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**Two Evils**  
**Series: The Weeping Prophet**  
**The Village Church at Shell Point**  
**Evening Service**  
**February 6, 2022**

- I. Text
  - A. **Jeremiah 2:12–13** (ESV) —
    - 1. 12 Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, 13 for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.
  - B. Importance of water to desert people
    - 1. Extraordinary delight to find a fresh spring of water
    - 2. Israel/Palestine and water
  - C. **Evil #1 – forsaken fountain of living waters** (God)
    - 1. Fountain supplies pure water by itself; requires no effort
    - 2. Dumb – “that’s just stupid”
  - D. **Evil #2 – hewed broken cisterns**
    - 1. Requires work – they have to do the digging
    - 2. Designed to catch rainwater, runoff
      - a. There isn’t much!
    - 3. Broken – doesn’t hold
    - 4. Stagnant, prone to disease, contamination
      - a. Cf swimming pools, without filtration
    - 5. Dumber
- II. Structure of Chapter 2 – **Divorce Court**
  - A. **The Parties**
    - 1. God is the husband; Judah is the wife
    - 2. God the plaintiff
  - B. **The Beginning – God recounts the good old days**; honeymoon
    - 1. **Jeremiah 2:1–2** (ESV) —
      - a. 1 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD, “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.”
    - 2. Ryken: God remembers what the honeymoon was like. He pages through the photos in his wedding album. As he looks back on the early days of his marriage, there is an ache in his heart. He can remember how his bride adored him when they were first married.
    - 3. Relationship – more than obedience to law
      - a. Covenant faithfulness



- c. 6 They did not say, ‘Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?’
  - d. 7 And I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.
  - e. 8 The priests did not say, ‘Where is the LORD?’ Those who handle the law did not know me; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.”
2. Judah left God – they walked out on Him
  3. **Jeremiah 2:17** (ESV) — 17 “Have you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the LORD your God, when he led you in the way?”
  4. “If God does not seem as close as he used to, who moved?”
  5. NIV – They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves (v 5)
    - a. Adultery – only explicit and legitimate cause for divorce
    - b. Spiritual adultery
  6. Adultery leads to emptiness
    - a. Worthless – same word for vanity in Ecclesiastes; vapor, mist; empty
  7. Left God for nothing
  8. Adultery manifested itself in indifference (v 6)
    - a. **Jeremiah 2:6** (ESV) — 6 “They did not say, ‘Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?’”
  9. Responsibility lies with leaders
    - a. **Jeremiah 2:26** (ESV) — 26 “As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed: they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets...”
    - b. Leaders with hands caught in cookie jar
    - c. **James 3:1** (ESV) — 1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.
- C. **Exhibit A – 2.10-12 – Nation changing its gods**
1. **Jeremiah 2:10–12** (ESV) —
    - a. 10 “For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see, or send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has been such a thing.
    - b. 11 Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.

- c. 12 Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD,”
  - 2. Less faithful than pagans
    - a. No pagan nation ever changed its dead gods; Judah has exchanged its living God for dead gods!
  - 3. Judah changed glory of God’s presence for empty nothingness
  - 4. **Jeremiah 2:28** (ESV) — 28 “But where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you, in your time of trouble; for as many as your cities are your gods, O Judah.”
  - 5. Confusion in worship
    - a. **Jeremiah 2:27** (ESV) — 27 “... who say to a tree, ‘You are my father,’ and to a stone, ‘You gave me birth.’ For they have turned their back to me, and not their face. But in the time of their trouble they say, ‘Arise and save us!’”
    - b. Tree, wood – feminine god; called father
    - c. Stone – masculine god; called the one who gave birth, mother
  - 6. **Jeremiah 2:12** (ESV) — 12 “Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD...”
    - a. How astonishing; even heavens would be appalled
- D. **Exhibit B – 2.14-18 – Propositioned neighbors** for political reasons
  - 1. **Jeremiah 2:14–18** (ESV) —
    - a. 14 “Is Israel a slave? Is he a homeborn servant? Why then has he become a prey?
    - b. 15 The lions have roared against him; they have roared loudly. They have made his land a waste; his cities are in ruins, without inhabitant.
    - c. 16 Moreover, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head.
    - d. 17 Have you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the LORD your God, when he led you in the way?
    - e. 18 And now what do you gain by going to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates?”
  - 2. Most obvious broken cistern – political alliances, with both Egypt and Assyria
    - a. Assyria was first to protect against Israel alliance (Isaiah)
    - b. Egypt next to protect against Babylon
    - c. Both resulted in enslavement
  - 3. Ryken: Politics is a broken cistern. When Christians trust in political solutions to save the nation, they bring judgment on themselves.
    - a. True of liberal or conservative solutions as substitute for gospel
- E. **Exhibit C – 2.20a – Broke the Easy Yoke of Yahweh**
  - 1. **Jeremiah 2:20** (ESV) — 20 “For long ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, ‘I will not serve.’...”
  - 2. Formerly had heavy yoke (Egypt); God broke that yoke to set them free

