

Jeremiah 17:1-10

- We will be in Jeremiah chapter 17 this morning, but let me bring you up to speed with what is going on up to this point.
 - Israel and Judah have repeatedly forsaken the Lord
 - A number of kings have ruled over each kingdom, and the sins of the people have gotten progressively more grievous
 - There have been a long line of false prophets who have been telling the people what they want to hear... that the Lord was with them and would bless them as they continued in their sin.
 - Jeremiah has already prophesied that they would be taken into exile by an army from the north, and there will be great suffering
- Let's look at Jeremiah 16:10

[Jer 16:10 ESV] 10 "And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, 'Why has the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?'

- God is telling Jeremiah that people are going to question God's severe judgment
- I'm not sure if this is truly an honest question or not
- Listen to the Lord's response:

[Jer 16:11-13 ESV] 11 then you shall say to them: 'Because your fathers have forsaken me, declares the LORD, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshiped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law, 12 and because you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, every one of you follows his stubborn, evil will, refusing to listen to me. 13 Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.'

- Oh... that's what God's so upset about
- People in Judah were guilty of creating idols and worshiping them
- Here's a takeaway: If you have trusted Jesus Christ for your salvation, then you and I live under grace, and your sins have been paid for, but God's attitude toward sin has not changed.
 - **[Num 23:19 ESV] 19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?**
 - These people were so comfortable with their lifestyle that they fooled themselves into believing that God had become comfortable with it too.
 - He will never be "cool" with sin
- Now, let's flip over to chapter 17, verse 1

[Jer 17:1-10 ESV] 1 "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, 2 while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, 3 on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory. 4 You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever." 5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. 6 He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by

the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit." 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? 10 "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

- Jeremiah speaks of their sin being engraved on their hearts and on the horns of their altars with a pen of iron that has a point of diamond
 - These are the tools used when carving stone
 - Their hearts have turned to stone, which is what sin will do.
 - **[Rom 2:5 ESV] 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.**
 - Paul talking to believers in Rome
 - Wrath is from the Bema judgment seat of Christ
 - As Jim says, Heaven won't be the same for everybody
 - Is your heart becoming hardened because of sin?
 - For the believer, it is a dangerous thing to excuse the sin in your life.
 - Maybe you have a pet sin... that thing that nobody else knows about
 - As a believer, you probably can remember a time when you felt convicted about it.
 - What about today?
 - It is a hard thing to live under conviction, and that is why we make excuses and justify it.
 - And so our heart gets harder
 - As believers, the sin is paid for, but it is a wedge in our relationship with Christ
 - Rom. 2:5 tells us that we will have to give an account for that
- Remember that Jeremiah is talking specifically about God's judgment on the sins of Judah
- They are guilty of creating idols and worshiping other gods, and Jeremiah just said that "their sin is engraved on their heart and on the horns of their altars"
 - The verse doesn't say that God etched their sin on their heart. It's written on their heart because it means so much to them that they keep it there.

[Jer 17:2-3 ESV] 2 while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, 3 on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory.

- Verse 1 said their sin what etched on their hearts, which is because they treasured it.
- Verse 3 says they will lose all of their wealth and treasures as the price (or plunder) for their sin
- Jesus says:
 - **[Mat 6:19-21 ESV] 19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**
 - No matter what it is that you and I treasure, the physical location where it resides is where our heart will be.
 - If you are wild about your grandkids and they live in California, you'll think about them all the time, you'll worry about them when something is going on out there, you'll plan your vacations so that you get to see them. Your heart is there because your treasure is there.
 - If I work to accumulate earthly treasure, then my heart will be focused on this life, and the storms of life will rock you to the core, because your treasure is at risk.

- If I work to accumulate eternal treasures, then your heart will be focused on eternal things
- The people of Judah treasured the things of this world, and couldn't recognize the things of God, if it slapped them in the face
 - Now, they are losing everything that they treasure, which happens to every single person who puts more value on the things of this world, rather than the things that are eternal.
 - Unless the Lord returns first, eventually, you're going to die. One day, it will be God's perfect will for you and to die, and you don't get to take your toys with you.
 - Some of us will lose our treasures before we die
 - God drove this truth about what we treasure home for me several years ago
 - When you write a check for the last mortgage payment you can afford, you suddenly get a reality check about what is important
 - I wouldn't volunteer to go through it again, but there I stood on the brink of losing what I thought was everything, when God showed me that it was just STUFF
 - I remember where I was standing, when He taught me that, and the resounding theme that repeated over and over was, "All I need is Jesus".
 - Don't make your life about the treasures of this world... it's fool's gold
- You may be wondering what happened to verse 2. I wanted to tie a bow around treasures first.

