

Sink Deep Roots in Our Trustworthy God

Jeremiah 17:5-14

May 14th, 2017

Intro –

Helping someone navigate NY city who had never been there. Would need to give a big picture and “on the ground” instruction.

Big picture – take them to the top of the Empire State Building and point out the major landmarks, roadways, outline of the city, boundaries of the different boroughs. In Pocatello, when Tom first visited I took him up to the pillars by campus to see the lay of the land.

On the ground – How do you call a taxi? How can you avoid looking like a tourist (don’t look up at the buildings)? What are the dangers? What’s a reasonable price for a burger (my story with Mike)? There are mud puddles, and pedestrian traffic, safe and unsafe areas.

The same is true of God’s instruction for life.

We need a big picture view of life –What is the end goal? What is it all about?

We change by the power of Christ to be more like Christ for the glory of Christ.

But we don’t change in general ways we change in specific ways because we don’t sin in general ways, we sin in specific ways.

The chronically angry woman sins against specific people in her life in specific ways. She needs to understand that repentance means not just being sorry for her anger or expressing a general desire to be more like Christ, it will involve confessing to her daughter for the way she yelled at her that morning.

The man who gossips has spoken about specific people to specific people. He will likely need to confess, apologize, and recognize the situations in which he is tempted to gossip so he can control his tongue.

This passage in Jeremiah gives us some of the big picture of life. He uses a simple analogy to explain it. We’ll look at that analogy, see what the application of it would have been for the original audience, and then connect it to our lives today.

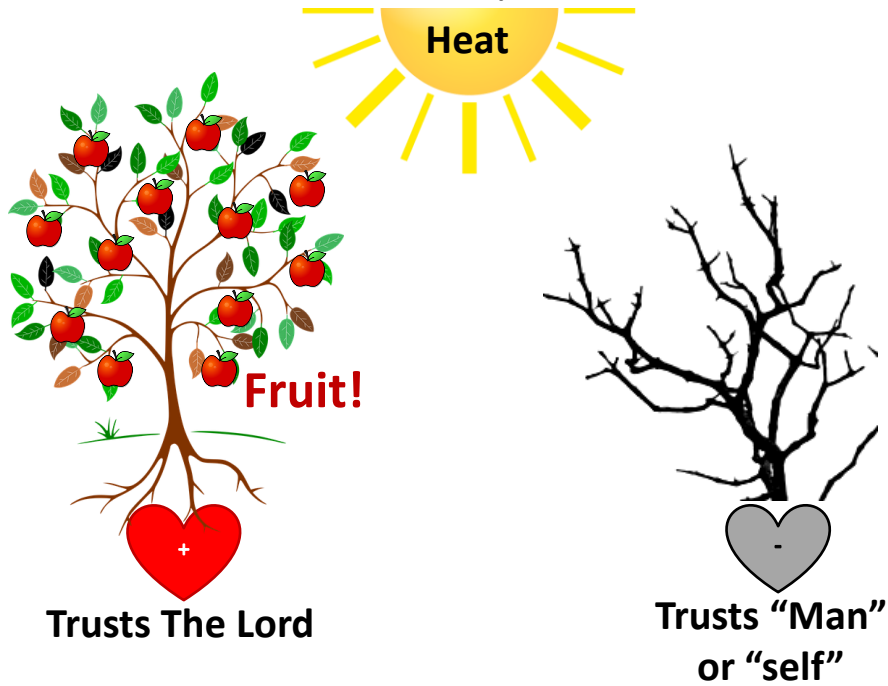
1. What we trust in affects our response to ***adversity***. (17:5-8)
 - a. The cursed man trusts in ***man*** and ***shrivels*** in adversity (vv. 5-6)
 - i. Trusts in mankind, Makes flesh his strength
 1. The immediate cultural application for Jeremiah’s audience was the nation’s tendency to rely on international alliance in a type of power politics. They might rely on Egypt or Syria for strength.
 2. Jeremiah ministered to the nation of Judah during the reigns of the last 5 kings.
 - a. From the good, godly king Josiah who saw a short-lived revival, through the last king Jehoiachin.
 3. Many refused to walk in the ways God commanded but followed their own counsel or false prophets.

- a. **Jeremiah 7:23-24** "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.'²⁴ "Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in *their own* counsels *and* in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.
 - b. **Jeremiah 5:30-31** "An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land:³¹ The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their *own* authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?
4. They boasted in their wisdom, strength, and wealth.
- a. **Jeremiah 9:23-24** Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;²⁴ but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.
5. Worshiping other gods
- a. **Jeremiah 2:28** "But where are your gods Which you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you In the time of your trouble; For *according to* the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah.
6. Child sacrifice
- a. **Jeremiah 7:31** "They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.
- ii. His heart turns away from the Lord
1. Not just a problem with actions; it is indicative of the heart condition.
 2. **Jeremiah 2:12-13** "Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate," declares the LORD.¹³ "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.
 - a. Two main sources of water – artisan springs that were cool, clean, flowing and cistern, clay lined holes in the ground that would get muddy, collect bugs, stink
 3. Sin is a matter of where we put down our roots
 4. ~~**Jeremiah 5:21-24**²¹ "Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes but do not see; Who have ears but do not hear."²² "Do you not fear Me?" declares the LORD. "Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, An eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it."²³ "But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; They have turned aside and departed."²⁴ "They do not say in their heart, "Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain in its season, Both the autumn rain and the spring rain, Who keeps for us The appointed weeks of the harvest."~~

