



Sunday Devotion for Martin Luther Church

3rd Sunday after Pentecost, June 21, 2020

A warm welcome to watch this devotion and related videos at
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjEQnirqCMN01Fog17AX4MGNhoBKUpl>

A. GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Words of Welcome

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Good morning and thank you for joining us for our online worship. Today we will hear words of lament from Jeremiah, who is sent by God to perform an impossibly difficult task, and in his words we can sense the burden he feels. And yet, there is a glimmer of hope, a realization by Jeremiah that he cannot help but to keep going, to tell the story that is burning in his bones, ready to proclaim to others that he must praise the Lord.



Today is marked as the National Indigenous Day of Prayer and some of our prayers have been drawn from our partner churches as we approach God together with our petitions.

As we begin our service I also want to thank everyone who has participated so far in our weekly worship through their willingness to record a reading or a prayer and sending it in. If you would like to be a visible part of our online worship, please contact the church office and let us know.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:
O God our defender,
storms rage about us and cause us to be afraid.
Rescue your people from despair,
deliver your children from fear,
and preserve us from all unbelief;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and ever. **Amen.**

B. WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Jeremiah 20:7-13

⁷O Lord, you have enticed me,
and I was enticed;

you have overpowered me,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all day long;
everyone mocks me.

⁸For whenever I speak, I must cry out,
I must shout, "Violence and destruction!"
For the word of the Lord has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.

⁹If I say, "I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,"
then within me there is something like a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.

¹⁰For I hear many whispering:
"Terror is all around!
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"
All my close friends
are watching for me to stumble.
"Perhaps he can be enticed,
and we can prevail against him,
and take our revenge on him."

¹¹But the Lord is with me like a dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and they will not prevail.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonor
will never be forgotten.

¹²O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous,
you see the heart and the mind;
let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

¹³Sing to the Lord;
praise the Lord!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hands of evildoers.

Psalm 69:7-10 [11-15] 16-18, read by Greg and Anneli

⁷Surely, for your sake I have suffered reproach,
and shame has covered my face.

⁸I have become a stranger to my own kindred,
an alien to my mother's children.

⁹Zeal for your house has eaten me up;
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon me.

¹⁰I humbled myself with fasting,
but that was turned to my reproach.

¹¹I put on sackcloth also,
and became a by-word among them.

¹²Those who sit at the gate murmur against me,

and the drunkards make songs about me.

¹³But as for me, this is my prayer to you, at the time you have set, O Lord:

"In your great mercy, O God, answer me with your unfailing help.

¹⁴Save me from the mire; do not let me sink;

let me be rescued from those who hate me and out of the deep waters.

¹⁵Let not the torrent of waters wash over me, neither let the deep swallow me up;

do not let the pit shut its mouth upon me.

¹⁶Answer me, O Lord, for your love is kind;

in your great compassion, turn to me.

¹⁷Hide not your face from your servant;

be swift and answer me, for I am in distress.

¹⁸Draw near to me and redeem me;

because of my enemies deliver me.

Gospel: Matthew 10:24-39, read by Jocelyn

[Jesus said to the twelve:] ²⁴"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³²"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father,

and a daughter against her mother,

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Sermon by Vicar Jordan Smith

As I looked at the readings for this week I was immediately drawn to the reading from the prophet Jeremiah. Certainly not because it's a mood booster. After spending five weeks with our discussion group working through Job, the mood of Jeremiah is fitting in nicely with the despondent and questioning tone we have been hearing from another Old Testament character over many chapters. Jeremiah is introduced as one God knows well and one who is destined for great things. In the first chapter it is said "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5). Jeremiah was called even before his birth to speak to the nations,

and specifically, to call on the nation of Judah and urge them to repent and turn to the Lord.

Jeremiah delights in the Lord and Jeremiah says in chapter 15 that “Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16). Jeremiah is nurtured by God’s words, they bring him joy, and yet his lament comes to us today in chapter 20, we see him turning on God, calling out to God, using bold words bordering on blasphemous that accuse God of deceiving him, or luring him into this mess.

