

1. Introduction

- a. Jeremiah:
 - i. A prophet who acts as the mouthpiece for God to tell His people what’s wrong with them (see 1:9 when he says “Behold I have put my words in thy mouth.”)
 - ii. Prophesized since he was young and probably served for 40-50 years
 - iii. Served under Josiah as king when things went well—but served long enough to serve under bad kings as well—he saw the full spectrum of Judah’s condition
 - iv. Most persecuted of the prophets—people really didn’t like his messages calling out their sin
 - v. Referred to as the “weeping prophet” in part because he is believed to be responsible for writing Lamentations
- b. The topic of sin:
 - i. Not primarily a breaking of rules but a problem of where we “root” ourselves—what we place our ultimate trust in: where our trust to live our lives truly lies.
 - 1. Here, the sin isn’t exactly what we would think of as sin: it’s more under the surface than the people are willing to admit to themselves
 - 2. We can easily be convicted or made to feel guilty about bad things we do
 - 3. But it’s hard to convince us of the bad things we ARE (cf. v. 9—the heart is deceitful above all things)
 - 4. This makes us humble enough to know that there is more in our heart than we would care to admit
 - 5. All of v.1-4 is used as a literary device to say that sin had crept into all areas of Judah’s life as a people (altars, groves, mountains, fields, even their heritage—how they would be remembered)
- c. This passage deals with the source of our anxieties/worries: that we place value (roots) into things that will ultimately fade away
- d. Jeremiah here says that cursed is the man who trusts and blessed is the man who trusts—meaning that everyone everywhere will find trust in something for ultimate meaning and hope

2. The “Root” of Sin

- a. Jeremiah describes two types of trees/plants (v.6 and v.8)
 - i. V6: Better translated as a shrub or “naked” bush—it has shallow roots and therefore can’t enjoy the pleasure of leaves and growth.
 - ii. V8: The other is a tree planted near a river where the roots stretch deep and long
 - iii. The difference is where the roots are—a shallow place, or a deep source.
- b. What do roots do? At least two things
 - i. Roots anchor the tree—providing support and balance to its life
 - ii. Roots give nutrients from the soil—providing growth and nourishment
- c. Sin, in this case, is putting roots into something other than God.
 - i. Roots show where our trust truly is.
 - 1. Our anchor: What worries us? What, if taken away, would destroy us or topple us?
 - 2. Our nutrients: What do we do with our solitude? Where do we go to get refreshed? To find comfort and nourishment?
- d. Verse 7—blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust IS the Lord
 - 1. Why the repetition of “trust?” It mean you can fully trust in God and yet still not find your trust AS him—you’re trusting Him to deliver you into particular circumstances but not trusting IN Him as the source of trust and comfort itself
- e. What are the results of your roots?
 - i. Bush—it will know no prosperity (cf. v. 6). People with this kind of trust may get what they wanted but it won’t make them happy

1. Roots of the bush aren't necessarily in the wrong place—they're just not deep. They are in the top soil that is first to suffer from drought
2. If our roots only go as deep as the bush's roots, then when that thing dries up, we will also dry up and blow away (i.e. trusting in our work, family, reputation, success, control, etc.)
- ii. Tree—it will know no drought (cf. v.8). The tough times won't be able to touch you but because it can't touch the source of your roots.
- f. Jeremiah says the heart is deceptive—we all put our roots into something, whether we realize it or not
 - i. The "roots" of a tree determine what kind of tree it will be. Judah had, fundamentally, put their roots in "your wealth and all your treasures"---their accomplishments and "heritage"

3. The Cure for Sin

- a. Jeremiah asks to be healed—but in v.9 it says who can understand the heart? Who can cure it?
 - i. No one can heal themselves just as a bush in the desert can't replant itself next to a river
 - ii. We need to be replanted—we need rebirth where our roots/identity/trust/value/self-worth run deep into God.
 - iii. It takes the God of the water (see verse 13—God is the fountain we have to be placed in)
- b. How do you know you've been re-planted?
 - i. You won't feel the heat when it comes
 - ii. Jeremiah was called a man of suffering—of weeping
 1. So much so that the apostles most closely aligned another one to come later, Jesus, with Jeremiah (Matt 16:14)
 2. Jeremiah was persecuted by his own people for calling out their sin
 3. Jesus was ultimately persecuted by his own people and died for their sin
- c. Many people have been uprooted and replanted in good soil—they've found God as their source of ultimate trust, happiness, joy--because one person in history was thrown out to the desert
 - i. Jesus says "I thirst" (cf. John 19:28)—he was taking the real heat that we deserve
 - ii. Jesus was cosmically hydrated from the fountain of living water (cf. John 4:14)—but on the cross he gets tossed to the desert wasteland
- d. T.S. Eliot—*The Wasteland*

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
 Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
 A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
 And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
 And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
 There is shadow under this red rock,
 (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
 And I will show you something different from either
 Your shadow at morning striding behind you
 Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
- e. Under the red rock—the bleeding rock who is Jesus—we get shade and rest—otherwise we will put our trust/roots into something else that will ultimately wither
 - i. We get neither the shadow at morning (worry of the day) or the shadow at evening (fear of the future)
 - ii. Jesus, the red bleeding rock got it all for us