

REPENT OF INJUSTICE

LESSON SCRIPTURE: JEREMIAH 22

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JEREMIAH 22:1-10

*Key Verse: Act with justice and righteousness....And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood.
Jeremiah 22:3*

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.

WORD POWER!!!

- **Heed** – To pay attention.
- **Desolation** – A state of complete emptiness.
- **Bemoan** – To express sorrow.

GETTING READY!!!

Last week, we learned about one of Jeremiah’s difficult messages that he shared with the royal court. Jeremiah did not sway from obeying God and continued to say, “Thus said the Lord.” The message in the lesson today is still the same but with an added twist: turn back to God. Jeremiah tells the people that our love and knowledge of God is good. However, it should be displayed in how we treat other people.

How do you like to be treated? How does it feel when you say hello to someone and they do not respond? God wants all of us to be kind and loving people. When we treat someone unkindly, we are not displaying what we have been taught. This is what it means to act with justice and righteousness, taking into account that everyone is worthy of respect and love.

INTO GOD’S WORD!!!

We find Jeremiah yet again with another message of conviction for the people in the land. The king was still not acting in ways of justice towards the people. Jeremiah admonished the king to uphold his kingly duties by treating everyone in a righteous and godly way. However, just like previous leaders, the king didn’t feel that was necessary.

Jeremiah explained that if repentance and justice began to happen in the land, then God would reward it. However, if they continued to live in ways displeasing to God, they would be punished. If the king would not change his ways, then the consequences would have to be paid.

Some of the people in the land were sad and were weeping because before King Jehoiakim was the leader, King Josiah ruled. King Josiah ruled with godly judgment and justice. However, Jeremiah told the people to not cry over the past, but weep for the destruction and injustice that they are currently experiencing under the new king.

Jeremiah further explained that the treatment of the people was bad, and they must be treated with kindness and justice. This is what the Lord requires. However, the king did not listen, and the destruction and consequence that God promised would happen came in the future.

USING GOD'S WORD!!!

A good leader treats everyone with fairness and respect. As Christians, we are expected to live out our faith by how we treat each other. Do you think it is easier to treat someone nice who is nice to you, or treat someone nice who is mean to you? I am going to take a guess and say that you probably answered “yes” to the first part of the question. It is easier to be nice when others are nice to you. However, it takes extra effort to be nice to those who are mean.

In the scripture lesson today, God gave the king and the people another opportunity to make the right choice. God

encouraged them to treat everyone with justice and to help those who were defenseless. Jeremiah called the people to do God's work of justice, and repent of the injustice that had been happening in the land. As Christians we should identify ways that we can help the oppressed and ask forgiveness for the times we overlooked them.

REMIX!!!

Jeremiah tells the king of Judah that God is giving the nation one more chance. Though they were given a chance, they made the choice *not* to listen to God. They decided not to follow God and had to pay the consequences. When we do wrong, we have to remember that we too have consequences for our actions. In *The Lord's Prayer*, we are reminded that we should ask for daily 'bread' and forgiveness.

QUESTIONS

1. Why should we treat others with kindness?
2. Did the king in this story listen to Jeremiah's warning?
3. Name a time when you were given a second chance. How did that make you feel?

PRAISE GOD!!!

Jeremiah's story and message can be an inspiration to all of us! No matter how difficult the message God gave Jeremiah to share, Jeremiah did it! Jeremiah's obedience and faithfulness were rewarded by God. Think of a time when you got an award or gift. Why did you receive the award or gift? Every day, we are given the gift of grace and mercy from God.

We must strive to give this same gift to others with whom we come into contact.

CLOSING PRAYER

Join in with your class at the end of the period and pray this prayer together, as a reminder of the daily need of God's love and grace:

God, thank you for keeping your promises. Thank you that you still speak to us today. Help us to ask for forgiveness when we have done wrong. Lead us and guide us to be better leaders and champions of justice on this earth.

Say *The Lord's Prayer*.