

**RESTORE**  
**BROKEN CISTERNS**

Tuesday, May 5

Reading: Jeremiah 2:1-13

**Jeremiah 2:13** *"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."*

The greatest desire of people's lives is to be satisfied – to be fulfilled. An old proverb reminds us that there is a 'God-shaped vacuum' in our hearts that only He can fill. But often we try to fill it with something else. The prophet Jeremiah lived in the last days of the nation of Judah. Because they had turned away from God to idols they would soon be taken into exile in Babylon. In chapter 2 of Jeremiah's book, God laments that His people have replaced Him with "worthless idols." Jeremiah pictures this as an exchange of living water for broken cisterns. Instead of trusting in the reliable, ever-present Source of refreshment and renewal from God, they made their own 'solutions' that could never satisfy.

"The most reliable and refreshing sources of water in Israel were her natural springs. This water was dependable; and its clear, cool consistency was satisfying. In contrast, the most unreliable source of water was cisterns. Cisterns were large pits dug into the rock and covered with plaster. These pits were used to gather rainwater. This water was brackish; and if the rains were below normal, it could run out. Worse yet, if a cistern developed a crack it would not hold the water. To turn from a dependable, pure stream of running water to a broken, brackish cistern was idiotic. Yet that is what Judah did when she turned from God to idols."<sup>1</sup>

We do the same thing in our lives. We try to deal with our problems and hang ups in our own strength. We dig our own cisterns. God said that without Him our plans and solutions are broken. They won't work! They won't satisfy! In fact, most often our manmade solutions turn into idols. An idol is not just a stone statue you bow down to. An idol is anything that takes the place of God in your life. In his book Counterfeit Gods, Pastor Tim Keller describes the heart of sin as "making a good thing the ultimate thing."<sup>2</sup> Even good things can become bad if we look to them for help and satisfaction instead of looking to God. Knowing and pleasing God should always be the ultimate goal of our lives.

A 'broken cistern' may be a dependence on work, family and friends, or community involvement to get you through. These are all good things, but they can never fully satisfy or solve the hang ups in our lives. Many turn to alcohol, drugs, or sexual addictions to fill the void. You might turn to social media, video games, or TV/movies for an escape. But these things (and a host of others) can never meet our need. As the prophet Jeremiah would say, we "have exchanged [our] glorious God" for what can never solve our problem or bring us contentment. Only the Lord can do that!

What are some "broken cisterns" you have relied on in the past?

What 'broken cisterns' are you relying on right now?

What would it look like to focus on the "living water" God gives instead?

<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Dyer. "Jeremiah" (Bible Knowledge Commentary - OT), p 1121

<sup>2</sup> Vince Antonucci. Restore, p 26