The words that Jeremiah has been given to speak, the story he has been put into, that which was his joy and nurtured him, has become his burden. And he laments.

I think of all that is happening around us these days, of the story we are in and find that those things which brought us joy, those stories that nurtured us, they have become our burden. They have become our burden because they have burdened others and suddenly many of us are having to reckon with what these stories mean not just to us, but to our friends, and our neighbours, and our loved ones. And many people find themselves lamenting.

Jeremiah is living in a time where society is in upheaval. His people are disobeying God, their leaders are not keeping the law, and now he has to be the one to warn them that Jerusalem will be destroyed. He’s been put under lock and key because of this message, and as he comes out the next day, this is his lament. He is hurting, he is in pain, he is afraid, he is angry. But we hear in verse 9 that “within me there is something like burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in and I cannot.”

And I start thinking of the voices that have risen up over the past three weeks, voices that have been talking for much longer but have remained mostly unheard. Voices that have been put under lock and key, have faced opposition, have faced unspeakable things -these voices have felt the spirit moving with such a fire that they can not do anything but speak out in this time where injustices against our neighbours who are black, indigenous, and people of colour have become front page news.

The hymn of the day I have chosen is a classic from the revival period of the late 1800s, I Love to Tell the Story. We will sing the hymn together in a few moments but I think the text of the hymn provides us a way to look at Jeremiah’s lament and his story, and connect it to our lives today.

Verse 1 - I love to tell the story, of unseen things above.

Jeremiah was called to prophesy about those things which were unseen. Of a God who the people had turned away from, had chosen not to see, the God they had ignored.

And I find myself wondering, are our headlines finally filled with those stories that white culture has chosen not to see? Chosen not to see those who are struggling. Chosen not to see those who are hungry. Chosen not to see those who are victimized. Chosen not to see the personhood of all in our society, the personhood of the indigenous people who were on this land before us, the personhood of those facing racism. Because when we tell the story, of unseen things, we tell the story of Jesus. It is a story of God come among us, incarnate as Jesus, the Christ figure marching in the world to tell us that the oppressed matter, that black lives matter. We need to love to tell the story because it’s a story of love, of Jesus’ love, and like Jeremiah, Jesus was struck down, and like Jeremiah he could do nothing other than go

through torment to proclaim God's word.

In Verse 2 – I love to tell the story, for some have never heard its message of salvation from God's own holy word.

We need to tell the story, because some have never heard, or they have heard it but it's been told as a lie to them. They've heard a story of Jesus' love as their children were stolen away from home and sent to residential schools. Or LGBTQ youth were told of Jesus' love while they were sent to conversion therapy.

All too often it is easy to tell the pleasant story, rather than listening to the community crying out. Of the hungry calling for food. Of George Floyd calling for air. Of those who are afraid they will harm themselves calling for help but not receiving the right response. Of indigenous community members in New Brunswick or Alberta or Ontario facing violence and bloodshed both in our history and in our backyards today.

We love to tell a story of salvation, but is the story we tell being demonstrated in our action?

Verse 3 -I love to tell the story for those who know it best.

Because there is always something new to hear, and we need constant reminders of the grand narrative that surrounds us. Jeremiah reminds himself that God is with him. We are reminded that Jesus is with us each time we gather around the communion table, fed and reminded of how a night of suffering led to proclamation of joy three days later.

Jeremiah's lament is not a sign of him walking away from God, but is a sign that even in the pain and suffering he is going through, he has faith that God is with him and God hears him. People protesting on the street are not saying they are giving up on society, but that they have faith that people can change and bring about a new vision that matches God's vision for the world.

It's hard to be a prophet, and thanks be to God that not all of us are called to be prophets. In a time where we are called to walk with others, God has surrounded us with prophets and our first step is to listen.

May God open our ears to the prophets who are speaking among us. Let us get uncomfortable. Let us listen to their lament. Let us listen to their story. Let the spirit move us. And let us listen for the glimmer of hope, that God will work through all of us to shape a just society and respond with a new, new song so that we can once again sing that old, old story of Jesus and his love.