- iii. We see this on a cultural level
 - 1. Status is determined by wealth; people are “spiritual” but not religious, meaning they worship a deity of their own making; the basis for right and wrong is determined by cultural forces and personal feelings.
 - 2. May we not be swayed by these forces in the world.
- iv. In adversity, he or she shrivels and dries up because the things he or she was trusting in can be removed.
 - 1. The job is lost, the looks fade, the friendships break. Those are shallow roots.
 - 2. In light of eternity, they don’t last, even if they last through 80 or 90 years on earth.
- b. The blessed man trusts in the **Lord** and **grows** in adversity. (vv. 7-8)
 - i. For the original audience this would mean repentance so as not to be taken captive by Babylon for their rebellion as a nation against God.
 - 1. **Jeremiah 24:5-7** "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place *into* the land of the Chaldeans. ⁶ 'For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. ⁷ 'I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.
 - a. This is the hope and the way they would flourish – the nation is toast. It is going to fall because of the rebellion of the people. But there will be a remnant who are faithful to the Lord and I will preserve them even in Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans.
 - 2. Exemplified in Jer 42-43 – The people say “pray for us that the Lord would tell us what to do. We will listen to the voice of the Lord! Jer: the Lord says, “Don’t go down to Egypt. Trust in the Lord here in the land. He will deliver you from the king of Babylon.” The people: “Liar!” They only wanted to hear one message from God, the one that concurred with what they already wanted to do.
 - ii. Even when heat and drought come, he doesn’t wither, but grows and yields fruit.
 - 1. The heat comes to both trees.
 - a. Adversity in life comes to all people. Bodies fail. Relationships go south. Other people sin against you or are simply incredibly draining, people let you down
 - 2. Adversity doesn’t have to bring anxiety.
 - 3. Heat is actually good for a fruit bearing tree. What do apple trees look like in the winter months? They are dormant, no leaves, no buds, no fruit. As things heat up in spring, they leaf out and are covered in flowers that will lead to fruit. The heat brought the fruit.
 - 4. Likewise, heat can bring fruit in your life, but it all depends on your root. It all depends on what the root is tapping into.

- a. It doesn't depend on your positive attitude. That is just another way of trusting in self.

iii. PPT of the two trees, two trusts, two consequences from the heat



iv.

v. Applications –

1. Mothers on mother's day – there is heat that comes with having children – sleepless infant, stubborn toddler, mysterious illnesses,
2. New HS or college grad – launching out in life – there will be some heat – whether you shrivel up or respond to the heat by growing more like Christ depends on your root.
3. UBC as we move toward a new season

2. The heart of our **problem** is a problem with our **hearts** (17:9-11)

- a. If the contrast is so stark between these two trees and these two people, why would anyone choose what isn't in their best interest?
 - i. We do it every time we sin.
 - ii. Wayne Grudem – “All sin is ultimately irrational.”
 1. Satan trying to usurp God's place, Adam and Eve thinking they could gain by disobeying their Creator,
 2. “Though people sometimes persuade themselves that they have good reasons for sinning, when examined in the cold light of truth on the last day, it will be seen in every case that sin ultimately does not make sense.”
- b. The reason we sin is because of our hearts, they deceive us, they are not well, and they are beyond our ability to understand.

- i. Do you ever feel like you don't even understand yourself and your motives? That's what v. 9 says about the heart.
 - c. But the Lord sees and searches the heart.
 - i. Terrifying and encouraging – He sees what no one else sees. That's accountability and that's terrifying. But He also forgives as our only hope. That's encouraging!
- 3. Our only hope is the **Lord** (17:12-14)
 - a. His throne is **high** and **glorious** (v. 12)
 - i. Babylon may come to rule over Israel and Judah, but God rules supreme over Babylon and all the universe.
 - ii. He reigns over your life as well. He's the King who deserves allegiance. He's the sovereign who hasn't abdicated His throne. It has been this way "from the beginning" – when God created the heavens and the earth, He ruled and reigned over them.
 - b. Since He is the only source of **living water**, those who **forsake** Him will perish like a name written in the dust. (v. 13)
 - i. "written in the dirt/dust" is probably the idea behind this. Impermanent. Temporary. Unlike those whose names are written in the book of life (Rev. 20:12; 21:27)
 - ii. Circles back to the image of the two trees, the bush in the desert without water is like the one who walks away from the Lord, the fountain of living water.
 - c. God alone can **heal** and **save** (v. 14)
 - i. What is our hope for our desperately sick hearts? Only the Lord. If He heals, we are healed. If He saves, we are saved. No other hope.
 - ii. The third tree – The cross – is the means by which we are saved. On our own we would remain shrub brush in the wilderness.
 - 1. Jesus came and endured the heat of a sin cursed world, He perfectly lived as the man who trusts in God the Father, and bore our sin on the cross.
 - iii. Come to the fountain of living water.
 - 1. **John 4:14** ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."
 - 2.