3. Set free to serve God whose yoke is easy
    - a. “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
  4. But they would not serve Yahweh, service which is a joy and delight, not a burden
  5. Breaking free from God is to be burdened with hard yoke of sin
    - a. **Romans 6:16** (ESV) — 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?
- F. **Exhibit D – 2.20b – Became a Common Harlot** waiting for action
1. **Jeremiah 2:20** (ESV) — 20 “... Yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore.”
  2. Kidner: ... a restless wife to whom the bonds and burdens of true love were slavery, and the lure of the forbidden irresistible.
  3. Reference to Baal worship
    - a. Ryken: Shacking up with gods they hardly knew.
  4. Involved ritual prostitution
    - a. Practiced on hilltop shrines beneath large spreading trees
    - b. Andrew Comiskey: In effect, idealized, eroticized images of the creature were being worshiped, and worship degenerated into nothing more than orgies. The collision of body parts between faceless, nameless people marked the depths of Israel’s idolatry.
  5. Good at it!
    - a. **Jeremiah 2:33** (ESV) — 33 “How well you direct your course to seek love! So that even to wicked women you have taught your ways.”
    - b. Ryken: The Jews knew enough about worshiping idols to give lessons to the most experienced pagans.
    - c. Ryken: This was scandalous, as it always is when religious people turn away from the Lord. A regular churchgoer who does not worship God from the heart is more wicked than an unbeliever who has never heard the gospel.
- G. **Exhibit E – 2.21 – Wild Vine**
1. **Jeremiah 2:21** (ESV) — 21 “Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?”
  2. God planted a vineyard
    - a. All the right seeds
    - b. All the right care
    - c. Every right to expect choice grapes, good wine
  3. **Isaiah 5:1–7** (ESV) —
    - a. 1 Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
    - b. 2 He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a

wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

- c. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.
- d. 4 What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?
- e. 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
- f. 6 I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.
- g. 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

4. Vine turned on God

- a. Animals turning on their masters – understandable
  - (1) Plants turning on the gardener – like something out of horror movie

5. Spiritual kudzu

- a. Introduced from Japan in 1876
  - (1) Forage crop, ornamental plant
- b. 1930's – farmers encouraged to use it to prevent soil erosion by Soil Conservation Service
- c. Lot's of planting by Civilian Conservation Corps
- d. Since – invading southeastern US at rate of 150,000 acres a year
  - (1) In spite of physical and chemical efforts to stop it
- e. Once thought to be a beautiful, useful plant – became a devastating, invasive plant that is out of control

H. **Exhibit F – 2.22 – Indelible Stain**

- 1. **Jeremiah 2:22** (ESV) — 22 “Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord GOD.”
- 2. Evidence left behind
  - a. Perpetrators of awful crime
  - b. Tried their best to cover tracks
  - c. Cleaned up the evidence
  - d. Called Servpro – “Like it never even happened”
- 3. God's CSI could still find the evidence
  - a. Stain was indelible
- 4. Ryken: Sin is not simply a cosmetic problem. Even after the detergent, the exotic cleansers, the turpentine, and the tomato juice, the stain of sin remains. What soap can wash away sin from the soul? There is no home

remedy to take away guilt. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can purify us from all sin.

I. **Exhibit G – 2.23b-25 – Wild Animal, Out of Control**

1. **Jeremiah 2:23–25** (ESV) —
  - a. 23 “... Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done— a restless young camel running here and there, 24 a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind! Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her.
  - b. 25 Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst. But you said, ‘It is hopeless, for I have loved foreigners, and after them I will go.’”
2. Two animals in view
  - a. Young Camel
  - b. Donkey
3. Young camel
  - a. Swift, young camel entangling her ways
  - b. Look ungainly, awkward
    - (1) Camel – horse designed by a committee
  - c. Young and loose, they run around, out of control
    - (1) Almost comic sight
  - d. Bailey and Holladay: Literally, this camel is criss-crossing her tracks. The young camel is the perfect illustration for all that is “skittery” and unreliable. It is ungainly in the extreme and runs off in any direction at the slightest provocation, much to the fury of the camel-driver. To sit in a village courtyard and watch such a young camel go scooting through, with some alarmed peasant dashing madly after it, is an unforgettable experience; such a young camel never takes more than about three steps in any direction. To this day the young camel provides a dramatic illustration for anything unreliable. Thus “interlacing her paths” is an accurate description of a young camel – it provides Jeremiah a perfect illustration for the fickleness of Israel.
4. Way in the valley – Valley of Ben Hinnom
  - a. Place where children were sacrificed to Molech
  - b. Blood on Israel’s hands
    - (1) As there is on ours with abortion
    - (2) Only difference is we get to our children earlier in a more sanitized setting
5. Donkeys – in heat
  - a. Sin as the uncontrolled sexual urges
  - b. Bailey and Holladay: The habits of the female in heat are dramatic and vulgar. She sniffs the path in front of her, trying to pick up her scent of a male (from his urine). When she finds it, she rubs her nose in the dust and then straightens her neck, and with head high,

closes her nostrils and “sniffs the wind.” What she is really doing is *sniffing* the dust which is soaked with the urine of a male. With her neck stretched to the utmost, she slowly draws in a long, deep breath, then lets out an earthshaking bray and doubles her pace, racing down the road in search of the male.