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen

Hymn: I Love to Tell the Story ELW 661

I love to tell the story / of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory, / of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story, / because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings / as nothing else would do.

Refrain

I love to tell the story; / 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story / of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story: / how pleasant to repeat
what seems, each time I tell it, / more wonderfully sweet!
I love to tell the story, / for some have never heard
the message of salvation / from God's own holy word.

Refrain

I love to tell the story, / for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting / to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory, / I sing the new, new song,
I'll sing the old, old story / that I have loved so long.

Refrain

Prayers of Intercession

Creator and Redeemer, as we approach you in prayer, make us walk in beauty and balance, make us open our hearts and minds, make us speak the truth. We pray first for your Community, the Church, The Body of Christ. We pray for all our relatives in the circle of life throughout all Creation; for those chosen to be our leaders and teachers.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Providing God, your creation shows us that life comes from death. Renew the places where our land, air, and waterways have been ill for too long. Heal those who are affected by the environment, whether through lack of access to clean water, breathing issues from pollution, or illness due to viruses. Direct the work of all who care for the environment and those who care for the people who live in it.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Protecting God, sustain and keep safe all who work to defend others across the world. Revive and strengthen organizations dedicated to caring for refugees and migrants while their homelands struggle for peace. May your protective presence also be felt by all who are sick this day. We pray especially for Guenther. Support us in our care for all of those who are in need.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creator God, from you every family in heaven and earth takes its name. On National Indigenous People's Day, we remember you have rooted and grounded us in your covenant love, and empowered us by your Spirit to speak the truth in love, and to walk in your way towards justice and wholeness.
Mercifully grant that your people, journeying together in partnership, may be strengthened and guided to help one another to grow into the full stature of Christ, who is our light and our life.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you are with us and we are never alone. Bless all fathers and father figures who strive to love and nurture as you do. Comfort all who long to be fathers and all for whom this day is difficult.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Joyful God, you bless us with new life each day. We pray especially for those who celebrated birthdays this week: Mark, Dan, Willem, Christiane, Marita, and Deborah. Grant them peace in the year ahead as they continue to walk in your way.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Reigning God, you bless us with guides and caretakers in the faith. As we give thanks for those who have died, increase our care for one another until we walk with them in newness of life.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our father who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
And the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever.
Amen.**

C. SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
God, the creator, Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Announcements

In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak, **all meetings and worship services are taking place virtually.**

- Sunday [Video Devotions](#) are on our [YouTube Channel](#). Please subscribe and comment.
- German [Radio Devotions](#) on our website and Sundays at 9.30 am on CHLO Radio AM 530
- [Virtual Sunday Coffee Hour](#) at 11:00 am through Zoom (link sent by email)
- [Sunday School lessons](#) and [Fabulous Fridays](#) on our website
- [Virtual Coffee Shop Talk](#), Mondays 7:00-9:00 pm through Zoom led by Vicar Silke Fahl. Email vicarfahl@martinluther.ca to sign up.
- [Coffee or Lunch with Job](#): Bible Reading and Discussion about the Book of Job led by Vicar Jordan Smith until June 24. Two opportunities: 8:30 am and 12:15 pm. Email vicarsmith@martinluther.ca to sign up.
- [Virtual Prayer Circle](#), Wednesdays 5:30-6:00 pm through Zoom led by Solveig Christina Voss; we also have a Prayer Request Wall in the Church Foyer
To request a prayer or join our prayer circle, email prayers@martinluther.ca.
- [Give Peas a Chance](#)- A grow some, give some movement hosted by Martin Luther and Redeemer Lutheran with donated seeds.
- [Corona-Care Calls](#)- Volunteers are continuing to call you with more information and to understand your needs. Let us know if you'd like to join the call team!
- Please phone or email the church office:
 - ◇ if we can help you in any way
 - ◇ if you'd like to volunteer by doing Sunday readings or making masks
 - ◇ with feedback on what we're offering
 - ◇ to support our church and [donate](#). Best ways are PAR or send cheque to church office

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*Member of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) &
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