

SCRIPTURE READINGS

INTRO: Have you ever been sad and angry at the same time? Our first reading comes from the prophet Jeremiah. This passage expresses strong emotions of sadness and anger. Traditionally, it was believed God could not be all-powerful and feel such emotions because being emotional makes you weak. And so, it was believed the prophecy expresses Jeremiah's feelings. But actually, the prophet is portraying God's feelings in first person language. Listen:

Jeremiah 8.18-21, 9.1-6,10

¹⁸ My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick.

¹⁹ Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land:

'Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her ruler not in her?'...

²⁰ 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'

²¹ For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.

²² Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?

Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?

Chap.9 - O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears,
so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

² O that I had in the desert a traveller's lodging-place,
that I might leave my people and go away from them!

For they are all adulterers, a band of traitors.

³ They bend their tongues like bows;

they have grown strong in the land for falsehood, and not for truth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, says the LORD.

⁴ Beware of your neighbours, and put no trust in any of your kin;
for all your kin are supplanters, and every neighbour goes around like a slanderer.

⁵ They all deceive their neighbours, and no one speaks the truth;
they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent.

⁶ Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the LORD.

¹⁰ Take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the animals have fled and are gone. Amen.

INTRO: Our second reading comes from the gospel of Luke. If God is portrayed as vulnerable to sadness and anger, the very same is also the case for Jesus. Here's how Jesus expresses his feelings just before he enters the city of Jerusalem for the final week of his life:

Luke 19. 41-44

41 As Jesus came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.' Amen.

We are listening, O God; **Speak to us!**