- c. **Jeremiah 2:24** (ESV) — 24 “... None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her.”
- d. Idols don’t have to chase Judah; Judah chases them
- e. Addictive sin
- f. **Jeremiah 2:25** (ESV) — 25 “... But you said, ‘It is hopeless, for I have loved foreigners, and after them I will go.’”
  - (1) Useless to try and stop; Judah will have her sin
  - (2) Can’t help herself
  - (3) As is the case with any kind of addictive sin
    - (a) Drugs
    - (b) Gambling
    - (c) Sex
  - (4) Any kind of idolatry has addictive qualities

## V. **Judah’s Defense**

### A. **Protests innocence**

- 1. **Jeremiah 2:23** (ESV) — 23 “How can you say, ‘I am not unclean, I have not gone after the Baals’? ...”
- 2. **Jeremiah 2:25** (ESV) — 25 “Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst. But you said, ‘It is hopeless, for I have loved foreigners, and after them I will go.’”
  - a. Under cross examination, she admits she loves foreigners
- 3. **Jeremiah 2:35** (ESV) — 35 “you say, ‘I am innocent; surely his anger has turned from me.’ Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, ‘I have not sinned.’”
  - a. She presumes upon God; pretends He won’t be angry
  - b. Such claims will be the basis or judgment

### B. **Denial**

- 1. **Jeremiah 2:27** (ESV) — 27 “... But in the time of their trouble they say, ‘Arise and save us!’”
  - a. As if nothing is wrong!

### C. **Blame**

- 1. **Jeremiah 2:29** (ESV) — 29 “Why do you contend with me? You have all transgressed against me, declares the LORD.”
  - a. They actually have that chutzpah to blame God!

### D. Those are the broken cisterns

- 1. No defense is sufficient
- 2. The wife is guilty of spiritual adultery of the worst kind
  - a. The divorce is a slam dunk
- 3. This is not a no-fault divorce state
  - a. God is not a no-fault divorce God



VI. **Application**

- A. What about the church?
  - 1. Has the church...
    - a. ... forsaken the fountain of living waters?
    - b. ... hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns...?
  - 2. Have we forgotten God and tried to replace Him with all kinds of other fine-sounding substitutes?
  - 3. Do we even know what the gospel is any more?
- B. Ortlund: What might our evangelicalism, without the evangel, look like? We would have to replace the centrality of the gospel with something else, naturally. So what might take the place of the gospel in our sermons and books and ... tapes and Sunday school classes and home Bible studies, and above all, in our hearts?
  - 1. ... a drive toward church growth...
  - 2. ... sympathetic, empathetic, thickly-honeyed cultivation of interpersonal relationships...
  - 3. ... a determination to take America back to its Christian roots through political power
- C. What about us personally?
  - 1. Do we love God like a newlywed?
  - 2. Or have we grown cold, indifferent
    - a. Grown fond of fooling around with all the substitutes
  - 3. Have we become spiritual adulterers, sleeping around with the idols of our age?

VII. **The Case Revisited**

- A. It's over, isn't it?
  - 1. The divorce
  - 2. Evidence is overwhelming
  - 3. Defense is pathetic
  - 4. Verdict is clear – Guilty as charged!
  - 5. God, the faithful husband, the perfect husband, will set her aside, never give her another thought
    - a. He has every right to
- B. **Jeremiah 3:14–15** (ESV) — 14 “Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15 “ ‘And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”
  - 1. “I am your master” – NIV has “husband”
  - 2. After all that – God still loves her!
    - a. He still considers Himself to be her husband!
  - 3. Ryken: It is a breathtaking command. It is God's grace for the ungracious, his faithfulness to the unfaithful. Even when God's love goes unrequited, he does not cease to love. Although his marriage is violated, he does not break covenant.

VIII. **Application Revisited**

- A. Believer

1. Do you love God the way you did at first?
    - a. If not, don't play the denial, blame games
  2. Know that your Divine husband wants you back
  3. **Jeremiah 31:3-4** (ESV) —
    - a. 3 the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
    - b. 4 Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.
    - c. Message to Israel
    - d. Message to all believers who are wayward
- B. Not a believer yet
1. God commands you to turn away from your idols, cast yourself on His mercy
    - a. Turn away from the broken cisterns you have built for yourselves
    - b. Turn to the fountain of living waters
  2. Jesus is that fountain
    - a. **John 4:14** (ESV) — 14 “but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
- C. Whoever you are, don't forsake the fountain