

## Sermon Seed

Text: Jeremiah 4:11-12; 23-28

Theme: The Earth Shall Mourn

Reflection by: Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey Guillaume



### I. THE CREATOR'S CALL FOR JUST PEACE

#### A. THE CREATOR SPEAKS (4:11-12)

1. The Creator speaks, calling upon all to listen
2. The Creator brings a new wind into the city, wakes all from their contentment

#### B. THE CREATOR SPEAKS ABOUT THOSE WHO LACK WISDOM (4:22)

1. Foolish actions, lack understanding; it is the opposite of wisdom
2. Arrogant minds, not observing the scriptures; failure to have a relationship with God
3. Doing evil, only possessing inventiveness of not doing good; no knowledge of wisdom

### II. THE CREATOR'S WARNINGS OF DE-CREATION (4:23-26)

#### A. DISMANTLING OF CREATION

The Earth shall mourn, it would become void and full of waste  
The Heavens shall be filled with darkness

#### B. THE DEATH OF CREATION

Land and sky would be without Creatures  
Fruitful land will be turned back into the wilderness

### III. THE CREATOR'S FINAL APPEAL FOR JUST PEACE (4:27-28)

#### A. CREATOR'S VOICE OF GRACE

1. There will not be complete destruction upon the land

#### B. A Call for Repentance

1. There will be forgiveness

## Narrative Context:

The purpose of the book of Jeremiah is to make a 'trumpet call' to a community, and to stir them up, by shocking them into an awareness of the danger of where their

destructive behavior is leading them. As it is written in Chapter 4:11-12; 23-28, the Creator speaks of the community losing their commitment of being in covenant with God, and as a result, the Earth shall mourn. Therefore, the purpose of this prophet's vision from the Creator is to bring a message of forgiveness to the beloved community. In doing so, the community can make a new covenant with the Creator since they failed miserably in living out the old covenant. Therefore, the community will be able to have new life, so they may live happily, peacefully, and justly together.

#### Conflicts at Play:

It is important to note the conflicts at play, which lead to the Earth's lament. There are several threats and promises from the Creator. There is a warning of the dismantling of creation, and leaving the city in ruins, and a call to awaken a slumbering population with an urgent message to follow the ways of justice and peace, or suffer undesirable consequences. The Creator is personified here, through Jeremiah's vision, calling people from their foolish ways and arrogance, their lack of relationship with God. The Creator speaks in the public square. Wisdom is not dwelling in some ivory tower. For every person who has ears to hear, every street corner is vocal with evidence that foolishness produces death, and the Creator yields life.

#### Way of Just Peace for the Creator:

In moral anger, the Creator uses bold imagery to awaken people from their slumber and unjust ways. Every incentive is appealed to, but in this passage there is the strong emphasis on the consequences that follow unwise living. The Creator speaks out in the street and never stops. As long as there is injustice, the Earth will mourn, and seek justice and peace for all of creation.

As we see that the Creator is using every effort to tell the truth about consequences. The Creator is urging people to realize the consequences that follow unwise living. The Creator is urging people to realize their wrong acts and to confess their sins. And in doing so, the Creator speaks of the suffering that is to come, and for all to listen to the call for justice and peace. It almost seems that there are no words of comfort or healing, and it appears that there is no hope for the sinner that allows the bitter fruit of injustice.

Perhaps, the Creator wants to awaken those in the public streets to the injustice that exists, and that they should join with the Creator in creating a community of justice and peace. As the Creator uses the notion that foolish people have to learn the hard way. They have to experience the painful results of not loving justice. There are many unpleasant consequences that come to those who choose foolish living, and many of these consequences cannot be changed. In other words, the Creator shares the truth about consequences by expressing that many of them are irrevocable. But even in those irrevocable consequences, whereby something terrible has happened and life has been forever altered, the Christian gospel even has a message in that hour. As

Jeremiah's divine vision speaks of their not being total destruction because the community will replace their old covenant with the Creator with a new covenant, through the coming of the Messiah. It does not picture the Creator being separated from the sinner who suffers. Instead, there is future rejoicing over the one who repents, even though there are consequences that cannot be altered.

As there is still hope for the persons who repent and change their ways. They hear the assurance of forgiveness. And by this forgiveness, they can better understand how God's justice and peace, fit together. In that, we do not always understand how our faith and actions can transform our world, but we can listen to the Creator's call, which calls upon us still.

Today, God continues to speak on the love we are to have for our all of our neighbors, and for Creation itself, by calling upon us work toward "Just Peace with the Earth" for a planet that urgently "groans in travail" (Romans 8:22). To counter our current path of *de-creation*, we are called to join with God in addressing the structures of injustice that brutally extract the Earth's resources too often to compensate the rich, polluting our planet with little regard for sustainability, indigenous populations, or future generations.

The UCC's [3 Great Loves](#) campaign is a helpful reminder of the intersectionality of love of creation and neighbor. This campaign calls us to show "Love of Neighbor, Love of Children and Love of Creation." Today, the Creator calls upon us to show love for children who are in the immigration detention system and for families who have been separated as a result of this system. The Creator calls us to demonstrate love for people who are living as refugees, far from their homelands and facing insecurity. The Creator calls us to build a more just and peaceful relationship with the Earth, God's "good" creation that today is threatened more than any time in history.

So, what will be our response to voice of the Creator for Just Peace? Will we accept the invitation to embrace the call of repentance, and obtain an opportunity to embrace God's grace that forgives and offers eternal peace? Or will the Earth continue to mourn?