

“Like a Tree Planted by Water” (Jer 17:5-10)

Covenant Church
Pastor Zack Phillips
Sunday, February 17, 2019

Jer 17:5-10 (NRSV)

- 5 Thus says the LORD: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals
and make mere flesh their strength,
whose hearts turn away from the LORD.
- 6 They shall be like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see when relief comes.
They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.
- 7 Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.
- 8 They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.
It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.
- 9 The heart is devious above all else;
it is perverse—
who can understand it?
- 10 I the LORD test the mind
and search the heart,
to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings.

1. Introduction

“What is written in [the Scripture]? What do you read there?” (Luke 10:26)

2. First, about life, not happiness

a. Water (of life) as a critical and recurring scriptural image

Ezek. 47:1-5, 9, 12: Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side. Going on

eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed... Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes... On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

John 4:13-15: Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Rev 22:1-2, 17: Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations... The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let everyone who hears say, “Come.” And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

b. Reject apologetics of greater happiness?

John 6:60, 66-69: When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?”... Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

3. Second, what sort of “trust”?

a. Trusting God’s ways

- Jer 17:1-4: Proclamation of Judah's sin
 - Engraved on its "heart"
 - Practiced by the "green" "trees"
 - For which God will give away their "wealth"
- Jer 17:5-8: Relevant wisdom
 - Cursed are those whose "heart" "turns away from" the LORD
 - Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, like a "tree" with "green" leaves planted by "water" and bearing "fruit"
- Jer 17:9-10: More wisdom: the LORD's declaration
 - The "heart" (2x) is deceitful and "incurable" the LORD will search it and give to each according to their "fruits" of their actions
- Jer 17:11-18
 - The one who gets "wealth" unjustly will ultimately be a fool
 - The one who "turns away from" the LORD will be written in the dust because he has forsaken the stream of living "water"
 - "I" have not desired the "incurable" day

b. Trusting God's plans