



"FEELING OUR FAITH"

SCRIPTURE: JEREMIAH 8: 18-9:1

GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ASHEVILLE, NC

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Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

8:18 My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick.

8:19 Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" ("Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?")

8:20 "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

8:21 For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.

8:22 Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?

9:1 O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

The Word of the LORD

Thanks be to God.

Jeremiah's Calling: A Poem About Saving the World

A prophet who mourns
is a prophet who believes
A believer who prays
is a believer who grieves

Grief is testimony, prophecy,
the truthful cacophony
that wails for all of us
Every single one

forsaken by virtue
the economy
starkly ensues, imbues
our bodies as commodities
Only as good as they feed
Someone else's profit

Capitalism needs us
Cannibals
Hungry for some strange
Exchange of value
Extracting, exacting from the flesh
That makes us family
Turned against ourselves.

Capitalism washes brains
Floods them with disdain
For our shared lot
Tells us we can't trust
We shouldn't believe
Skills that deceive
Are the ones conceived
Those received when creator
Dreamed us up.

Listen to Jeremiah calling
To his people. Hear the pain
Hear the wailing
The joy spilled in the blood
Of unsaved lives
That angry prophet, he cries
He lives and he dies
By the horror of
Idolatry's disease.

He sees the madness
The scant remains
Of what humanity should be
Told we never would be

Couldn't be salvaged
Instead ravaged by a
A brutal turn
That spurning of a shared world
Of a common good,
Deep down, that good
Feeding, the food of
Human dignity, of a way
To be free.

Jeremiah is calling for you
He sees the blueprint
He knows anguish
Because he didn't forget
You are not made for profit
Your place is not on a balance
Sheet, replete with reasons to
Be something you are not

The prophet who mourns
Is the prophet who believes
Who pleads, who needs
Us to dig deeper than
The lies

Greed misleads, it spins
It undoes the love and
Shoves us into relationships
Gone wrong, all wrong.
We weren't built to hate each other
We learned that
To keep the dollars,
The decimals points
Moving to the left side
Of the ledger, over and against
Our very own nature.

And then we forgot,
We bought it in full
The false prophet of profit

That ph to f
The inner voice made tone deaf
To the ear
They sound the same,
That siren song that strikes the name
Of what is really to blame.

That's where the church steps up
A magic trick
A weapon more powerful than any big stick.
Forget the alphabet
Look in the mirror-
You must learn
not only to hate others,
You must learn to hate yourself
And call it virtue,
Not harm but dogma.
Burning flesh away
Ecclesial magma
Let the wounds ooze
Into doctrinal deflection
It's not capitalism, it's you
Your body, your yearning
Your passion, your desire
Your skin, your beating heart
Your creativity, your dreams
Projecting, deflecting
Onto our bodies the shame

Capitalism banks on the shame
To distract and erase us
Forget to imagine,
Work to fuel the engine
That could,
the would-be reason
For being
becomes the death
Of a salesman
Left always wanting more
Told he's never enough

The power to snuff
out decency for a decent wage
So indecent we lost
Sight of it

A prophet who mourns
is the prophet who still
Believes that we were made
For growing, discovery, for sweet love
For dancing around fires that
Teach us to watch stars
Celestial kin
The most ancient light
Always traveling, always reaching
For us to see, to be true
To the wonder of the tiny
Rhythms, the drum beats
Of life and natural death,
Unhastened by the brutal casualties
Of war

Without greed there is no
Human chattel,
Without greed there is no
Scarcity
Without greed, no pornographic
Bodies, no bodies lost to
To the nameless graves of
A murderous plot
To turn us against God
The goddess herself
The one who birthed a universe
With amoebas and atoms,
With things we can't fathom
Mysteries and revelry
Music and tears
That travel the creek beds of
All these years
A world that never told us
It wouldn't change.

The prophet who mourns
Is the prophet who believes
That change is not a choice
But reverberations of God's voice
Speaking to us of eternal things
Don't pray for change, it's a given
Pray for a rekindled love for the
Land of the living.
Death is not a choice, but violence is
Jeremiah's fury is not his primary emotion
Grief is his.

Faith is feeling the loss of what the world
Is not, but could be.
Faith is believing the worst is not the
First thing we remember
But deep within each of us
Is a memory, an ember
So tender, so merciful, so true

That's why we are here
Together now
Not to feel guilty
But to feel finally seen
In the beautiful gleam
Of the creator's eye
Gazing on a gathered people
Learning to disarm, ceasing the harm
No longer sounding the alarm,
No more staging the attack,
protecting, projecting
And avoiding the lack
that we feel
In our forgotten state
When what matters struggles
To breathe and what kills us
Gets judicious reprieve.

We're here because

Prophets who mourn
Are prophets who believe
And believers who pray
Are believers who grieve
Our sorrow testimony
To our salvation
Because grief is not the loss of joy
It is resistance to cruelty that
Calluses human hearts
That teaches us to destroy

Feel the sorrow, like marrow in your bones
Cry for our brothers lost in war.
Weep for the powerful numb to the pain.
Mourn for the locked up, the forgotten,
The captive and forsaken
Wail for creatures lost
For sentience dulled
For trust dissolved, dusty, in ruin
For bones longing still to dance.

That grief will be what saves us,
Jeremiah tells us
His prophecy stretching across time
Like the light of stars from our beginnings
The edges of our hopes
Bending now, not breaking
But making us, taking us to
The threshold of being at home
Together again.

Thanks be to God.