

Prayer of the Holy Spirit

Good Morning Friends!

We are looking at the metaphor of God as Potter. In an ancient world without plastics, Pottery was commonly used for many things. In last week's scripture, we heard the use of the reference to "womb" as a symbol of the container where God formed the prophet.

[SHOW CHIMINEA]

Then the prophet's "mouth" became the vessel through which God connects with God's people once again...like the pitcher, formed to pour.

The key point of that message is God formed each one of us in a container to be a container through which God pours God's word and love.

This week, the imagery is that of a CISTERN. Just what is this metaphor of the cisterns?

In ancient Israel, as well as in all dry primitive cultures, it became imperative that water be saved. The average rainfall in the southern deserts of Israel and on down to Cairo is less than a half inch per year. Therefore, it was crucial that systems be devised whereby water can be saved and stored.

Since the Neolithic age, humans have utilized cisterns to hold water from rainfall and runoff. The simplest way was to dig a hole in the ground. Water moves to the lowest level; so, much of the precious liquid would seep right into the soil.

People began to experiment with coverings over the soil to prevent the loss of some of the water. Limestone became the material of choice. BUT, However well such a pool was sealed with limestone, it was inevitable that leaks would occur. Water has its way of discovering cracks.

This is the reality that informs the metaphor of Jeremiah.

Water is life, But God's people have turned away from the source of Living Water! And, God's people are taking shortcuts and listening to 'false gods' (idols...greed, abuse, self-interest vs common good, etc.) resulting in 'cracks' in the cisterns made from idolatry.

Jeremiah's prophecy this week uses this imagery of the cistern to speak of **the dangers of not paying attention** to the things that can sustain life for the long-haul in favor of things that are of less worth.

What can we name for our time that is truly important but in danger of being neglected?

Our own history of Saint James can speak to the challenge of having good wells, cisterns to supply water here. The impact of years of winter treatments on a main road above our water source took its toll on water quality and mechanics of our pipes.

But, What can we name for our time that is truly important but in danger of being neglected?

I believe it is fair to lift up the care of creation and climate... the care of refugees in the face of homeland disruptions.

Further reading through Jeremiah will reveal how God does not abandon, but offers unconditional return to God. In fact, the poetry and prose of Jeremiah invites us to reflect on God's passion for healthy, loving relationship with all of humanity.

What biblical narratives come to mind? Perhaps Joseph, son of Jacob, thrown into an empty cistern until sold by his brothers. Yet years later, Joseph would save his family from famine.

Maybe the parable of two children, in which the youngest runs off with his inheritance and yet is welcomed with open arms by the father when he 'comes to his senses' and returns home.

The cracked cistern can be salvaged... and made beautiful and life giving when we center ourselves more and more on the source of all life and live in loving relationship with one another. <The cracked pot>

May it be so. Amen.