

Year end 2019

Plucking up & breaking down, Building & planting

Jeremiah 1¹⁰

God's two-fold call upon each of our lives



It's our **last Sunday** of the year – good time to be contemplative;

- reflecting on the year almost past;
- anticipating what might be new in year to come.

Our tradition is: on last **Sunday evening** of year I present a list of what God has done;

- highlight is list of all new people God brought amongst us – to be part of us;
- that's tonight – encouragement to come;
- but this morning:
 - I want us to think more of big picture of what God doing in each of our lives;
 - takes me to prophet **Jeremiah**.

(Jeremiah's time)

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry began in 627BC;

- later than **Isaiah** (Christmas day) – who saw fall of N kingdom of Israel to Assyrians
- Jeremiah is 100yrs later – only S tribe of Judah is left;
- now they in trouble – facing God's judgement from north – Babylonians.

∃ **theme** which pervades whole book of **Jeremiah**

- I want you to see it for yourself:

1(10) See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant."

18(7-10) If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom,
that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it,
and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil,
I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it.

And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom
that I will build and plant it,
and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice,
then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it.

24(6) I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land.
I will build them up, and not tear them down;
I will plant them, and not uproot them.

- 31(28) And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the LORD.
- 42(10) If you will remain in this land, then I will build you up and not pull you down; I will plant you, and not pluck you up; for I relent of the disaster that I did to you.
- 45(4) Thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD:
Behold, what I have built I am breaking down, and what I have planted I am plucking up- that is, the whole land.
- theme is obvious:
 - 2-fold ministry: (1) pluck up / break down
 - (2) build up / plant.

(Everyone's time)

I'm now suggesting to you: this **same 2-fold call** is God's call now **upon your life**;

- ∃ things from this past year to pluck up / break down;
- ∃ new things to build up / plant in year to come.

This is **general principle** we see in:

Ecc 3(1-3) For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
... a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
... a time to break down, and a time to build up.

We then see same principle applied v specifically/ personally / individually to us by Paul:

Eph 4(22-24) Put off your old self,
which belongs to your former manner of life
and is corrupt through deceitful desires,
and be renewed in the spirit of your minds,
and put on the new self,
created after the likeness of God in true righteousness & holiness.

- different illustration - same principle;
- let's run w language God gives us thru **Jeremiah** of kingdoms ...

Plucking up & breaking down

Start w **ultimate** in enemy kingdoms:

The kingdom of Satan

Eph 6(12) We do not wrestle against flesh & blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Satan is one who **orchestrates attacks** upon us as God's people;

- he can no longer attack Christ directly
 - Christ conquered Him – Christ sits on throne in glory;
- but he given leave to attack Christ's people
 - because Jesus knows : this will actually serve His own interest to strengthen;
 - Satan still thinks he can bring us down – do everything in his power to destroy.

This is what is really **happening behind the scenes**;

- this is invisible to us – v real – but in spiritual realm we not perceive w these eyes;
- what we see is the outworking of this in ...

The kingdoms of this world

The **philosophies** of this world:

- philosophy:
 - God is **unnecessary** – propounded relentlessly w dogma of **evolution**;
 - anything else is unthinkable / intolerable;
- God is **irrelevant** – **materialism**:
 - material / tangible things are all that really count
 - are all that are real
 - spiritual concepts are just fluff;
 - **hedonism**- we live for pleasure;
 - mantra: so long as you are happy all is good
- God is **dangerous** – dogma of **tolerance** – more than tolerance – approval;
 - unhealthy / repressive to suggest anything is sin;
 - Christianity is repressive;
 - to teach it to children is akin to child abuse.

The infiltration into God's kingdom

This is where we need to be **ultra-vigilant** to see these things for what they are;

- pluck up / break down / tear down;
- mandate from apostle in **2 Cor 10(5)** to **destroy arguments & every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God.**

This is where we really **need one another** – esp **across** the **generations**;

- older ones **need younger ones**:
 - older we get more complacent we can become;
 - need vitality of youth;
 - need freshly opened eyes of new converts to remind older ones of how first intense love for Christ helps put everything in proper perspective;
 - of how zeal for Christ's lordship wants everything submitted.
- at same time – younger ones **need older ones**;
 - youth grown up amidst Gen Z values of tolerance / moral relativism;
 - education / peers are marinated in it – naturally imbibed;
 - when converted may need help to see how inculcated they become.

See it in **attitudes** to things like:

- sex outside of covenant bond of marriage;
- homosexual practice;
- gender fluidity;
- personal autonomy for everyone.
- opposition to headship / servant leadership of husbands
 - respectful submission of wives

∃ things of kingdom of world infiltrated church need to be plucked up / broken down.

