

REPENT OF INJUSTICE

LESSON SCRIPTURE: JEREMIAH 22

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JEREMIAH 22:1-10

Key Verse: Act with justice and righteousness. Jeremiah 22:3b

Jeremiah 22:1-10 (NRSV)

1 Thus says the Lord: Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,

2 and say: Hear the word of the Lord, O King of Judah sitting on the throne of David—you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates.

3 Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.

4 For if you will indeed obey this word, then through the gates of this house shall enter kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their servants, and their people.

5 But if you will not heed these words, I swear by myself, says the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation.

6 For thus says the Lord concerning the house of the king of Judah; You are like Gilead to me, like the summit of Lebanon; but I swear that I will make you a desert, an uninhabited city.

7 I will prepare destroyers against you, all with their weapons; they shall cut down your choicest cedars and cast them into the fire.

8 And many nations will pass by this city, and all of them will say one to another, “Why has the Lord dealt in this way with that great city?”

9 And they will answer, “Because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.”

10 Do not weep for him who is dead, nor bemoan him; weep rather for him who goes away, for he shall return no more to see his native land.

VOCABULARY

- **Heed** – Pay attention.
- **Desolation** – State of complete destruction.

INTRODUCTION

Scenario A:

All along, Nancy knew that if she got caught, the consequences would be brutal, but Nancy did it anyway. In order to have an entire team present for the competition, she wanted to make sure Sadie was included, had what she needed, and was well prepared. However, her friends thought differently. They just didn't want Sadie, who was from Puerto Rico, on their team.

Scenario B:

All along, Jackson knew that if they didn't believe him, the consequences would be harsh, but he testified anyway. Steve was falsely accused of taking Darryl's iPhone, when all along, Steve borrowed it to make a call and dropped it in a manhole.

Scenario C:

Jessica and Keith were homeless, but they never missed a day of school. Even when they didn't have anything to eat and were starving, they came to school. The members of the Christian Fellowship at school decided to pool their resources, to make

sure that whoever came to school hungry had a peanut butter and jelly sandwich before classes started. This turned out to be much bigger than they imagined. They didn't have enough resources at first, but they followed through on their promise anyway.

Activity #1: Do It Anyway. In these three scenarios, what do you think the consequences were and what do you think happened in the end?

THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible story tells of the message sent to the people from God. Here is the message and the consequences for not following the instructions:

God sent a message to the house of the king of Judah to make sure to take care of all matters of justice, and make sure things remained right between the people. He told them to rescue victims from those who would exploit them, and not to take advantage of the homeless, the orphans, or the widows. And by all means to stop the killing. They were also instructed to keep the commands, so that when the kings who followed in the line of David came, they would go peacefully. If they didn't keep the commands, their palace would end up in a heap of rubble. God spoke and warned them, saying, "Although I really like this place, I swear I'll turn it into a wasteland, pound it to a pulp and then burn it up."

When people ask what happened, they would learn that the people here walked outside of God's covenant and brought in new gods. So, don't fret over King Josiah or weep for his son.

For they have been exiled and are no longer here.

LIFE APPLICATION

Justice is all-inclusive. It reaches the saved and unsaved alike simply because God cares about everyone. It is not God's desire for people to be destroyed, but it is God's desire that we all heed God's laws and commands. The ultimate goal God would want for us is that we would do right and turn from evil. *Just Do Right!* God wants us to be obedient and do good. Although our good deeds cannot save us, they are a testament to our faith and relationship with God.

Knowing God is loving others. When we see people struggling and turn away like we don't see them, that is just as bad as *putting* them in that position. If we truly love one another we should show care and concern for each other. It doesn't matter if we are Christian or not, at the end of the day, we are all children of God. We must take care of each other.

I know that there are times when innocent people get caught up in ungodly schemes and suffer, but that is the exception and not the rule. God, however, will use those situations to become testimonies or teaching moments. Understand that God cannot be deceived, either. There is a spiritual law in place that affects everyone. Whatever you sow you will reap. So, it may look like people get away with wrongdoing, but their wrongdoing will get them in the end.

Activity #2: To Be or Not to Be. Create a "What Would You Do?" skit based on the three scenarios given in the introduction of this lesson. With three teams, each team will tell what their

understanding of justice and righteousness is based on the skit's scenario.

SUMMARY

There are times when the trouble we get in is a result of injustice. There are times it's a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. There are also times that our decisions take us to a place we never would have imagined. Nevertheless, God expects us to act with justice and righteousness.

Activity #3: Act With Justice...View this short video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmsitqPfcZo>) "The Roofers and the Homeless Guy" After viewing the clip, discuss in what ways you see God at work, and in what ways you see the roofers acting justly.

CLOSING DEVOTION

While the song "All I Need" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_SKO_pCn1A) by Brian Wilson is playing, write a note to God on the index cards, expressing your gratefulness to him for reaching us whenever we need him. When everyone is finished, say in unison...

"Thank you, God, for touching us and making us over. In the name of Jesus. Amen."