

**2-13-22**

**Sermon- Mere Humans**

**Scripture- Jeremiah 17:5-11, Psalm 1**

**Hymns- 563, 646, 536**

**Theme- Jeremiah asks "is there anything that can bring true healing to this wayward and ailing people?" There is, in fact, such a cure. We know it in the Christian tradition as the grace of God in Jesus Christ.**

### **I. Your Cheatin' Heart Will Tell On You**

My folks were big Hank Williams fans...no, not the son, but the Father, the original! Hank wrote a song called "Your Cheating Heart...it was one of his most successful, and I know that for some of you, all I had to do was mention the song and now it will be in your heads all day. GOOD!

If you remember, the first two lines go like this:

Your cheatin' heart will make you weep. You'll cry and cry and try to sleep.

But sleep won't come the whole night through. Your cheatin' heart will tell on you.

When Tears come down like fallin' rain, You'll toss around and call my name.

You'll walk the floor the way I do, your cheatin' heart will tell on you!

I thought of that song when I read what Jeremiah said in this passage.

**A. There are so many types of hearts out there that we might say are Cheating hearts:**

**1. First, The Evil Heart in Verse 5** The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

In **Matthew Chapter 3**, Jesus said that the Hearts of the religious leaders were (A Fountain Full of Evil) . 34You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of

the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. 35The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. What is in us wow

**2. Second, There is the Wayward Heart** King Rehoboam had a Wayward Heart- He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD.

**3. Third, There is the Foolish Heart or Blind Heart** PAUL describes the folks throughout history as having a foolish heart.

In **Romans 1:21** he observed "For although they knew God, they never glorified God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools."

**II. In this passage we see that Jeremiah believes everyone has a cheating heart.**

**A. He says, "the heart is devious above all else" "it is perverted who can understand it."**

He noted how evil the heart of the people of Judah was. Their hearts were kind of like the hearts of people in Genesis 6:5-6:

**5** The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. **6** The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.

John Knox a Scottish reformer in the 15th century who was founder of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland said this referring to original sin: "The image of God was utterly defaced in man, and he and his children became by nature hostile to God, slaves to Satan and servants to sin" (Scots Confession 3.03).

He definitely he believed in a cheating heart.

**B. We can see what happened to the hearts in Jeremiah's day:**

In verse 2, we see that the hearts of the people start worshipping foreign Gods. They are falling into all types immorality the ruler

does nothing but enjoy his self-indulgent pleasures within the palace.

Does that ring any bells for you when we think of the prevailing attitude in the world today?

**C. In reality there have always been some hearts who do Trust in mortal Man and some hearts trust in God.**

Consider the hearts that trust in mortal man in **verse 5**: they are like a desert plant that wilts and dies under the blazing sun. This is the picture of the one believer who trusts in man instead of the LORD; they are deemed **dry and unsustainable**.

Have you met people like that?

Now consider the hearts that trust in God in **verse 7**: these hearts are sunk deep in well-watered soil and because of that, they flourish.

The heart who trusts in the LORD will be like a tree planted by the waters, whose leaf will be green. Jeremiah drew on the images of Psalm 1 which we read as our call to worship, where the blessed man is the one who delights in God's word (**Psalm 1:1-3**).

Verse 6 reminds us that the person who trusts in human beings will end up like a shriveled bush, while verse 8 says that the person who trusts God will be like a tree that has its roots sunk deep beside a stream.

**Which one would you like to be?**

**III. How can we fix this heart condition? How do we heal the sin-sick soul or fix this cheating heart?**

**A. Jeremiah asks: "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Is there no doctor in the house?**

When Jeremiah asks, "Is there no balm in Gilead" he is inferring that it was like an ointment, and was good for all kinds of ailments. You could say it was the Vicks Vapor Rub of the day, or maybe Vaseline.

Jeremiah asks "is there anything that can bring true healing to this wayward and ailing people?"

**B. There is, in fact, such a cure.** We know it in the Christian tradition as the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, 28"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. The African slaves of the American South knew of this cure, perhaps better than we. Held captive and oppressed all their days, laboring under the lash of the overseer, they were allowed to sing some spiritual songs as they worked. One of them is the beloved hymn based on Jeremiah 8:22,

"There Is a Balm in Gilead", which was our first hymn today.

"Sometimes I feel discouraged, And think my work's in vain, But then the Holy Spirit Revives my soul again." And then there's this: "If you can't preach like Peter, If you can't pray like Paul, Just tell the love of Jesus, And say He died for all."

#### **IV. In conclusion, we must understand that we are asked to be a defender of the Faith**

One of my favorite verse in Scripture, **1 Peter 3:15** reminds us to **Always** be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...!

#### **A. Our faith lives should be always focused on ways we can achieve this for the kingdom:**

**1.** We could understand our hearts better by first knowing that by nature, the heart is deceitful. Maybe not right this minute but under just the right circumstances we know that it can lead us in the wrong direction, away from the things of God.

Indeed, the old adage which tells you to "follow your heart", can get you in a lot of trouble. I am sure if you just take a minute to think about it, you all will have your own personal examples...

**2.** We need to acknowledge the distractors to our true direction in Christ, such as self-satisfaction, complacency, and always be ready and willing to correct our course. **How many of us have trouble admitting our mistakes????**

**Mark Twain once said that he was never lost, but was "confused" once for three days!**

**3.** Finally, we must remember the healing balm in the life of Jesus, **He died, He was buried, He arose....FOR US!**

Jesus can heal the cheating heart because only He offers the Grace that forgives, Grace that **Nurtures** us, Grace that **empowers**, that gives us education, our job, our place, our dreams, our hopes. If you decide to accept all that, you will be like a tree planted by God near the living waters... everything you do will flourish. Amen? Let Us Pray...