

Living Water: Lesson 4 Homework

Day 1: Scripture Reading

Read through Jeremiah 2:1-13 and Jeremiah 17 using our color coding system. Copies of Jeremiah 2:1-13 and Jeremiah 17 are at the end of Week 4 homework for your convenience. Before you begin, ask God to teach you and transform you through the reading of His word.

Blue: What is God like? How does He work? What is His character?

Green: What does God promise?

Orange: What does God ask of us?

Pink: What is worthy of prayer and pursuit in your own life?

Day 2: Scripture Meditation

What does God remember at the beginning of Jeremiah 2 (vs. 2)?

What does vs. 3 say that Israel was to God?

Describe in your own words what God says Israel has done in vs. 5-13:

These passages are wrought with the devastation of God's heart over what has become of His bride. He remembers the early days of their relationship and the devotion that Israel had for Him as He walked them through the desert. In spite of all that God is, all that He is capable of and all He has proven He can provide for His people, Israel has turned their back on Him. They have gone after empty and broken things to get relief. They have pursued fulfillment in things that can only give them more brokenness.

The authors of the Bible lived in a land that was mostly a dry and desolate place. This makes the metaphor of living water an extremely powerful one. For them, the presence

of God is comparable to the gift of fresh, clear, cold, clean water. Water like this brings immense relief when the temperature of life gets turned up.

Seventy-five percent of the literal promised land is desert. The rabbis say that just as the promised land is seventy-five percent desert, so we can count on life to be seventy-five percent desert. If this is true, and desert is inevitable, we need to ask ourselves the question, “Where are we going for water?” How will we get what we need to survive? Where will we go when the heat of our lives is turned up?

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.”

Psalm 42:1

Read the verse above and asking yourself if you can honestly say that to God. If you can't, ask Him help you know your need for Him. Ask Him to cause you to thirst for Him!

Day 3: Journaling + Confession

Jeremiah 2 and Jeremiah 17 are sad chapters in God's story. They depict how far God's special possession has gotten from Him. They recount how Israel has so easily forgotten how good, how abundant, how just, how righteous and how merciful God is. If we are honest, they prick our hearts because we know that Israel's tragedy is ours as well. We so quickly turn from the goodness of God to such lesser things in order to be fulfilled. Spend some time using the following prompts to examine your heart and spend some honest time of confession before God:

- What are some of the broken cisterns you have turned to when your life becomes difficult, tiring or even just boring? Name them. Make a list. Get gritty before God. He already knows.
- Write a confession letter to the Lord. He loves you so much. He longs for you to expose the dark and chaotic shadows of your heart so that He can bring shalom, light, healing and wholeness. If this is new to you, use Psalm 51 as a guide.
- Is there anyone in your life that has been living water to you? Was there a time when you were in a desert and someone was the presence of God in that place? Take some time to write them a thank you letter. Be specific. Normalize blessing and thanking people who have been a cold cup of water on a hot day to you.

Day 4: Repentance/Mikveh

In John 7, Jesus says that He is living water. Anyone that thirsts can come to Him and drink and then living water will flow out of that person. When we are going to the right source, not only do we get filled up, but God can then use us to be what our thirsty world needs. We can directly reflect the relief that the Gospel can bring to the brokenness around us. *What an amazing truth!* And yet, in spite of this, as we journaled about yesterday, so many times we go to the wrong thing and get off track.

One of the early practices in the time of Jesus was related to this concept of living water. It is called mikveh. It was an outward sign of inward repentance. People would simply wash in living water (not stagnant water) as a symbol of God's presence cleansing them of all the ways in which they have strayed in their relationship with Him.

Not only would they wash, they would also consecrate or rededicate themselves to God. Consecrate simply means to set apart or fully devote something to God. They would wash their head, heart, hands and feet as a way of saying all of me, I give back to you.

In Hebrew, the word mikveh is very closely related to the word for hope. The practice of mikveh is a picture of our hope. The hope of the gospel is rooted in us knowing that we need Him, that apart from His presence and salvation in our lives we are totally lost. We come to the living water that God with this posture and we allow Him to wash us clean. Then we re-consecrate ourselves for His purposes. What a joy repentance is! Returning to the arms of the Father is like running into a sparkling, clear, cool waterfall when your life feels like a land of burning heat.

