

Advent 2016 - Waiting on the World to Change...
The Foundation of Hope, Peace, and Joy
Jer. 31:1-7; 33:1-16
December 18th, 2016

I. God who is BIG and BEYOND. (v.1-13)

- A. CLARIFYING our limited PERSPECTIVE. (v.1-3)**
- B. What God will DO - RENEWAL. (v.4-13; 31:3-6)**
- C. WHY God will DO it - LOVE. (v.11; 31:3; Lam 3:22)**

The section of Jeremiah from which we draw today's text is often called the Book of Comfort (Chaps. 30-33) Despite all the suffering and judgment that the Jewish people will have to go through, God has not forgotten them. It's always a good practice to begin by reflecting on who God really is. From there we can begin to understand the situation we find ourselves in.

1. If Jer. 33:2-3 is true, then why was Jer. 33:1 happening? Have you ever felt trapped and helpless?
2. What are the places that you think God wants you to be an agent of renewal in the coming week?
3. God's love endures forever. What does that mean? How does it relate to us and the problems we have and the mistakes that we make?

II. God who is WITH us to LEAD us. (v.14-16)

- A. From BIG to SMALL. (v.2,15)**
- B. From God BEYOND to God WITH us. (v.2-3,15)**
- C. A LOVE that TRANSFORMS. (v.10-12,15-16)**

Once we understand the immensity of God, and our own size in perspective, it makes the miracle of the incarnation even more amazing. They big and beyond God, because of love, becomes small and beside. A sprout, coming put of David's family tree. But this is no ordinary twig. This is the one who will change everything, in every way, forever.

4. Reflect for a few minutes on what God actually did by becoming a baby in a manger, born to poor Jewish parents. What does that say to you?
5. When have you felt closest to God in your life? Farthest away? Where was God during those times? Were your feelings representative of the truth?
6. When has someone's love for you (other than God) actually helped you to change?

III. The LOVE of God LEADS to... (v.11; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 15:13)

- A. HOPE for the FUTURE. (v.14-16; 31:1-6; Ps. 130:7; Rom 5:5)**

- B. PEACE deeper than the PRESENT. (v.4-11; Phil. 4:7)**
- C. JOY that RADIATES through it all. (31:7; Ps. 90:14)**
- D. A BIG God who became SMALL for US. (I Jn. 3:16)**

We save the candle of love until the 4th week of Advent, because love is what holds it all together. We started with that... "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed." And we end with it..." Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." (Ps. 90:14) It's why they say, "God is love."

- 7. What are some tangible, practical ways to live in Hope despite the difficulties of the present?
- 8. Who do you know that has lived out that "peace that surpasses all understanding"? What did that look like?
- 9. What exactly is joy? Is it different from happiness? Contentment? How do you know if you have joy?
- 10. God became one of us. How is He calling you to enter the world of those around you so that He can go with you there?