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Images of Shame

Series: The Weeping Prophet

The Village Church at Shell Point

Evening Service

June 26, 2022

I. Introduction

- A. How do we feel about something when it goes bad?
 - 1. Ex: Child breaking vase
 - a. Glass vase that came with the \$12 flower arrangement from Publix
 - b. 6th Century Antique Mayan figurine
 - 2. Ex: Soup stuck in back of refrigerator
 - a. Leftover from Campbell's soup
 - b. Exotic Lamb Stew, roasted with leeks, onions, garlic; integrated into a delicious soup based with lentils, exotic spices; took all day to make
 - 3. Ex: Car accident
 - a. Accident in 1983: 1967 Chev Malibu totaled from the rear by drunk driver
 - b. 2010 BMW similarly totaled
- B. **The Principle** – the better something is to begin with, the worse it is when it gets corrupted
 - 1. Similar principle: magnitude of sin is proportional to the value of the object affected
 - a. Sin against God is no peccadillo
 - b. God is eternal, holy, altogether lovely
 - c. Sin against God carries the worst possible consequences – eternal destruction – because sin is against the most valuable Being in all the universe
 - 2. Speaking of elements of the created world – the better something is, the worse it is when it gets corrupted or destroyed
 - a. Something really valuable is corrupted – awful shame
- C. Shakespeare (Sonnet 94): For fairest things grow foulest by foul deeds; lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.
- D. **Aristotle: *Corruptio optimi pessima*** – the better the thing the worse the abuse; corruption in the best is the worst corruption; corruption of the best becomes the worst
- E. Jeremiah 13 – five images of awful shame
 - 1. Shameful – those which are meant to be the best, turn out to be the worst, because of sin

II. **Linen Belt**

- A. **Jeremiah 13:1–11** (ESV) —
1. 1 Thus says the LORD to me, “Go and buy a linen loincloth and put it around your waist, and do not dip it in water.”
 2. 2 So I bought a loincloth according to the word of the LORD, and put it around my waist.
 3. 3 And the word of the LORD came to me a second time, 4 “Take the loincloth that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a cleft of the rock.”
 4. 5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.
 5. 6 And after many days the LORD said to me, “Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the loincloth that I commanded you to hide there.”
 6. 7 Then I went to the Euphrates, and dug, and I took the loincloth from the place where I had hidden it. And behold, the loincloth was spoiled; it was good for nothing.
 7. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9 “Thus says the LORD: Even so will I spoil the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.
 8. 10 This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing.
 9. 11 For as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the LORD, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen.
- B. Jeremiah is told to take a linen waistband; probably linen that was an undergarment, worn close to the skin (cf 11; “so I made the whole house of Israel cling to me...”)
1. Go to Euphrates – near Babylon; bury it in rock
 2. Wait for a while
 3. Go dig it up
 4. Ruined
- C. Losing my underwear in an old dryer
- D. Best would become the worst
1. 13.11 – Israel and Judah – people for renown, praise, glory
 2. Meant to be as close to God as possible
 - a. They would cling to God, God to them
 - b. Glorious image of the kind of relationship God desired for His people
 3. They didn’t listen – bowed down to other gods, served other gods
 4. They became worthless
- E. Ryken: ... The linen belt was meant to be a beautiful picture of God’s relationship with his people. God wants us to be bright and clean. He wants to wrap us around his waist like an embrace.
- F. Westminster Shorter Catechism
1. What is the chief end of man?
 - a. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

2. Glorify God – shine in such a way as to show God to be as beautiful and radiant as possible to a watching world
 3. If we don't do that, the one thing we were designed to do will not be accomplished
 - a. Our lives will be worthless
- G. Ryken (re: Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 1): The chief purpose and ultimate goal of human beings is to be wrapped around God's waist like a fashion accessory. When we are at our very best, we adorn God with glory.
- H. Ryken: If your whole life is devoted to the service of Jesus Christ, you are like a linen belt around God's waist. You look great! But if you are trusting in money, ability, family, government, or anything besides God, then what you are doing is useless. If your life is not dedicated to bringing honor and renown to God, then it is worth about as much as a belt buried in a pile of dirt. You are worthless when it comes to your primary purpose – giving glory to God. You were made to be the brightest ornament in all creation, but the corruption of the best becomes the worst.

