

Yielding Fruit

Jeremiah 17:5-10

- We jump right into the prophecies of Jeremiah in today's passage
- In a section often labelled "The Sin of Judah," we find many potential applications for ourselves
- After describing their idolatry and providing warnings about the anger of the Lord
- There are a more general set of principles and statements that remind us of New Testament counterparts

- Words that could have encouraged those under persecution in the early church to trust God, rather than men
- Words that may lift the eyes of any new Christian to the Lord, who provides essential nutrients for long-term growth

- There is also a key warning about the heart of man found here
- And a reminder of our accountability to God in everything

- It has all the necessary ingredients for an enlightening period of study about "Yielding Fruit"
- Which is today's theme from Jeremiah 17:5-10

- Jeremiah is often referred to as "the weeping prophet"
- He was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah
- Beginning just before Judah fell to Bablyon and was led away into captivity

- He is a prophet that provides the modern reader with key thoughts about idolatry
- Man's responsibility to the One True God
- The human heart
- And God's judgement

- In today's text, we'll focus on the health and growth of those who trust God
- And review a critical insight that helps us understand who we are

- The whole passage first, then a verse-by-verse review...

Jeremiah 17:5-10

5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

- Jeremiah begins the way every good prophet or teacher should
- With "thus saith the Lord..."
- Which will likely be the primary concern of any listener
- Is this one man's opinion or God's truth?

- We're assured Jeremiah brings the truth
- And each phrase deserves a closer look...

Jeremiah 17:5

5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

- Men, created by God, are worthy of love
- Deserving of kindness
- And God gives every man, including His declared enemies, mercy

- But men are far from perfect
- Every man is faulty and prone to failure
- Very likely to let us down
- Or even to deceive us for their own gain

- And while we care for and minister to people
- We don't set people up as gods
- Or trust them in the way we would trust the Lord

- We certainly don't depend on human strength
- And turn from the Lord
- This kind of a person is cursed, it says here

- This is what will happen to those who trust men...

Jeremiah 17:6

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

- They will be like a bush in the desert, where no one lives
- Residing in a hot and dry place with bad soil
- A place uninhabited because it is parched and salty
- Nothing can grow and flourish there

- Trusting men means life in a land without blessing
- Relying upon men for our security
- Placing our confidence in men

- Means unfruitfulness
- The opposite can be said of those who trust the Lord...

Jeremiah 17:7

7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

- This is a very different commitment with a very different outcome
- We look beyond our equals, those who are fallible, to the Perfect One
- The One who is faithful, trustworthy, all-powerful, and full of grace
- If He has our confidence and becomes our hope
- We are blessed
- The place of our dwelling is vibrant
- And far from that dry and withered bush, we become something else entirely...

Jeremiah 17:8

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

- Trust in the Lord brings strength
- Like the strength of a tree that is well-watered and has deep roots
- This is not a tree in the desert
- It is a tree planted by the river
- With a constant and abundant supply of water
- No one is concerned for this tree when the heat comes
- Its leaves shall remain green
- Times of drought will not kill this tree
- Its health, provided by a supply of life-giving water, will keep it fruitful
- When the plants in the nearby fields wither
- The contrast couldn't be more plain
- Men who place their faith in God enjoy all the benefits and advantages
- And are prepared well against the day of adversity
- We transition from this picture to another as the text continues
- Jeremiah says this about our hearts...

Jeremiah 17:9

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

- The heart may convince us to turn from God
- It may deceive us into believing we can have confidence in self
- Or in some other person
- We may come to believe that we can escape the desert-places by our own strength
- By following the wicked desires within us
- None of this is true
- Our hearts lead us astray
- Left unchanged by Christ it will take us far from the safe and fertile riverside
- But God knows and understands this...

Jeremiah 17:10

10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

- We have a just judge
- He sees and knows everything
- The secrets inside lay open to Him
- And He has an unhindered view of our actions
- Those who trust men are judged accordingly
- And those who trust Him are given mercy
- The man-centered are barren of fruit
- But the God-centered are full of fruit
- Never because they produced it on their own
- Rather, because He supplied the living water needed to make it grow
- Today is best day to examine our hearts
- Has it deceived us into trusting self?
- Or have we rejected self and placed our confidence in God?

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2023