**Daily Prayer & Encouragement – 3rd December**

Jeremiah 17:5-8

This is what the Lord says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Jeremiah is saying that we need to be like that tree along the bank that has a constant supply of water. It can withstand anything nature throws against it. Those who trust in the Lord are blessed because their roots are tapped into the stream of life. “They are not anxious in the year of drought.” God can sustain us through anything. We are blessed because we have confidence in God’s prevailing presence. And it is in that presence that we put our trust and find rest.

God wants us to be like this healthy plant. The plant depends on its roots. As long as its roots are watered and the soil is fertile, it will grow. Gary Smalley travels the world doing marriage enrichment seminars. He uses the metaphor of a dying plant to illustrate what happens when a relationship does not have healthy roots.

Relationships require SECURITY, LOVE, TRUST and CONFIDENCE. Whenever that trust is violated, the relationship withers and dies unless it gets help. We need to secure our lives with trust in one another, not walls and fences or systems that enclose us. The same is true for our faith in God. We trust God by remaining open, in touch daily with Him and entering frequently through the gates of His prevailing presence.

Where is your trust and confidence during this challenging year of 2020? Can you say your roots go deep in Christ, or you are turned to the god of FEAR?

The Israelites had reached a point where they put all their trust in man-made security systems. Instead of wars they MADE DEALS with other countries. Their dealings had become their god. All their energy, their loyalty and resources were directed toward the preservation of deals which were self-serving and built on fear rather than faith.

Jeremiah was saying that Israel’s constant obsession with playing “let’s make a deal,” would cause them to dry up and wither away. They were being misled and putting their trust in practices that would ultimately lead to their demise.

About a month ago, a parishioner rang me and said that when COVID 19 is over, he will serve and worship God. Sometimes we are willing to worship God and have faith if we get results. But what about those times when things do not go in our favour or as planned? What about those times when we cannot see the light and the end of the tunnel? To have roots is not to make deals with God. God is not a wheeler-dealer. To have roots is to keep our faith strong no matter what life brings us. We keep our roots strong by being in dialogue with God every day, not just in the trying moments. God needs our devotion always. When that happens, we will have life-long security. God is calling you to let your roots go deep and be grounded in Him. Will you consider His invitation?

“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him .They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream .It does not fear when heat comes;  its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:5-8).

May this verse be true for you and your loved ones. May it give you strength and confidence in your day to day challenges.

Rev’d Patches Chabala

Team Vicar