III. Wine Jug

- A. **Jeremiah 13:12–15** (ESV) —
1. 12 “You shall speak to them this word: ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, “Every jar shall be filled with wine.” ’ And they will say to you, ‘Do we not indeed know that every jar will be filled with wine?’
 2. 13 Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land: the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
 3. 14 And I will dash them one against another, fathers and sons together, declares the LORD. I will not pity or spare or have compassion, that I should not destroy them.’”
 4. 15 Hear and give ear; be not proud, for the LORD has spoken.
- B. This is a riddle that Jeremiah uses to “rope a dope”
1. Wine is a bit of a riddle in the Christian world
- C. Background
1. Evangelicals have a dim view of wine
 - a. Problems with alcohol; destructive of families with alcoholics
 - b. Alcohol is an escape from problems, stress
 - c. Overconsumption is a serious issue
 2. Others don't have quite the same view
 - a. Wine v. really good wine
 - b. Connoisseurs of wine appreciate the wonderful and subtle distinctive tastes of various wines
 - (1) Tell the difference between ordinary wine and the really good wine
 - c. Nothing could be better than to enjoy a really good glass of wine among good friends

- d. European culture – values wine
 - (1) Served at every meal
 - (2) Don't have nearly the alcoholism that we have in the US
- 3. Biblical view is closer to the 2nd
 - a. Psalm 104:13–15 (ESV) — 13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. 14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.
 - b. Psalm 4:7 (ESV) — 7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.
 - c. Jesus and water into wine at Cana
 - (1) Best wine v. ordinary wine
 - (2) Jesus' wine was the best!
 - d. Danger – intoxication
 - (1) Except for Nazirite vows, Bible allows wine to be consumed (water was not as healthy and reliable!)
 - (2) Bible sees intoxication as serious sin
 - e. Proverbs 20:1 (ESV) — 1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.
 - f. Proverbs 23:20–21 (ESV) — 20 Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, 21 for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.
 - g. With proper restraint, wine is good; without proper restraint, wine is very, very bad
 - (1) The corruption of the good becomes the worst

D. Passage

- 1. Jeremiah – Every jug is to be filled with wine!
 - a. People – Here! Here!
- 2. People miss Jeremiah's point
 - a. Jugs that he's speaking of will be filled to the point of intoxication
 - b. Jugs are not the actual wine jugs; they are the people of Judah!
- 3. Calvin: They indeed all knew that bottles were made for wine; but they did not understand that they were the bottles.
- 4. People – apple of God's eye; His special children
 - a. Sins have made the good wine into awful wine
 - (1) v 15 – pride seems to be added to the mix
 - (2) 15 Hear and give ear; be not proud, for the LORD has spoken.
 - b. Supposed to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, filled with intimacy, filled with the love of God
- 5. God will pour into them the wine of His wrath
- 6. Ryken: If his people will not wrap their praise around him, he will pour the wine of his wrath into them.... Jerusalem will be turned into one big

fraternity party. Kings, priests, and prophets will roll out the barrel together. Fathers and sons will drink together and then smash into one another in drunken demolition.

- a. These people won't even be able to walk home without crashing into one another
 - b. Career at WVU – for several years was rated by The Princeton Review as the number one party school
 - c. Worst – after a big football game won, one particular section of town became a drunken orgy
7. Everybody's affected; no one left out
- a. Kings
 - b. Priests
 - c. Prophets
 - d. All the inhabitants of Jerusalem
8. King throws a party, and everyone crashes it
- a. King doesn't care
 - b. The more the merrier
9. The outcome is destructive
- a. Literally, self-destructive
- E. Jeremiah sucks them into his riddle with his statement about wine
1. Then turns the table; shows that they are the jugs
 - a. They'll be filled with the worst of wine
 2. Once again, the corruption of the best becomes the worst

