

October 2021

Introduction to Jeremiah

Around 627 BC Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry. He understood the Lord had called him from the womb of his mother (Jeremiah 1:4–10). It was a dangerous vocation. He was mocked, put in stocks, dropped in a well and left to die. He tried to resist the prophetic call, but the Lord was too strong for him (Jeremiah 20:7–9). His message was immensely unpopular. He challenged the kings, the priests, and the false prophets.

The priests and professional prophets had developed a dangerous theology based on a serious misunderstanding of God's mercy in sparing Jerusalem and the Temple at the time of Hezekiah. They came to believe that God's everlasting promise to David and his presence of the Temple made them invincible. In their false confidence, they believed that regardless of what they did, God would have to be faithful to his promise to David. Surely, he would protect Jerusalem, because his Temple was there. But they were wrong, dead wrong.

Less than 100 years after their miraculous rescue, they had resumed cheating and robbing the poor, following after other gods, and even sacrificing their own children (7:30–31). They had no shame, and their pursuit of false gods knew no bounds. Through Jeremiah, God accused them of turning the Temple into a den of thieves (7:11). The result would be the destruction of the Temple. Jesus would quote those very words to warn that the same fate would befall the rebuilt Temple, if his contemporaries did not repent and change their ways.

There is so much to study in Jeremiah's work, but we will limit our study and meditations to a dozen passages to help us understand the true nature of covenant, and marital love. The tender and intimate images of married love are used to describe the relationship of God and his covenant people. The heart-wrenching images of marital infidelity had unfolded the true nature of idolatry. In Jeremiah, marriage also supplies the images to understand not only what the relationship of God and his people is like now, but also the promise of our deepest hopes for the future as well. The long-awaited day of the Lord will come and will be a celebration of the wedding of the Lord and his beloved. On that day, the weapons of war will be abolished; the land will pour forth grain, wine, and oil. Our enemies will be defeated. Those in need of pity will be pitied. Those who were not God's people will be his people, and he will be our God. Jeremiah continues the prophetic practice of using marriage imagery both to expose the depth of Judah's betrayal of the covenant and to point to a way forward.

The themes:

- Our first love (2:1–3)
- What went wrong? (2:4–9)
- The folly of idolatry (2:10–15; 2:25b–28, 32–33)
- Divorce and exile—broken marriage (3:1–2, 19–20)
- Submission to the will of God—image of the potter (18:1–6)
- Cure of the incurable wound (30:8–14; 30:17–22)
- The nature of our God and his love (31:1–5; 31:8–13)
- Our marriages participate in and are signs of the New Covenant (31:31–34; 33:6–11)



Jeremiah 2:1–3

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 2:1–3

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 first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it were held guilty; disaster came upon them, says the LORD.

Meditation

Do you remember your wedding day? I remember being in the back of the church and seeing my bride for the first time that day. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Do you remember the heady first days of love? The first kiss? Do you remember when there was nothing more you wanted to do than to be with her/him? The Lord is describing his relationship with his people in that same way. He was protective of his beloved. He rescued them from all their enemies.

What could happen to change that first love? We know it needs to be cherished, nurtured, protected from competing loves and lovers. Although we know it must grow and mature, we also must not forget how we were first captured by our beloved. We must never forget that glimpse of her/his unique glory and splendor.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 2:4–9

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 2:4–9

Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. ⁵ Thus says the LORD: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves? 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 no one passes through, where no one lives?" ⁷ I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered 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 rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and went after things that do not profit. ⁹ Therefore once more I accuse you, says the LORD, and I accuse your children's children.

Meditation

What went wrong? This is a courtroom scene reminiscent of the one in Micah 6. The piercing question is this: What has the Lord done that would so offend his beloved that they would go after worthless things and become worthless themselves? Their problem was that they forgot their first love. They did not regularly call to mind the good things the Lord had done for them. They "fell out of love"—which, as we know, is simply a series of choices we make to not love.

