

SEPTEMBER 28TH 2025

'JEREMIAH THROUGH LUKE'S LOOKING GLASS'

I thought this week I'd like to look at Jeremiah through the lens Luke. Both passages touch upon issues of faith, the understanding of God's promises, and the implications of how we behave in relation to God's justice, love and mercy.

As we know Jeremiah was a prophet known as the 'weeping prophet' and he finds himself imprisoned in the court of the guard because of King Zedekiah's fear of his prophecies. The words Jeremiah speaks are significant, the Israelites are facing both imminent catastrophe as well as the promise of future restoration. God prompts Jeremiah to buy a field in Anathoth, despite the coming destruction from the Babylonian siege. This act symbolises faith in God's promises of future restoration and the belief that life would eventually return to Israel. Habakkuk says something similar. The purchase of the field tells us that all isn't lost because of hope. Hope reinforces the idea that God hasn't abandoned them, God will be with them when they need God the most. In today's world we also know that when we have hope then we can be firm in our belief that God hasn't abandoned us.

What we hear through Jeremiah is an emphasis on God's sovereignty and faithfulness despite circumstances that seem irredeemable. The prophet's investment in the land, buying a field for a price, speaks to the enduring nature of God's covenant with Israel emphasises the importance of faith especially when we're facing difficult and desperate times.

From Luke, we hear the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus from Jesus. This is a story which contrasts the lives of two men: one a very wealthy man who lacks nothing, and the other a very poor and sickly man who would be happy to eat the crumbs under the rich man's table named

Lazarus. That's how it was while the two men were alive. However, when both men had died their circumstances were reversed. Lazarus, comforted by Abraham, while the rich man suffers greatly in a place that Luke describes as the place of the dead. Through this parable Jesus is addressing issues such as social justice, the moral implications of our choices made during the course of our life, and as we know, each choice we make has a consequence.

The rich man's plea for mercy, seeking comfort from Lazarus, raises up questions about how much we are actually aware of our responsibility to the actions/decisions we make and the effect they have on other people. We often make decisions based on our wants or needs without enough consideration as to how it may change someone else's life circumstances. Abraham's response clearly shows what response God may choose to enact.

So where do both of these readings connect? It happens with the concepts of hope, justice, and God remaining faithful to the promise of life eternal in the kingdom of heaven in a restored relationship with God, amidst contrasting circumstances. In each instance the overarching narrative is about faith – Jeremiah's faith in God's promise of restoration, and the rich person's failure to acknowledge the moral responsibility he had in his mortal life towards those who sit on the margins, are seen as being different, and less fortunate than himself.

Jeremiah purchases a piece of land which seems like a fairly normal thing to do, however, considering the circumstances he was facing it's actually a purchase which reflects an enormous amount of trust in God's future restoration, whereas the rich man Luke talks about embodies a failure to see the value to invest in something beyond the immediate desire to simply satisfy an instantaneous sense of gratification because it gives him a sense of comfort and a raised place

in society. Each reading reveals the significance of actions and their consequences; Jeremiah's obedience buys hope for the future, which the rich person's neglectful dismissal of Lazarus' needs leads to his torment.

Jeremiah's faith is expressed in his actions; he purchases land from Hanamel one thought of the purchase is to keep it in the family due to Hanamel's old age. The land is bought during a siege, quite a precarious situation- he does this to say not only do I ask you, the people, to remain hopeful in God's promises, he's saying *I am so hopeful, I'm going to buy land*. This is a case of *I am doing* what I'm asking you to do. Luke contrasts this faith in action with the rich person's selfishness. His life as an exhibitionist fails to recognise our faithful obligation to help others. Each reading teaches that faith is about more than private belief – it's about how we live out our faith through the intentional loving and peaceful actions we make towards others.

What we can see through the wisdom of Jeremiah and Luke are themes of our transient existence verses eternal consequences that weave their way through both passages. Jeremiah's investment looks toward a future where all of God's people live in a restored relationship with our peace loving and caring Creator, which clearly demonstrates of our deep faith that gives us the internal strength to transcend any immediate struggle. Conversely, the rich person's indifference to Lazarus ultimately leads him to an eternity of suffering, symbolising that our choices we make during our lifetime have long-term consequences.

Jeremiah and Luke have given us powerful stories leading us towards a greater understanding of faith, responsibility, and the ongoing implications of our choices. Both draw our attention to God's justice and the importance of actions which reflect our faith and how much it means to us. While Jeremiah offers a tangible and real hope deeply

rooted in the promise of restoration, the parable of the rich person and Lazarus serves as a sobering reminder of the enduring consequences of neglecting that hope as witnesses of Christ's love as we interact with others.

Both Jeremiah and Luke challenge us to consider our faith and the legacy of our choices, urging us to continue to be active in our participation in the fabric of community and God's promise, relying on the assurance that God's sovereignty and faithfulness will endure and uphold us through each difficulty we face.

Amen