IV. **The Dark Mountain**

- A. **Jeremiah 13:16–17** (ESV) —
1. 16 Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for light he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness.
 2. 17 But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock has been taken captive.
- B. Remember WV Mountains in the fall
1. Glorious every time of day
 - a. Sunrise
 - b. Mid day, low humidity, bright sun
 - c. Sunset
- C. Drive in the mountains
1. First time we took Matt's wife Crystal to Dolly Sods; just dating, before they were married
 - a. Hoping for enough sun to make the mountains sparkle
 - b. Dreary, rainy, foggy; could see nothing
 2. Imagine a trip to the WV mountains during the fall of the year
 - a. Reports are for full sunshine; leaves at their peak
 - b. Travel along path toward an overlook

- c. Middle of the trip, darkness descends
 - d. Out there, there is no ambient light; not close to any civilization
 - e. More than dreary fog – palpable darkness
 - f. Darkness where you can't see the hand in front of your face
 - g. Grope about, without reference points, stumbling as you try to make your way along the path back to your car
 - h. But you can't tell direction; lost
 - i. Just as likely to fall over the precipice as you are to find your way back along the path
3. Milton (*Samson Agonistes*): O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse Without all hope of day.
- D. Pride at center of the sin is what causes this darkness
- 1. Jeremiah's version of pride goeth before a fall
- E. Mountains are meant to be beautiful
- 1. The best becomes the worst
 - 2. Mountains in their glory are an extraordinary pleasure to behold and experience
 - 3. Mountains in darkness are frightful places, filled with danger
 - a. Disasters waiting to happen
- F. *Corruptio optimi pessima*
- 1. The better the thing, the worse the abuse (Aristotle)

V. **The Royal Family**

- A. **Jeremiah 13:18–21** (ESV) —
- 1. 18 Say to the king and the queen mother: “Take a lowly seat, for your beautiful crown has come down from your head.”
 - 2. 19 The cities of the Negeb are shut up, with none to open them; all Judah is taken into exile, wholly taken into exile.
 - 3. 20 “Lift up your eyes and see those who come from the north. Where is the flock that was given you, your beautiful flock?”
 - 4. 21 What will you say when they set as head over you those whom you yourself have taught to be friends to you? Will not pangs take hold of you like those of a woman in labor?
- B. Historical context
- 1. Jehoiachin was taken into captivity in 597; mother Nehushta was taken with him
 - 2. Lost their beautiful crowns
- C. Ironies
- 1. From highest seat to lowest
 - a. Throne to bench
 - b. Penthouse to outhouse
 - c. One throne to a very different kind of throne
 - 2. Kings need subjects to be kings
 - a. “Where is the flock that was given you, your beautiful flock?” (Jeremiah 13.20b)

- b. No subjects
 - c. King in name only
 - 3. Companions become their rulers
 - a. “What will you say when they set as head over you those whom you yourself have taught to be friends to you?” (Jeremiah 13.21a)
- D. How complete and total is the kingdom being wrested from them?
 - 1. Jeremiah 13:19 (ESV) —
 - a. 19 The cities of the Negev are shut up, with none to open them; all Judah is taken into exile, wholly taken into exile.
 - 2. When cities of the Negev are taken, the conquest is complete
 - a. Most conquerors would stop at the Negev and wouldn’t bother
 - (1) Just a desert
 - 3. All of Judah is in exile
- E. Royal family
 - 1. King of Israel was meant to be the best of the best
 - a. Object of greatest honor in Israel and Judah aside from God
 - 2. Now we find the Royal family without a land, people, crown
 - a. How miserable!
 - b. How far fallen!
 - 3. Corruption of the best has become the worst
 - a. *Corruptio optima pessima*
 - b. The better the thing, the worse the abuse (Aristotle)
- F. Ryken: It is hard to read these verses without thinking of the near-collapse of the English Royal Family during the 1990's. In her annual speech on Christmas Day 1994, Queen Elizabeth told the British people that she had had a bad year. It was an *annus horribilis*, she said, a horrible year. If she had really wanted to show off her Latin, she could have quoted Aristotle: *Corruptio optimi pessima*. When a royal wedding is followed by adultery, deception, divorce, and death, the best has become the worst.
 - 1. There is still an England today
 - a. There would be no Judah, no Jerusalem for nearly two generations after this kingdom fell
 - b. Whatever the glories of the British empire, Israel was meant to be the crown jewel of all the kingdoms that ever existed
 - c. She would be completely overwhelmed