Mikveh is a powerful metaphor that Jesus himself would have been familiar with. You can do it at your kitchen sink or in the shower. You can do it as you are giving your baby a bath or in the bathroom sink at your office. Repentance is unlimited. We can come to our Father anytime, anywhere. There is nothing magical about the water but often, practices of disciplines speak more powerfully to us in metaphors.

Conclude today by practicing mikveh in your own environment, in your own way.

Day 5: Prayer

As the week comes to an end, take the opportunity to live into the spiritual discipline of prayer.

Begin by praying Scripture and focusing on God and who he is. Create space to ponder some of the things He might be asking of you. Here are some prompts that may help:

- Thank God for His character (maybe the things you underlined in blue). Thank Him for the ways in which He works in our lives.
- What did you underline in orange? Is there anything you saw that He is asking of you? How are you doing with those things?
- Recall His promises and pray them back to Him (Did you underline anything from this passage in green?). Ask Him to bring His kingdom for you and your community in keeping with all He has promised.
- Pray over the things He has revealed to you (the things you underlined in pink). Ask for His help in all He has ordained for you.

Conclude by praying for the requests of your small group or other people you love that God brings to mind.

Jeremiah 2:1-13 - Israel Forsakes the Lord

¹ The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²“Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD,

“I remember the devotion of your youth,
your love as a bride,
how you followed me in the wilderness,
in a land not sown.

³ Israel was holy to the LORD,
the firstfruits of his harvest.
All who ate of it incurred guilt;
disaster came upon them,
declares the LORD.”

⁴ Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the clans of the house of Israel.

⁵ Thus says the LORD:

“What wrong did your fathers find in me
that they went far from me,
and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?

⁶ They did not say, ‘Where is the LORD
who brought us up from the land of Egypt,
who led us in the wilderness,
in a land of deserts and pits,
in a land of drought and deep darkness,
in a land that none passes through,
where no man dwells?’

⁷ And I brought you into a plentiful land
to enjoy its fruits and its good things.
But when you came in, you defiled my land
and made my heritage an abomination.

⁸ The priests did not say, ‘Where is the LORD?’
Those who handle the law did not know me;

the shepherds transgressed against me;
the prophets prophesied by Baal
and went after things that do not profit.

⁹ “Therefore I still contend with you,
declares the LORD,
and with your children’s children I will contend.

¹⁰ For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see,
or send to Kedar and examine with care;
see if there has been such a thing.

¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods,
even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory
for that which does not profit.

¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this;
be shocked, be utterly desolate,
declares the LORD,

¹³ for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Jeremiah 17 - The Sin of Judah

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
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.”

¹¹ Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch,
so is he who gets riches but not by justice;
in the midst of his days they will leave him,
and at his end he will be a fool.

¹² A glorious throne set on high from the beginning
is the place of our sanctuary.

¹³ O LORD, the hope of Israel,

all who forsake you shall be put to shame;
those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth,
for they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living water.

Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance

¹⁴ Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;
save me, and I shall be saved,
for you are my praise.

¹⁵ Behold, they say to me,
“Where is the word of the LORD?
Let it come!”

¹⁶ I have not run away from being your shepherd,
nor have I desired the day of sickness.
You know what came out of my lips;
it was before your face.

¹⁷ Be not a terror to me;
you are my refuge in the day of disaster.

¹⁸ Let those be put to shame who persecute me,
but let me not be put to shame;
let them be dismayed,
but let me not be dismayed;
bring upon them the day of disaster;
destroy them with double destruction!

Keep the Sabbath Holy

¹⁹ Thus said the LORD to me: “Go and stand in the People’s Gate, by which the kings of Judah enter and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, ²⁰ and say: ‘Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. ²¹ Thus says the LORD: Take care for the sake of your lives, and do not bear a burden on the Sabbath day or

bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. ²² And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath or do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers. ²³ Yet they did not listen or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck, that they might not hear and receive instruction.

²⁴ “But if you listen to me, declares the LORD, and bring in no burden by the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy and do no work on it, ²⁵ then there shall enter by the gates of this city kings and princes who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And this city shall be inhabited forever.²⁶ And people shall come from the cities of Judah and the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the Shephelah, from the hill country, and from the Negeb, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and frankincense, and bringing thank offerings to the house of the LORD. ²⁷ But if you do not listen to me, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and not to bear a burden and enter by the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched.”

journal

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