

Day 1
November 20



Pray | Ask God to re-orient you to him



Read | Jeremiah 17:1-4

BULLSEYE!

The beginning of God's words to Jeremiah in this week's passages is very grim. The Israelites' land is caught between two super powers, Assyria and Egypt, both of whom are vying for it. This is a dangerous time, but God has been on their side, protecting them! However, we see from this passage that the greater danger is not without them -- it is within them. Their innately sinful hearts are leading them off the path God laid for them, and out of their covenantal relationship with him.

The Greek definition of sin is "to miss." We were created for unity with God, finding our fulfillment in living in covenant with him, but we continually miss the mark searching for things other than him to fill us. The Israelites have been missing the mark for centuries and God is about to give them the desire of their hearts: to be left alone to do their own will.



Reflect | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

How have you missed the mark? We've heard the phrase, "Be careful what you wish for; you just might get it." Verse 4 in our passage says that the Israelites are about to lose their inheritance of their own accord. What blessings have you perhaps missed of your own accord?

Whether you are brand-new to the Bible, or grew up loving Jesus, confess to God that you know you have missed the mark and ask him to use this week's lessons to re-orient you to him.

Jeremiah 17:1 says that some of our sins are engraved in our hearts. They are deeply embedded in our beliefs and behaviors. What 'misses' do you have that are deeply ingrained in your life?

Day 2

November 21



Pray | Ask God for a clear picture of the trajectory he wants you on.

WHAT IS YOUR TRAJECTORY?

The world tells us to follow our hearts and they'll never lead us astray, and that we will always find fulfillment if we do so, but Jeremiah is contradicting this! Our hearts are influenced by the world around us: by every message we've ever heard, be it constructive or destructive, truth or lie. We try to make sense of the world around us, which cannot be understood. So how can this heart, with all its influences, truly be trusted on its own? Jeremiah shows us a source of help!

It is important to know the state of our hearts and the trajectory we are on so that we can make the proper adjustments to get back on course. And the more we recognize our own sinful hearts, the more we will appreciate God's goodness and grace.



Read | Jeremiah 17:5-10



Reflect | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

Consider the true desires of your heart: what it is that you really want for ultimate satisfaction, and how do you know those are your true desires?

Based on the last question, if you continue the trajectory you are on, what does your life look like in the next 6 months? The next year? Spend time talking to God about how satisfied you are with the trajectory you are on. If you feel that you need an about-face toward God, please reach out to someone at Five Oaks who would be happy to walk with you!

We all know we will have trials in life no matter our trajectory, and we usually don't look forward to these trials and pain. But Jeremiah 17:8 says that if we trust in God, we are like a tree who "...does not fear....and does not worry...." Give your fears and anxieties to God today, trusting him to keep you nourished with himself.

Day 3
November 22



Pray | Ask God for understanding of what it is to be a new creation in Christ.

A NEW HOPE

Now it's time to move past the bleak declarations of Jeremiah 17 and on to God's perfect solution! Wherever there is discouragement there is always encouragement with God! God had a covenant with the Israelites, his people. The covenant required obedience that the Israelites (and all mankind) simply could not keep up with forever. After all, behaviors flow out of our hearts, and if our hearts are sinful, then that sin will inevitably seep into our behaviors. We need a change of heart at our core.

So now came the time for God to unveil the perfect plan that he had next for us. A plan to change our hearts!



Read | Jeremiah 31:31-33; 1 Peter 1:20-21



Reflect | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

What does 1 Peter 1:20-21 say about the new covenant? Why is it important to note that this new covenant was new to us, but not to God?

How does knowing that God will give you a new heart change the way you approach obedience?

On Day 1 we saw that our sins are engraved on our hearts. How does Jeremiah 31:33 confront this?

Day 4
November 23



Pray | Thank God for opening his heart up for you to know him.

KNOWING THE CREATOR

When God created us, the Bible says that he created us in his image, which means we have the capacity to relate with him more intimately than anything else in creation. In fact, 1 Peter says that even the angels long to look into these things.

The Bible says that God knows every hair on our heads. He knows us intimately and wants us to know him just as intimately. God wants us to get to know him even more intimately than we know the people we are closest to on earth. It is no small thing to have an intimate understanding of the king of the universe!



Read | Jeremiah 31:31-34; 1 Corinthians 13:12



Reflect | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

In Jeremiah 31:32, God refers to himself as the husband to his people. In 1 Corinthians, we see that one day we will know God fully, and be fully known by him in true intimacy. How important is it to you to fully know and be fully known by God?

We have examined some of the ways in which we have missed the mark and have seen sin engraved on our hearts. But Jeremiah 31:34 says that God will remember our sins no more. How does it feel to know that God will replace your sins with his heart, and forgive you completely?

If you have never taken the first step to getting to know God intimately, this concept may seem far-fetched. Please do reach out to your small group leader, another leader at Five Oaks, or someone you know who knows God and ask them for the first steps in getting to know God. It's much like how you would go about getting to know a new co-worker or friend.

Day 5

November 24



Pray | For the excitement of knowing God to be uncontainable.

SHARING YOUR GIFT

We have been given an incredible gift. The people of Jeremiah's time were simply unable to continue to walk in obedience to God because of their sinful hearts, and we are the same. Jeremiah prophesied about a day when God would write his law on his people's hearts, so that they could intimately know him and keep their side of the covenant with him! That day came with Jesus. God forgave our sins through Jesus and gave the Holy Spirit so that we could obey him and get to know him intimately.

In Jeremiah 31: 34 God says, "...they all will know me..." This gift is available to all of us, and God expect us to be his hands and feet on earth, helping others grow in their knowledge of God as well.



Read | Jeremiah 31:31-34



Reflect | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

What is some of the best news you've ever received? What did you want to do with that news? Consider the importance of the gift you've been given in Jesus and Jeremiah 34. How does that compare?

Consider the opportunities you've had to share your intimate knowledge of God with someone else. What have you done with those opportunities and why?

In what ways does our knowledge of God motivate us to make God known in the world? Jeremiah 31:34 says that all will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. How has your knowledge of God prompted you to reach out to the less fortunate?

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