

Marks

of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
■ Giving Time, Talents & Resources
Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In &
Beyond the Church

July 4, 2021

Day 1: Jeremiah 33:12

"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In this place, desolate and without men or animals—in all its towns there will again be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks.

The promise that God made to Abraham will be fulfilled but along the way to fulfillment there will be some setbacks. In Jeremiah's time the land around Jerusalem was desolate because of the invasion of the Babylonians. God is telling Jeremiah (and Jeremiah is to pass it on to his people) that there will be a time when life again will be in the land. We need to take this to heart when there are times that we think that God has allowed us to be desolate. When we feel the lowest it is at that time we need to recall that God sent His only Son to fulfill the promise.

Question: What is the most desolate place you have ever seen?

Challenge: How have you overcome loss in your life?

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-31

Day 2: Jeremiah 33:13

In the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah, flocks will again pass under the hand of the one who counts them,' says the LORD.

The prophet is giving another word of assurance. Jeremiah is saying that the one who owned the sheep will again be the one counting them. The real owners will gain the benefit of the sheep, not those who stole them.

Question: In this past year what have you lost that was important to you?

Challenge: Look up the places in this verse on a map to find where they are.

Scripture: Isaiah 41:1-29

Day 3: Jeremiah 33:15

"In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land.

Jeremiah can see a time when God will take a hand in fulfilling the promise. The promise is that the children of God will be with God in the Kingdom of God. God has used various means to deal with the problem of sin. All of these means have not solved the problem but have shined a light on the nature of sin so that it can be seen and dealt with. God has gathered all of the sin of the world in one place and time so that Christ – the Messiah - could destroy its power on the cross.

Question: Have you ever transplanted something? Did it grow? Why or why not?

Challenge: Look up the word "righteous" and see what it means. Now see how that pertains to Jesus.

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-13

Day 4: Isaiah 11:3

His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;

The main attribute of this leader - the Messiah - is a firm and equitable administration of justice. Justice is the application of the law, in its letter and spirit, to everybody. The law is not to be judged as fair or unfair. What is fair or unfair is its application. The one applying the law has to ignore any benefit they might gain from a judgment they render.

Question: Do you think this is where we get the term, "justice is blind"?

Challenge: What does the term "just law" mean?

Scripture: Deuteronomy 1:11-21

Day 5: Isaiah 11:4

but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

The Messiah will not consider the value of a person based on anything else but that they are a child of God. There is great temptation to use power for our own gain. Poor and meek refer not only to the person's financial status but to their ability to get the information needed to help them in solving problems. If a person does not know their rights they can easily be denied them. A just judge will not only apply the law evenly but make sure those who do not know what their rights are will be told them.

Question: What is the difference between the "poor" and the "meek"?

Challenge: What does righteousness have to do with judging if justice is blind?

Scripture: Leviticus 19:10-18

Day 6: Isaiah 11:6-7

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox

When the Messiah comes even the natural order in nature will be changed. Relationships will be altered so that what was predator and prey will now be friends. What once competed for limited resources will be able to share. All of creation will be blessed by the coming of the Messiah. Paul, in Romans, says that "just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification for all." (Romans 5:18).

Question: Why are these pairings powerful?

Challenge: How would you state in a simple sentence the quality of your closest relationships?

Scripture: Hosea 2:16-23