We are in danger of drifting away from each other and drifting away from the Lord as a couple, if we don't continually ask the question, "Where is the Lord in our life?" It is in looking back and seeing how he has worked in our lives that we can then recognize him at work today, in the subtle aspects of our ordinary, daily lives. Judah as a nation was in great danger because they did not ask, "Where is the Lord?" This led them to look to gods that weren't gods at all for the answers to life's most difficult questions. That was a serious mistake for them, and it is for us as well.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 2:10–15

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 2:10–15

Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever 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 something that does not profit. ¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the LORD, ¹³ for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water. ¹⁴ Is Israel a slave? Is he a homeborn servant? Why then has he become plunder? ¹⁵ The lions have roared against him, they have roared loudly. They have made his land a waste; his cities are in ruins, without inhabitant.

Meditation

This is perhaps one of the most pathetic oracles in the whole book, and it is repeated in chapter 18. Jeremiah invites the people to visit all the neighboring countries, to do some of the investigative reporting of which we moderns are so fond. Do other people exchange their patron gods for other gods? No, they don't! And those gods are not even real gods! But that is precisely what Judah has done. This can only be compared to people in an arid wilderness choosing to capture sparse rainfall in a leaky cistern rather than build their dwelling right next to a stream of running water. This is similar to the choice Jesus offered to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. Did she want water from the well of Jacob that would last only for a day or the living water that never ran out that Jesus offered? She chose Jesus, and the result was life. What happened to Judah when they chose wrongly? What will we choose?

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 2:25b–28, 32–33

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 2:25b–28, 32–33

But you said, "It is hopeless, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go." ²⁶ As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed—they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets, ²⁷ who say to a tree, "You are my father," and to a stone, "You gave me birth." For they have turned their backs to me, and not their faces. But in the time of their trouble they say, "Come and save us!" ²⁸ But where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them come, if they can save you, in your time of trouble; for you have as many gods as you have towns, O Judah. . . . ³² Can a girl forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number. ³³ How well you direct your course to seek lovers! So that even to wicked women you have taught your ways.

Meditation

In the verses just before today's selection, Jeremiah compares Judah to a wild animal in heat looking for any mate she can find. Then he further mocks them for calling a tree their father and a stone their mother. We should be repulsed by these images, because they reveal the true nature of idolatry. It is tempting to think that we would not be so stupid, but how often do we, as individuals, fail to see that at the deepest, most personal core of our being is a longing for God? And this longing, this place in our hearts, can only be filled by God. As Augustine famously said, "Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in you." It is not possible for anything, including one's spouse, to fill that space, and it is unfair and unrealistic to expect him or her to do that. This space is exclusively reserved for our personal relationship with God. To expect any created being or object to fill it is idolatry. But when God is at the center of our lives, we share in his very life. Filled with his life, satisfied by him, we can now give ourselves freely and fully to our spouse. We each need to make a space in our hearts which is exclusively for our personal relationship with God. This relationship not only helps heal the hurts of our common life, but also enables us as husband or wife to find in the love of God the deepest source of meaning in our life together.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 3:1–2, 19–20

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 3:1–2, 19–20

If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not such a land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? says the LORD. ² Look up to the bare heights, and see! Where have you not been lain with? By the waysides you have sat waiting for lovers, like a nomad in the wilderness. You have polluted the land with your whoring and wickedness. ¹⁹ I thought how I would set you among my children, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful heritage of all the nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me. ²⁰ Instead, as a faithless wife leaves her husband, so you have been faithless to me, O house of Israel, says the LORD.

Meditation

Marriage is the privileged metaphor for the intimate relationship of God and his people. It is an image that reveals the tender, loving nature of God and his desire to live one life with his people, as his faithful bride. However, when the bride is faithless, and the husband divorces her, divorce becomes a metaphor for exile. God is the wounded lover and he will abandon his beloved to their false lovers. They will go into exile. Their land will be conquered, the temple will be destroyed, they will be punished for breaking their promise. But divorce is not what God wanted for Judah, nor is it what he wants for us. Jesus will say, "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8). They were offered a choice: covenant love and fidelity versus covenant breaking. That is our choice too.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 18:1–6

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 18:1–6

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. ⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶ Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

Meditation

One of the scariest truths about God is that he is absolutely, and radically sovereign. He is free to do with his creation, including us, whatever he wills. This oracle served as a warning to Israel that they were like clay in the hand of the potter who could start all over and the clay could do nothing about it. Talk about the limits of free will! But they were in this horrible predicament precisely because they had abused their free will and sinned.

