



Devotional

June 28 - Oct. 3

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July 12–18, 2020: Weekly Devotion by Ed Cronyn

Sacrifice, humility, service, mercy and salvation join arms with one another in a never-ending battle against greed, selfishness and oppression. The prophesy of the sin-bearing servant and messiah (Isaiah 52:13-53:12), written centuries before Christ's birth, reveals both the depths of our shortcomings before God and His great mercy. On the one hand are the sins that continue to darken our souls today: unrighteousness, lust, perverting justice to oppress the poor and the foreigner, corrupting power and influence to serve our own purposes, and focusing on wealth and comfort more than on God. We are warned that these are the seeds of destruction of any people.

“They know no limits in deeds of wickedness; they do not judge with justice the cause of the orphan, to make it prosper, and they do not defend the rights of the needy. Shall I not punish them for these things? says the LORD?” (Jeremiah 5:28-29, NRSV)

Fortunately, in our corner covering all these sins is God's mercy as we accept the sacrifice of the messiah who suffered and bore the consequences of our sins and as we follow in His footsteps. Mercy restores and redeems us as we repent, love and serve God with humility, restore justice, and act generously with our neighbors in need. Not only are we forgiven, but God promises to “dwell with” us as we turn towards Him.

“Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. (Isaiah 56:1) . . . For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the

widow, or shed innocent blood in this place . . . then I will dwell with you in this place.” (Jeremiah 7:5-7, NRSV)

Challenge: It can be uncomfortable to think about how our choices affect others, but this is exactly what Isaiah and Jeremiah call us to do. Do we not practice and/or ignore many of the same injustices that these prophets address? Thankfully, we don't need to wallow in our shortcomings. God is merciful as we repent and follow Him.

Prayer focus: God, Your mercy washes me of my shortcomings, preparing me for Your work. Help me to follow You in humility and to spread Your love through service and the pursuit of justice.

WEEK FOUR (JULY 19–26)

Day 201: July 19, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 17:1–20:18

Abbreviated Plan: Jeremiah 25:1–38

The truth often hurts, not just for the one hearing it, but for the one speaking it. Jeremiah had a plot against him (18:18) and was a laughingstock (19:7). Yet he still felt a “fire in his bones” to speak the truth (19:9). May we have the same boldness.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 202: July 20, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 21:1–24:10

Abbreviated Plan: Jeremiah 26:1–24

Jeremiah is clear about God’s problem with the people: they did nothing about injustice (22:3). They did not treat the immigrants with dignity, or honor life, or care for children or those without social status. Much of this indictment can apply today. What do you think can we do about it?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 203: July 21, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 25:1–29:32

Abbreviated Plan: Jeremiah 31:1–40

Today’s Jeremiah reading offers God’s comfort (ch. 29) and judgment (ch. 25-27). We tend to hear only the first and not the second, but we need both. The first brings us up when we are down; the second brings us back down when we see ourselves too highly.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 204: July 22, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 30:1–33:26

Abbreviated Plan: Jeremiah 34:1–22

Change is hard, especially when it involves loss and grief. But God promises through Jeremiah that “the people who survived the sword will find grace in the wilderness,” (31:2). And God turns “mourning into joy and sorrow into gladness,” (31:13).\

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 205: July 23, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 34:1–38:28

Abbreviated Plan: Jeremiah 46:1–28

When someone reveals to us the truth of our sins, we tend to ignore the message and denounce the messenger, like the king did in Jeremiah 36. Instead, we must confess our sins and acknowledge the consequences. Fighting only makes it worse (38:17-23).

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 206: July 24, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 39:1–45:5

Abbreviated Plan: Jeremiah 50:1–46

God gave a clear word to the remnant in Judea: Stay. Don't look for greener grass elsewhere. Bloom where you are planted (Jer. 42:10). They should have listened, but they didn't. Sometimes the best (and hardest) thing to do is sit, watch, and wait for God.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 207: July 25, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 46:1–49:39

Abbreviated Plan: Jeremiah 52:1–34

In Jeremiah 46-49, the prophet casts God's judgment against nine earthly empires over five chapters. No worldly power is stronger than God. It proves that we can't trust earthly systems to provide a sense of security, hope, and prosperity that only God provides.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

July 19–25, 2020: Weekly Devotion by Shannon Hitchcock

As I read Jeremiah Chapters 17-49, I learned of a prophet who was courageous, persistent, and whose message was so unpopular he suffered death threats and was imprisoned.

Jeremiah repeatedly warned the Jewish people to turn away from worshiping Baal, (a fertility God), and Molech, (a Canaanite God associated with child sacrifice). I struggled with what relevance Jeremiah's message has for us today. Then I read Jeremiah 22:3:

...“And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.”

Images came to mind of the situation at our southern border—children housed in cages, separated from their parents, reports of their physical and sexual abuse.

I continued to read. I highlighted Jeremiah 48:29-31:

“We have heard of the pride of Moab—he is very proud—of his loftiness, his pride, and his arrogance, and the haughtiness of his heart. I myself know his insolence, says the Lord; his boasts are false, his deeds are false. Therefore I wail for Moab; I cry out for all Moab; and for the people of Kir-heres I mourn.”

A quick Google search tells me that Moab is an ancient kingdom that was located in Jordan. Yet Jeremiah writes of Moab as if it were both a man and a kingdom. It would be all too easy for me to replace the name Moab with that of the United States, and to admit that I frequently wail for our country.

But Jeremiah also has a message of hope. My favorite passage is Chapter 29: 11-14:

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord...”

May we all call upon the Lord and seek to do his will for the good of the alien, the widow, the orphan, our families, our community, and our country. Amen.

WEEK FIVE (JULY 26–AUGUST 1)

Day 208: July 26, 2020

Full Plan: Jeremiah 50:1–52:34

Abbreviated Plan: Lamentations 3:1–66

Jeremiah closes with his strongest indictment yet, against the mighty Babylonians. (ch 51-52) God’s strongest judgments are against the proud and the powerful, (50:31-32) who do not use their resources for God’s purposes of love and justice.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 209: July 27, 2020

Full Plan: Lamentations 1:1–2:22

Abbreviated Plan: Ezekiel 1:1–28

Lamentations reminds us to be true to our sorrow and grief, and being willing to name the hurt and pain we are feeling in our lives and in the world. For what things do we weep, with our eyes flowing with tears, with no comfort or courage to be found (Lam. 1:16)?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 210: July 28, 2020

Full Plan: Lamentations 3:1–5:22

Abbreviated Plan: Ezekiel 2:1–10

Lamentations 3-5 speak for any who feel like our world has fallen apart and we feel helpless. It also gives us the assurance that God is not mad at us (3:33) and God is with us until the very end (3:22). Mostly, it gives us permission to feel what we feel.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life: