

PREPARING AT HOME

March 12-18, 2018

Focus reading: Jeremiah 31:31–34 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=383294005>)

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 51:1–12, Hebrews 5:5–10, John 12:20–33

Theme: God's Love Is on Our Hearts

The prophet Jeremiah was called to warn God's people that they would be defeated in battle and taken into exile as a result of their unfaithfulness. Needless to say, the message and the messenger were not very popular! He advised the people to stop fighting their powerful rival Babylon. As a result, Jeremiah was seen as a traitor and narrowly escaped execution numerous times. As the people ignored Jeremiah's warnings, the "Weeping Prophet" had to not only endure persecution and physical suffering, but he had to face the emotional pain of seeing all that he had foretold come to pass. This week's reading comes after Jerusalem was destroyed and the people were taken into exile in Babylon. Jeremiah's prophesy had come true. The people had proven that, despite every warning, they were not capable of following God's laws and keeping the covenant. The surprising prophesy that Jeremiah now offers is that God will not only remain faithful but will make a new and better covenant by placing the covenant in the human heart rather than on stone tablets. The covenant will no longer be an external reality that can be ignored but rather an inseparable part of each person. That day is coming, promised Jeremiah, a prophet who once spoke of doom and judgment but now speaks of hope.

I KNOW THAT BY HEART

What do you know "by heart?" The Pledge of Allegiance? Particular songs? Your address? The months of the year? Even young children may be surprised by the number of things they know by heart! What do you know by heart about God and God's ways? What does your heart tell you? With older children, have a conversation about how can you listen to your heart when voices that are saying other things talk so loudly.

LENTEN VALENTINES

Gather colored construction paper, paints, markers, tissue paper, and whatever art supplies you have on hand. Make hearts, as you would for Valentine's Day. Print a message of God's love on the heart and give it to someone who could use that reminder.

FISH BANKS

Have you been using your One Great Hour of Sharing Fish Bank and calendar? Practice sharing during Lent as a way to listen to what God has written on our hearts!

PRAYER

Gracious God,
We give thanks that your love lives in our hearts
and can never be taken away from us.
Amen.

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