VI. The Maiden

- A. Jeremiah 13:22 (ESV) —
 - 1. 22 And if you say in your heart, ‘Why have these things come upon me?’ it is for the greatness of your iniquity that your skirts are lifted up and you suffer violence.
- B. Jeremiah 13:25–27 (ESV) —
 - 1. 25 This is your lot, the portion I have measured out to you, declares the LORD, because you have forgotten me and trusted in lies.
 - 2. 26 I myself will lift up your skirts over your face, and your shame will be

- seen.
3. 27 I have seen your abominations, your adulteries and neighings, your lewd whorings, on the hills in the field. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?"
- C. Beautiful virgin bride of Yahweh
1. Turns into a common whore, prostitute
 2. Might look good on the outside, God will lift up her skirts to reveal the attire of her trade – spiritual prostitution
 3. Never good for the prostitute
 - a. Joke about it being the oldest profession
 - b. Perhaps the most abused people in the world
 - c. Taken advantage of; susceptible to gross violence
 - d. When the violence happens, no one cares
 - (1) Just a prostitute
 4. The corruption of the best has become the worst
- D. Shame will be seen by all
1. No longer hidden
 - a. Sometimes hear reports of respectable housewives actually moonlighting as prostitutes
 - (1) No more
 - (2) Everyone will know
- E. What a striking difference in image
1. Bride v. prostitute
 - a. Epitome of beauty
 - b. Epitome of hardness underneath cosmetic attempts to hide life of abuse, pain
 2. *Corruptio optima pessima*
 - a. The better the thing, the worse the abuse (Aristotle)

VII. Redemption

- A. **Jeremiah 13:27** (ESV) —
1. 27 I have seen your abominations, your adulteries and neighings, your lewd whorings, on the hills in the field. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?"
- B. How long will you remain unclean?
1. Clue – v 23
 2. **Jeremiah 13:23** (ESV) — 23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.
 3. These people don't have it in them to do good
 - a. No more than changing skin color or spots
 4. How long?
 - a. Never, as long as you think you can clean up yourself
 5. How long?
 - a. Until Jesus Christ cleanses you

6. Transfer these images into a **New Testament alternative**
 - a. Filthy linen
 - b. Bad wine
 - c. Utter darkness on the mountains
 - d. Kingdom loss
 - e. Prostitute
- C. **Clean linen**
1. **Isaiah 64:6** (ESV) — 6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
 2. **Revelation 19:8** (ESV) — 8 “it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
- D. **Bad Wine v. Cup of the New Covenant** – Lk 22.20
1. **Luke 22:20** (ESV) — 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”
 2. This new wine is the best
 - a. Wine of God’s wrath has already been consumed
 - (1) Not by us, but by Christ!
 3. Now we get to drink of the best wine; New Covenant wine
- E. **Utter Darkness v. Light of the World** – Jn 8.12; 1 Jn 2.8
1. Darkness as metaphor for people living in sin
 - a. **John 3:19** (ESV) — 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
 - b. **Luke 11:34** (ESV) — 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness.
 2. Jesus comes as the Light of the world!
 - a. **John 8:12** (ESV) — 12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
 - b. **1 John 2:8** (ESV) — 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.
- F. **Kingdom Loss v. Crowns of glory** – 2 Tim 4.8; 1 Cor 9.25; 1 Pet 5.4; Jam 1.12, Rev 2.10; Rev 4.4
1. Lost dominion, now found in Christ
 2. **2 Timothy 4:8** (ESV) — 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
 3. **1 Peter 5:4** (ESV) — 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
 4. **James 1:12** (ESV) — 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which

God has promised to those who love him.

5. **Revelation 2:10** (ESV) — 10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
 6. What restored royalty!
 - a. Not for a king of Israel
 - b. But for us!
- G. **Prostitute v. Virgin bride** – Rev 21.2
1. We who were all prostitutes have been redeemed to a new virginity
 - a. Beautiful bride of Christ
 2. **Revelation 21:2** (ESV) — 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- H. How the tables have turned!
1. *Corruptio optima pessima* – the corruption of the best has become the worst
 2. Now, the **Redemption of the worst has become the best!**
 3. Praise God from whom all blessings flow
 - a. Praise Jesus for his marvelous work of redemption
 - b. Praise the Spirit for working in us that very redemption