

Prayer of the Holy Spirit

Good Morning Friends!

Our series on Jeremiah's prophetic visions of hope in the midst of despair ends with what seems like a bizarre act: Jeremiah buys property from prison in a time of overwhelming and seemingly never-ending death and destruction of his people and no assurance that he will ever be free again. He chooses to plan for a restored future he cannot yet see. He puts the deeds in earthenware jars, a common ancient practice for the safekeeping of important documents. No matter what, we are called to prophecy and safeguard the dream of a better future for all people.

We've been walking with Jeremiah, the Prophet; also known as the weeping prophet. Prophets cry out... and it's likely that if Jeremiah were a prophet in these days, he would be weeping and lamenting just as he did in the days of *Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar*.

Remember, when Jeremiah was just starting reforms were taking place. But Josiah was killed and a series of new kings came into rule. These leaders were not followers of God and the people strayed, too. Jeremiah was called to help the people return to their God.

Throughout, We have been looking at the metaphor of God as Potter. We have heard the important messages

- that God formed each one of us in a container to be a container through which God pours God's word and love.
- how God's people get distracted by worldly things and lose focus, and the prophet Jeremiah called us to center ourselves on God's will and God's ways.
- God as the potter who recognizes that the direction of the clay as it is being shaped is not going to bring out its best qualities and so begins to rework it on the wheel. As long as the clay is continually worked by the potter, it can still be changed and made into something beautiful ! And we know God to be faithful, never abandoning.

We asked...If God is the potter, then who is the clay?

- a close reading of this text reveals that the 'clay' is the whole community... the nation (Israel, Judah). So we must also apply this to ourselves as a faith community... and we could measure our nation in light of this text... how well are we following God's will and God's ways?
- And how God keeps on keeping on... faithfully working with what is ready, re-working as needed, but NEVER fully destroying, wiping out everything.

The people are plagued by enemies from outside (the north) and from within(the change of kings who do not follow God's will or ways), and they seek respite in things that cannot bring comfort and healing to the people.

But Jeremiah assures us that hopelessness and despair don't have the final word, that God offers a balm for every wound.

There is no medicine that can heal despair and hopelessness like the Spirit of God who bids us to follow in the ways of God's love and justice.

And so today Jeremiah does one more thing...no crying, no lamenting... Rather, he buys land. Why? Because Jeremiah trusts in the Lord. Jeremiah... sitting in prison, in front of his cousin, the witnesses, and all the other folks in jail, Jeremiah signs, seals, and has Baruch (the scribe) deposit the papyrus/parchment into safekeeping in an earthenware jar.

That's a bold act in the face of being overtaken by Babylonians! It's a bold act to do when you're in jail for speaking against the corrupt ruler. It's a bold act to trust in the Lord!

Loving and Serving God and God's people is our vision. In loving and serving God and God's people we hope to share faith, offer prayer and gather hope so that lives are changed... and disciples of Jesus Christ are welcomed into the fold.

There were a few folks from the congregation who were able to witness the engagement of Saint James faithful with God's people yesterday during the Fall Festival...HANDS...

If you were part of the planning Team would you stand...  
if you signed/showed up to serve, please stand...  
if you came out to be present, please stand...

I thank God for each one who planned, who served; all who generously gave time, talent & resources, poured sweat into, and lost sleep over this BOLD act of faith.

It's as if Jeremiah signed, sealed and deposited hope in an earthenware jar all over again.

What's your wildly important hope for this church?

How might this community of lovers and servers of God continue to love and serve God's people?

When you come forward for communion, please share your idea... your hope for loving and serving God's people.

Just place it in the Chimnea.

May it be so. Amen.