[Jer 17:1-2 ESV] 1 "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, 2 while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills,

- These children have (in all likelihood, fond) memories of their parents worshiping at altars to other gods.
 - vs. 2 tells us that these were all over the place
- This is a severe indictment on these people
 - The experiences that children have shape what they consider normal and acceptable growing up.
- John Wesley said that, "What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace."
 - We see this over and over again with the Israelites when it came to turning away from God, and we see it in our culture today.
 - First curse word on TV was in 1965
 - In 1960 there were 292 abortions in the US. Now, 20% of all pregnancies end in abortion.
 - 200 years ago, New Hampshire punished adultery with a fine of more than a year's wages + whipping no more than 39 times. Today, 74% of men and 68% of women say they would engage in an affair if they knew they would not get caught.
- Researchers say that children begin to form memories as early as 9 months old, around the age when they start clinging to momma, and don't want to go to strangers.
- What memories will the children in your life have from their childhood?
 - Will they remember being happy, having fun vacations, having the coolest clothes, or fanciest car?
 - What about the things that really matter? The things with eternal significance?
 - Will they remember how to turn to God's Word to know how to handle the issues of life?
 - Will they remember serving other people in the name of Christ?
 - Will they remember interceding for people in prayer?
 - Will they remember cheerfully giving to others and to God?
 - Will they remember seeking and following God's Will?
 - I'm so blessed to have some sweet memories etched into my heart
 - Examples

- The children of Judah vividly remembered their parents' idols
 - That may seem so far out there that we can't relate
 - I'll remind you that idols are anything that we put in the place of God
 - Imagine how hard it would be for kids to grow up to have a healthy, humble, growing walk with Jesus if they honestly believe that this whole world is all about:
 - Money, cars, career, status, power, or even THEM
 - **[Deu 4:9 ESV] 9 "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children--**
 - This is the word given to the Israelites by God, through Moses
 - Notice it says to "not forget the things they had seen, lest they depart from their heart all the days of their life"
 - This departure from their heart happens when the things of God no longer become their treasure
 - The deceiver is chomping at the bit to have you believe a lie and fall in love with ANYTHING other than Him
 - This was a very humbling message to prepare, and it is just as much for me as it is for you.
 - I certainly want to be intentional about the way that I raise my kids
 - Last Sunday night we heard from some missionary families in our church, and God may be calling some of you to the mission field
 - But He is absolutely calling each of us to be ministers in our own home.
- Continuing to vs. 4

[Jer 17:4 ESV] 4 You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever."

- They had to loosen their grip on the "stuff" that God gave them.
- Instead, they would serve their enemies in a foreign land because God was filled with righteous anger toward them. He is just.
 - God is faithful, but we are not and sometimes need a remedial course in the ways of God

[Jer 17:5 ESV] 5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD."

- Jeremiah is likely referring to a specific incident that we find in Isaiah:
 - **[Isa 31:1 ESV] 1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD!**
 - These people weren't turning to the Lord. Their hope was that other men would step in and save the day.
- Though this passage wasn't written to us, you can be sure that it was written for us, and is completely applicable.
 - There are absolutely times when God uses other people to meet our needs
 - Unexpected check left on the doorstep
 - Youth group showing up to take care of chores around your house
 - Someone stopping to help when your car is broken down
 - You and I are often tempted to become fixated on the blessings, or on the physical source of those blessings.

- When we do that, our hope is misplaced, and the enemy loves to use good things to take our eyes off of Jesus.
- Listen to Jeremiah describe the spiritual disposition of people whose trust is not in the Lord

[Jer 17:6 ESV] 6 He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

- This is our spiritual situation when we place our hope in anyone or anything but the Lord
 - Shrub in the desert = out of place
 - Parched places = nothing to sustain it
 - Wilderness = isolated in the middle of nowhere
 - Uninhabited salt land = impossible to grow

[Jer 17:7 ESV] 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.

- The root of trusting in the Lord, is believing Him.
 - Believing that you are who He says you are
 - That He is who He says He is
 - And believing that He will keep his promises
- Not only does he want us to trust Him. He wants to be our Trust.
 - That He be our only hope – Day in and day out.
 - Not ourselves
 - Not other men
 - Not our government
 - Not our own reasoning / intellect / and especially not our own heart

[Jer 17:8 ESV] 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit."

- This verse is about your SPIRITUAL health. Let's read that one more time and make sure that we are looking at it through that lens.
 - *He is like a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by the stream*
 - We will be constantly nourished
 - *And does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green*
 - Though we are going through tough spiritual times, we will remain spiritually fed
 - *And is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit*
 - There is peace when the trials come because our trust is in Him
 - Scripture does not teach us that believers are immune from hardships in this life
 - If our hope, and treasure is in Him, we will not be shaken and God's says that we will not cease to bear spiritual fruit.

[Jer 17:9 ESV] 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

- Man's heart is not naturally guided by truth. It is influenced by all kinds of things:
 - Emotions
 - Pride
 - Self-Interest
 - Lust
 - Guilt
 - Envy
- Man's heart led the people of Judah to treasure idols

- Man's heart led them to trust in the flesh rather than God
- Man's heart made right seem wrong and wrong seem right and led to the children of Judah to have fond memories of alters to other gods
- Man's heart cannot be trusted, and ultimately led to God's people being led into captivity, yet again.

[Pro 3:5 ESV] 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

- When you and I trust the Lord with anything less than our whole heart, we are trusting in the flesh of man, and vs. 6 says that we are spiritually a shrub in the desert, and nothing good comes of it.

[Jer 17:10 ESV] 10 "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

- "The Lord searches the heart and tests the mind" is talking about the Lord knowing our motivation in addition to our actions.
- If you haven't trusted Jesus as your savior, this is talking about how you will be judged at the Great White throne of Judgment.
 - You will NOT be found guiltless and the blood of Jesus will not be redeemed on your behalf.
- If you are a believer, you will still give an account before the Bema Judgment Seat of Christ
 - **[2Co 5:10 ESV] 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**
 - Your sins are paid in full
 - This is where our eternal treasure will be awarded or withheld.