



Meditation for the Fifth Sunday in Lent March 21, 2021

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. [Jeremiah 31:33]

Jeremiah speaks to the Israelites at a time when they have lost all hope. All evidence indicates that God has abandoned them, that they are spiritually in exile just as they are physically in exile. They recognize that they themselves have been unfaithful to God, and Jeremiah is struggling to make sense of this: How can an unfaithful people expect forgiveness? If God has abandoned them *for cause* what hope do they have?

God responds by removing human faithfulness from the equation. Period.

We will begin again, he says to Jeremiah:

I will write my law in their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people.

Our unbreakable relationship with God is presented as an undeniable fact. Not to be questioned. As real as every physical phenomenon that we experience with our senses. God has transformed human nature so that we intuitively know how to be in relationship with him. Most intriguing perhaps, God promises that people will no longer have to ask each other about God or spend time learning *about* God. For in what amounts to a second creation, God has made it possible for us to *know* God:

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. [Jeremiah 31:34]

This is an extraordinary promise. We do not need to look to anyone else for an explanation of God's ways. We do not need to take anyone else's word that God is faithful, and compassionate and forgiving.

And surely there is no greater peace than this: To know that God's law is written in our hearts. To know that we can trust our own inner wisdom. We can allow God to transform us into something unimaginably different from the unfaithful and unruly that we have been. We will be able to see God's purpose for us with a clarity that we could not imagine.

This meditation by Steven Charleston echoes Jeremiah:

Wake up, sleepers in the shadows. Wake up to see bright banners on your horizon. Wake up to see your redemption coming to you, the answer to so many of your prayers, the fulfillment of your dream from long ago. Rise up, faithful friends, to shout the good news to the morning sun: justice has arrived at last, mercy has returned, love has won the day. Rise up, good people of many lands, for this is the moment of change, the time when hope starts to be real and truth begins to speak to every courageous heart. Wake up, rise up, and rejoice!

Ladder to the Light, pp.154-155