What does this mean for us? How do we live with the absolute, radical sovereignty of God? Amid difficulties, especially those not of your own making, have you ever thought that this is not how you imagined your life would turn out? We enter marriage with so many plans and hopes. Then we come face to face with insurmountable difficulties: sudden job loss, debilitating sickness or death of a child, mental illness, long-term illness of our parents, our children leaving the faith, or a sudden violent storm that wrecks our home. In those moments we come face to face with the terrifying reality that we are not ultimately in charge. What then? Can we be like clay in the potter's hand? Can we be docile and formable in the hand of the Lord? Are we willing to wait patiently for the Lord to remake us? Are we even willing to cooperate? The key is to believe, to trust that this absolutely sovereign God is love, and that his only desire is for our good, for us to share his very life.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 30:8–14

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 30:8–14

On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will break the yoke from off his neck, and I will burst his bonds, and strangers shall no more make a servant of him. ⁹ But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. ¹⁰ But as for you, have no fear, my servant Jacob, says the LORD, and do not be dismayed, O Israel; for I am going to save you from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and no one shall make him afraid. ¹¹ For I am with you, says the LORD, to save you; I will make an end of all the nations among which I scattered you, but of you I will not make an end. I will chastise you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished. ¹² For thus says the LORD: Your hurt is incurable, your wound is grievous. ¹³ There is no one to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you. ¹⁴ All your lovers have forgotten you; they care nothing for you; for I have dealt you the blow of an enemy, the punishment of a merciless foe, because your guilt is great, because your sins are so numerous.

Meditation

Israel was once again a slave in a foreign country. The land promised to Abraham was occupied by foreigners, their king deposed and led away captive, the Temple abandoned by the Lord and destroyed by the Babylonians. Their wound is incurable. They have been dealt the blow of an enemy—all because sin has consequences. But in their agony, in their hour of greatest need, the promises are repeated. A day will come when they shall serve the Lord in their land and David will be their king.

As married couples, we need to hear the promises of the Lord not as relics of the past, but as words for us today. We hear the stories as if they were our own. We live in the hope that his promises will come true, that he will save us and transform our marriage! If the story ended with an incurable wound, it would be the end of Israel, the end of us. But this is not the end of the story. We dare to hope that there is a cure for the incurable wound, because Jesus rose from the dead and he is with us now. That is our story!

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.*

Share one idea with your spouse.

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 30:17–22

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Jeremiah 30:17–22

For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, says the LORD, because they have called you an outcast: "It is Zion; no one cares for her!" ¹⁸ Thus says the LORD: I am going to restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob, and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt upon its mound, and the citadel set on its rightful site. ¹⁹ Out of them shall come thanksgiving, and the sound of merrymakers. I will make them many, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be disdained. ²⁰ Their children shall be as of old, their congregation shall be established before me; and I will punish all who oppress them. ²¹ Their prince shall be one of their own, their ruler shall come from their midst; I will bring him near, and he shall approach me, for who would otherwise dare to approach me? says the LORD. ²² And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Meditation

We need to remember that Jeremiah is giving this beautiful promise to captives in Babylon who have lost everything. The prophet is pointing to a sure and certain day that many of them will never see. Many will not live to see the cities rebuilt. Many will not return to the land. But even in exile they can live in a different way because they have hope. It is not the kind of promise that is always just out of their reach, like a carrot on the end of a stick. No, they can live differently in the present because, while the promises will be fulfilled in the future, God is with them right now, in exile. Our exile experience might be the sadness we experience when a child leaves the faith or rejects us. It could be an especially difficult time with our spouse. We too can have hope that the God who made these promises is faithful. The most important truth is that even though we may feel "outcast," God has not abandoned us. Knowing that he will save us and our children makes all the difference in the world.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 31:1–5

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 31:1–5

At that time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. ²Thus says the LORD: The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, ³ the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. ⁴ Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall take your tambourines, and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers. ⁵ Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit.

Meditation

St. John tells us in his first letter that God is love (4:8). But what is love? There is no simple definition. If St. John is right, we can learn about love by studying what God does, for he himself is love. In this oracle we learn that love is everlasting. It is faithful to its promises. It is full of tenderness, mercy, and compassion. It is the most powerful force in the whole universe. Because of love's power, when Israel's long exile is finally over, Israel who had played the harlot, who had defiled herself like a wild animal in heat searching for her lovers (2:23–24), this unfaithful Israel will be called "O virgin Israel." Love will cure the incurable wound. Love will heal the land and make it fruitful once again. On that day, Jeremiah says, joy will return. We Christians know that that wonderful day burst into human history when Jesus rose from the dead to defeat death and cure the incurable wound. Ever since that moment, our participation in Christ's life and our covenant faithfulness function as a bright signpost in a darkened world. Our marriages make God's love visible in the world and point to that day when God's love will fill all of creation.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Unity Prayer: God, make our hearts one. Amen.



Jeremiah 31:8–13

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 31:8–13

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." ¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. ¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

Meditation

How can one describe what the day of the Lord will be like? Imagine a father bringing his family back to safety, a shepherd gathering and leading his flock, and slaves ransomed and set free. Imagine, too, a day when the blind, the lame, those with children, those in labor, those who are weeping—they all will be consoled. Imagine a day filled with song, dancing, and merrymaking. On that day mourning will turn to joy and sorrow to gladness.

We know that the scattered people are not just the Jews sent into exile in Babylon. All of exiled humanity—all of us, broken and blind—are stumbling to find joy in the arrival of our king. That great day burst into human history with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He mysteriously announced it in the context of a joyous wedding feast in Cana. There the King provided an abundance of the best wine anyone had ever tasted. That great day was strangely revealed on the cross and joyously completed in the resurrection on Easter morning. But Easter was just the beginning. It was the first day of the new creation that will be fully realized when this present evil age comes to an end. Our marriages participate in that new creation and point toward its fulfillment.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 31:31–34

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 31:31–34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Meditation

Marriage imagery is at the heart of the promise of a new covenant. Although God was their husband, Israel broke the covenant. It should have ended their relationship. But God is ever faithful. This new covenant will be different. It will be written on their hearts. God's law will be written on our hearts, it will be within us. All of us, from the least to the greatest, will know God. To "know" God calls to mind the tender, intimate knowledge of husband and wife. It is the language of marital love. It is clear that this is the relationship that God wants with us. On the night before he died, Jesus instituted the new covenant. He gave his body and blood to us. This is the new covenant between Christ and his bride the Church. Now filled with the Holy Spirit, all of us can know, in the most intimate way possible, Jesus and his Father. With that knowledge, he will be our help, our comfort, and our joy. He will fill us with wisdom, courage, and endurance to live out our vocations as husband and wife, father and mother.

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.*

Share one idea with your spouse.

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

Unity Prayer: *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



Jeremiah 33:6–11

Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 33:6–11

I am going to bring it recovery and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security. ⁷ I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. ⁸ I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. ⁹ And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them; they shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it. ¹⁰ Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, "It is a waste without human beings or animals," in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without inhabitants, human or animal, there shall once more be heard ¹¹ the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD: "Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD.

Meditation

As we conclude our time with the prophet Jeremiah, notice the action verbs in the first two verses. God is going to *bring* recovery and healing; he will *restore* fortunes, *rebuild* cities, *cleanse* them from guilt, and *forgive* their sins. He will *do* for the people he loves. The result will be a city of joy, praise, and glory for all the nations to see. Judah and Israel will be united once again, and all the nations will know how magnificent our God is. It will be a visible sign for the whole world. It will be like a great wedding feast. The air will be filled with the sounds of gladness and delight. The delighted, happy voices of the bride and the bridegroom will be heard all around. What a day of gratitude and thanksgiving to our God!

His steadfast love endures forever. Can you hear the voices? Voices of mirth, of gladness, of brides and grooms. Can you hear the promises of recovery and healing, of prosperity and security, of forgiveness of sins and freedom from guilt? It has begun. With the Holy Spirit you can hear and see it. With the Holy Spirit you can join your voices to that great chorus!

Quiet reflection: *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

Prayers and Intentions: *As if you were talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

Lord's Prayer: *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

Blessing: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Unity Prayer: God, make our hearts one. Amen.