

Jeremiah 33:2-16

“Reverse the Curse!”

1st Sunday of Lent

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Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

What shakes up your world? What makes you uneasy and anxious?

An unstable stock-market? World events or natural disasters?

A warning or report from your doctor?

Each of us is no doubt shaken in different ways by different developments.

The phone rings at 2 am.

And instantly you're uneasy and anxious.

Your boss says, “Could you meet with me tomorrow at 4pm?”

And instantly you're uneasy and anxious.

Whatever your anxieties, Jeremiah would understand your condition.

He was shaken by a number of things in his world.

[Inner Turmoil] *First*, God had called Jeremiah to be a prophet and to speak God's Word in a time when people refused and resented God's messengers.

At least twice there were attempts on his life.

The refusal and violent reaction to his message caused him great anguish.

Jeremiah shares his frustration with us when he prays to God:

O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and der-i-sion all day long. If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in. (20:7–9)

Thus, at the center of Jeremiah's life—his very vocation—there was tension and rejection.

If the inner turmoil of his life was not enough,

his world on the outside was about to collapse

– first inner turmoil and second outer chaos.

[*Outer Chaos*]

The *Babylonians*, led by Nebuchadnezzar, were about to conquer Jerusalem and enslave its population.

The glory of Jerusalem (Solomon's temple) would be flattened.

Jeremiah was at the crossroads of this inner and outer world.

He was called to announce that this would all happen because the people had so completely rejected the God who had given them the land, the temple, Zion, and Jerusalem.

What a situation!

However unsettled we might be and whatever shakes us up in life, these forces do not surpass the internal and external challenges that faced Jeremiah.

[*Sent a Word*]

Into such a shaken world, God sends a remarkable word for Jeremiah and for each of us:

“In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness’” (vv 15–16).

A calming, healing word.

A restoring, refreshing word.

A certain word.

Indeed, it is more than a word. It is a change in reality.

Jeremiah describes the coming of one who would reverse the curse of idolatry.

The Jerusalem that would experience violence,
bloodshed,
anguish, and
enslavement

would once again dwell in security and enjoy wonderful prosperity.

God's blessings would be lavished upon her.

This great reversal would be brought about by the presence of the one who would bring justice and righteousness.

David's seed, Jesus, fulfills this wonderful word precisely as Jeremiah promised.

Security: profound and permanent security is yours in Jesus.

And you are in him not by your own effort,
not by your own achievement,
not by something you did or did not do.

You are in him—in David's Seed—
for you were joined to his death and to his resurrection in your Baptism.

His death has done away with Israel's sin, Judah's sin, your sin.
His resurrection has given you life that is in God—in the Father, in the Son, in the Holy Spirit—as the triune name was spoken over you.

So when ...

The phone rings at 2 am.
And instantly you're uneasy and anxious.
Remember that Jesus has reversed the curse.
This doesn't determine your salvation.
You are God's child!

Your boss says, "Could you meet with me tomorrow at 4pm?"
And instantly you're uneasy and anxious.
Remember that Jesus has reversed the curse.
This doesn't determine your salvation.
You are God's child!

Now, even death cannot conquer you, for your life is secure in the life of God.

Jesus' word is certain: ***"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*** (Jn 11:25).

And our answer, with Jeremiah, with Martha, is ***"Yes, Lord; I believe"*** (11:27).

[In Jesus Alone]

Indeed, if we reflect for a moment,
it is clear that many of those who seek to make us feel safe and secure
cannot deliver.

The stock market?
Financial plans?
Identity theft protection?
Insurance?
Strong graduation rate?
Wealthy careers?
Physical strength?
Beauty?
Popularity?

All those places that advertise lasting security simply cannot deliver.

The most powerful and wealthy of human beings
will soon lose all that power and wealth.
How silly to regard wealth or power or popularity as gods!
How misspent is a life devoted to them as though they were gods!

Jeremiah spoke that message to his contemporaries.
He faithfully spoke God's Holy Word.

The majority rejected his message, but a significant minority listened and believed.
They saw reality for what it was.
They saw the beauty and wonder of the God of Moses and of Jeremiah.
They confessed their sins and rejoiced in God's forgiveness
for the sake of David's Seed, Jesus.

So, rejoice with Jeremiah.
Be at peace inside and as you meet the world on the outside, for you know Jesus.
And to know Jesus is to know the peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen!

You are the body of Christ, each one of you part of it! Amen!