

PILGRIM HOME CHURCH

The smaller groups in our church community are inside our homes where we go deeper, build friendships, and walk out the Christian life with each other.

HOME CHURCH GUIDE

- + “Breaking the Ice” question (group facilitator)
- + **CHECK-INS:** Introduce, check-in
- + **CARE:** Needs in the group
- + **COMPASSION:** What is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbours to join in?
- + **GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS** Church-wide, group-only
- + **DIG IN:** Discuss questions as a group
- + **END AND HOMEWORK:** Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

+ Tell of a time you visited someone else’s work, job or watched an artist at work. What did you learn? How did it feel to observe another’s workplace or artist? If someone watched what you did for a day what might they learn about the work, you or themselves?

+ Read the Text Jeremiah 18:1-12. What jumps out at you in the story? Why?

+ God nudges Jeremiah to go someplace out of his normal routine with intention (awake awareness) to hear a message from God. What do you think of this? If God still speaks this way what might it say about art and work?

+ Verses 5-6 speak of Israel being like clay. In the New Testament, the Church (local/and all churches together) is called God’s holy nation. It is not known first by boundaries, earthly cultures of nations, bombs, ballots, etc. but Jesus as head/ruler of it. What might it mean for the Church on earth to see itself as clay in Jesus’ hand? What about nations today?

+ 7 Back to the time and pre-Christ situation at hand, God talks about his concern for justice and bringing judgment against nations. In the New Testament, this is said to occur at the end of all time as we know it. How do you think national leaders would lead if they believed God was taking account?

+ “But/if” is the key phrase here. How do verses 8-10 challenge some understanding of God with all of these conditional phrases? What does this mean for our church and your life?

+ 12 Judah acts fatalistically. You can almost hear him say, “Nothing we do matters, so let’s keep on our same path, God is in control.” God is telling them something else. Are we this stubborn in our life choices?

PRAYER REQUESTS:

March 17, 2019

PILGRIM  CHURCH

JEREMIAH SERIES

THE POTTER’S HOUSE

Jeremiah 18:1-12

“If” is a word of challenge and possibility. It’s a hinge word, a condition changing word. This word is matched with the image of an artist making a pot. “If” comes to remind us that art takes on its own life even when in the hand of the artist.

Do you see your life as living art? How does that change how we live?

OUTLINE (Varughese):

- + 1-4 Narrative w/ symbolic act observed by Jeremiah
- + 6-10: Oracle from YHWH to Jeremiah
- + 11: Messenger-style speech to the people of Judah and Jerusalem
- + 12: Response of people to message

IN THE TEXT

Verses 1-2

+ The word used for potter refers to someone who gives shape or forms an object using material such as metal, wood or clay. “Potter” is appropriate because the person is shaping a vessel from clay.

+ While the text speaks to a group, it might be curious to note this language earlier about call, there was a forming/shaping work of God in Jeremiah's life. In what sense do you believe God is trying to shape you and us as a people at Pilgrim? How about the church in Canada?

Verses 3-4:

+ Jeremiah obeyed the command. Potter at the wheel, observed the art for a practical purpose. He observed the potter "rework" the clay into another vessel

+ Practical art and craft as a means of communication from the Lord.

Verses 5-6:

+ The message is given that Israel (not individuals - but the nation) was clay that thwarted God's original plan...

+ This is not as simple as meticulous sovereignty nor total freewill sometimes supposes. This is a relationship where there is enough freedom for God and the clay to be acted upon by each other!

Verses 7-8:

+ YHWH has the freedom to pronounce and determine the destiny of nations but his actions will be conditioned by the response of the nation to divine pronouncement.

+ These verses expand beyond Israel.

+ "pluck up, overthrow and destroy".

Verses 9-10:

+ These words are conditional. The human response of repentance or disobedience matters to YHWH.

+ We might say the more repressive and power-concentrated a regime is, the more its possibility for longevity is undone. There is a principle of God which de-centres crushing powers. The Spirit is working in the freedom business so people may freely choose to worship and share Jesus.

Verse 11

+ Something else is at work in their destiny

Verses 12

+ It is our own choice to respond. God has enabled us to respond, but does not force us to respond. They are making excuses, and He is saying that they have been empowered to choose differently. They see themselves as "locked in". God says, "No, you are never locked in."

FROM THE TEXT/FINAL THOUGHTS

+ Let God take you on a side-trip "to the potter's house" and be attentive to the Spirit's leading and teaching.

+ God's plan changed based on the people's wickedness/repentance

+ This conversation is proof that they can still change and change God's plan.

+ They are still in God's hand

+ A well-balanced text between God's freedom and human free will

+ God's plans and purposes are relational and therefore open to change.

+ God is a craftsman forming you and working with you. What kind of clay do you choose to be in his hands?