbulb?' The response is, 'Change? My grandmother gave us that lightbulb!'

Change is always difficult, and frequently resisted as we see in this text. Yet, this may be the perfect time, in this very strange year, to rethink how we wish to prepare for Christmas. Advent begins in just a few days. Advent provides a spiritual path to follow as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ's birth. Might there be some changes you would want to make to shift the focus more toward Jesus and less of what the world might demand? What might be a new tradition for this Covid19 season?

How about making an Advent Wreath for your home? You can find instructions for doing so here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_cunOkJlLe4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cunOkJlLe4)

## YOUTH

Please read Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28 and 31-34

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

From all the text this is what stands out to me.... Forgiveness. God taught us forgiveness but forgiving us from our sins... I am sure each of us has an example of having to forgive someone ... maybe even when they didn't think they did something wrong.

Forgiveness can be hard to offer to someone else depending on the circumstances but I promise you will feel better once you give the gift of forgiveness, even if you think they do not deserve it. The one lesson I hope we all take away from this text today is that everyone deserves forgiveness.

Think about a time you were given forgiveness.... How did that feel? Now think about a time you forgave someone else... How did that feel?

Let us pray,

Dear God, please forgive us all our sins and help us to forgive others the same way you forgive us. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

## CHILDREN'S

Read and Summarize:

Jeremiah continued to warn the people of Judah that their nation would be destroyed if they did not repent. Repent means to ask for forgiveness and follow God. The Lord commanded Jeremiah to write these warnings on a scroll and read it to the people. Jeremiah dictated the words to his secretary, Baruch, and then told him to go to the temple and read it to the people. Baruch did everything that he was asked, he read the scroll at the Lord's Temple. King Jehoiakim did not want to repent, so he cut the scroll into pieces and threw it into a fire!

Think:

What are some examples of how we might love God? (Prayer, song, going to Sunday School, helping people in need, sharing God with others.)

What are some examples of how we might love each other? (Being kind, helping those who are sad, obeying our parents, being a good friend.)

Remember:

God knows us each by name and loves us so much! Because He loves us, we are called to love one another!

Pray:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Help us to love You and love others the way that You hope we would. Help us to receive the love that You give us, as well as to receive the love that others give us. Please keep us all safe, happy, and healthy. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen!