

2 Trees

Jeremiah 17: 5-10

2 Questions

- What makes you, and me, who we are ?
- Who or what “defines” who we are ?

Possible answers

- Our “body”
 - Our “history”
 - Our “relations”
 - Our “commitments”
 - Our “mind”
 - Our “actions”
 - An “ongoing process of change”
- Klyne R. Snodgrass, *Who God Says You Are*; Eerdmans, 2018

What's obvious ...

- Everything around us is changing
- We are changing
- We need to change

- “Nothing is less obvious than WHAT needs to change and HOW that change happens.” – Timothy Lane & Paul Tripp, *How People Change*

What we want to know is ...

- “What must I do to change?”

God's response

- “Remember who you are ... then you will know what you must do”
- We easily forget who we really are
- And so we keep asking: what must I do to change?

Too many voices telling us ...

- Who we should be
- What we should look like, dress like, ...
- What we should act like, talk like, ...
- What we must do to be successful

- And ... most of us are buying it !

We are changing

- In which direction ?
- The direction God wants for His children ?

Questions

- What needs to change in my life ?
- How do I change ?

2 kinds of trees (Jeremiah 17: 5-8)

This is what the Lord says:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who draws strength from mere flesh
and whose heart turns away from the Lord.

That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;
they will not see prosperity when it comes.
They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.”

(Jeremiah 17: 5-6)

2 kinds of trees (Jeremiah 17: 5-8)

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,
whose confidence is in him.

They will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit.”

(Jeremiah 17: 7-8)

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Things to note from 2 trees

- LOCATION of our trust determines fruitfulness
- On what / who have I been trusting ?
- What /who has been defining who I am?
- Do I need to change the LOCATION of my trust ?
- Do I need to change the source of my identity ?

Things that contribute to our identity

- Our “body”
- Our “history”
- Our “relations”
- Our “commitments”
- Our “mind”
- Our “actions”
- An “ongoing process of change”

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Things to note from 2 trees

- LOCATION of our trust determines fruitfulness
- Change the LOCATION and problem solved ?

There's still a BIG problem

The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.

Who can understand it?

(Jeremiah 17: 9)

The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful,
a puzzle that no one can figure out.

(Jeremiah 17:9; MSG)

Why do we find v. 9 here?

- God intentionally placed this verse here !
- Historical context matters !

Jeremiah – the priest/prophet

The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. ² The word of the Lord came to [Jeremiah] in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, ³ and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

(Jeremiah 1:1-3)

Last 3 kings of Judah before the Exile

- Josiah (640 – 600 BC)
- Jehoiakim (609 – 598 BC)
- Zedekiah (597 – 586 BC)
- Events recorded in Jeremiah span ~ 40 years (626 – 585 BC)
- Jeremiah warned Judah to turn from their sin and obey God
- 586 BC – the fall of Jerusalem; exile of the Jews to Babylon

The book of Jeremiah - outline

- God calls Jeremiah to be His prophet (1:1-19)
- Jeremiah delivers God's messages (2:1 to 45:5)
 - God's warnings to Judah (2:1 – 29:32)
 - The Coming Exile and Restoration (30:1 – 33:26)
 - The Fall of Jerusalem (34:1 – 45:5)
- God judges the nations (46:1 – 51:64)
- A painful reminder of painful days (52: 1-34)

Context of Jeremiah 17: 5-10

God speaks near the end of chapter 16

“My eyes are on all their ways;
they are not hidden from me,
nor is their sin concealed from my eyes.
I will repay them double for their wickedness
and their sin, because they have defiled my
land with the lifeless forms of their vile images
and have filled my inheritance
with their detestable idols.” (Jer. 16: 17-18)

Jeremiah 17: 1-4

“Judah’s sin is engraved with an iron tool,
inscribed with a flint point,
on the tablets of their hearts
and on the horns of their altars.

2 Even their children remember
their altars and Asherah poles
beside the spreading trees
and on the high hills.

3 My mountain in the land
and your wealth and all your treasures
I will give away as plunder,
together with your high places,
because of sin throughout your country.

4 Through your own fault you will lose
the inheritance I gave you.
I will enslave you to your enemies
in a land you do not know,
for you have kindled my anger,
and it will burn forever.”

Jeremiah 17: 5-8

- 2 kinds of people – the cursed and the blessed

What was Judah's problem?

The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.

Who can understand it?
(Jeremiah 17: 9)

There is a way that appears to be right,
but in the end it leads to death.
(Proverbs 14: 12)

The many ways we deceive/justify ourselves

- Anger – heart for what is right
- Fear of people – sensitive heart towards the needs of others
- Gossip – prayerful concern for others
- Loving personal control – using my God-given leadership gifts
- Selfish attention-seeking – being candid about my needs

(from: *New Morning Mercies*, devotion for Oct. 31st by Paul David Tripp, Crossway, 2014)

God's solution to our BIG PROBLEM

“I the Lord search the heart
and examine the mind,
to reward each person according to their conduct,
according to what their deeds deserve.”

(Jeremiah 17: 10)

“I the Lord search the heart
and test the mind, [Hebrew: kidneys]
to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his deeds.” (ESV)

Almost everyone rejected
Jeremiah's message ... except one

“Lord, you are the hope of Israel;
all who forsake you will be put to shame.

Those who turn away from you
will be written in the dust
because they have forsaken the Lord,
the spring of living water.

14 Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed;
save me and I will be saved,
for you are the one I praise.”

(Jeremiah 17: 13-14)

Ready for some real change?

- Am I planted in the right location ?
- Am I willing to let God search my heart and put my complete trust in Him to change me?

“Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.”

(Psalm 139: 23-24)

“Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed;
save me and I will be saved,
for you are the one I praise.”

(Jeremiah 17: 14)

Ready for some real change?

- Am I planted in the right location ?
- Am I willing to let God search my heart and put my complete trust in Him to change me ?
- Am I willing to invite 2-3 godly friends to speak into my life (be totally honest and speak things I don't want to hear) ?
- As I begin to see my “real” self, I'll ask: How do I allow Jesus' perfect life, death, & resurrection to change me ?