The idols within God's kingdom

Idols are **not necessarily** things that are **intrinsically wrong**;

- may well be things : wholesome / healthy in proper place;
- but can be a lure which looms bit too large in our lives;
- influence upon us rivals influence of Jesus Christ;
 - might be pursuit of financial security
 - might be passion for physical fitness;
 - might be desire for comfortable lifestyle;
 - might be determination to climb corporate ladder;
 - might be concern for social justice;
 - might be campaign in church or community politics;
 - might be pre-eminence of a football team;
 - might be priority of your particular church ministry team
- anything good can become an idol
 - simply by obscuring even just a little the sovereignty / supremacy of Christ over every area of each of our lives.

Idols – no matter how good

- are to be **pulled down** / torn down from pedestals on which we put them.

The kingdom of self

Root of the problem – put ourselves on throne of our own lives – Jesus's place;

- see things from perspective of how affect me;
- my comfort / my convenience;
- how it makes me look / how I appear to others.

Word for all of this is **repentance** - tear down / turn around;

- first in our hearts – then in our action / speech / thoughts.

Building & planting

This is **purpose of tearing down** – clearing the way;

- I spent better part of year of Saturdays:
 - pulling down vines;
 - rooting up trees;
 - breaking down walls;
- I pretty reticent – *I like that tree* – boys said no – it's *got to go*;
 - I tried to save work by keep part of old wall – but it fell over;
- extensive demolition / digging out of dirt;
- all for purpose of erecting a new building – building a grandkids playground;
- planting new garden;
- clearing out old is necessary prerequisite to making way for the new.

Q for us – **What is it that we want to build / plant?**

What will it mean for kingdom of Jesus to be more manifest in 2020?

Start w biggest picture ...

The kingdom of Jesus in the universe

Not really in the universe – **OF the universe**;

- whole universe is His kingdom – nothing excluded anywhere / anytime;
- we thinking thru implications of that.

The kingdom of Jesus in my community

What can I do to manifest / acknowledge kingdom of Jesus:

- in my **workplace** – How can I demonstrate that my commitment to Jesus makes me more committed to serve my company / colleagues?
 - I know of amazing eg of 1 person willing to take blame for things not entirely his fault – considerable cost to himself;
- in my **community groups** / sporting groups / music groups / school / hobby groups
 - How can I be salt & light for the gospel?
 - How can remind myself : God placed me here as His representative?
- in my **neighbourhood** – How can I get to know my neighbours / let them know me?
 - Could I visit them – invite them in for a drink?

The kingdom of Jesus in my church

What will it mean for me to **be the church** rather than come to church?

- What ministry team could I contribute to?
- What can I see being enhanced about what we are / how well we do it?
- How can I live out body life of being a church family together?

Let me make 1 simple suggestion for anyone who might be feeling bit fringe-ish;

- not sure what to do;
- good start could be committing to come along on annual **church family retreat** on Canberra Day long w/e in March at Jindabyne;
- great way of fast-tracking the sense of connectedness;
- coming up w ideas of what we can do to help one another along the way.

The kingdom of Jesus in my family

What do I want my **family to learn** this year?

What are my family strengths / weaknesses?

What would be a good book of Bible for us to read / pray thru together?

What sort of Qs are our children asking?

How can I show them that answer always involves Jesus / gospel?

How can I encourage them to work this out for themselves from the Word?

The kingdom of Jesus in me

Of course, this is the **heart** of it – this is where it really begins;

- this is where the power / love / drive receives it's fire from risen LJ.

Remember how apostle Paul put it in His **2-sided summary**:

2 Cor 10(5) We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,

- that's the breaking down – then ∃ the building up / planting taking every thought captive to obey Christ.

What a goal for the new year!

- **every thought** taken **captive** into communion w Jesus;
- every thought taken in conjunction w Jesus;
- every thought aligned w kingdom of Jesus;
- that will be what eternal glory is like w resurrection body;
 - won't make it all the way in 2020;
 - but our privilege / calling / commission to live in anticipation of it

(Conclusion)

This is our **noble / honourable calling**.

(Our excuses)

Jeremiah said **Jer 1(6)**

"Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth."

- we might say:
 - Ah, I do not know where to begin;*
 - Ah, I do not know where to turn in your word;*
 - Ah, I do not know if I can do this / too hard;*
- we have our **excuses**, just like Jeremiah did;
- this is a **battle** – like it was for Jeremiah;
- **none** of this comes easily for us – just like it did not come easily for him.

(God's response)

What is **God's response**?

*(7) But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth';
for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.*

*(8) Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD."
- in case he didn't get how significant / liberating / empowering this is;
- he says it again – last v of chapter*

(19) I am with you, declares the LORD, to deliver you."

This is **what makes the difference** for each / every one of us;

- we can't do any of this on our own;
- but when God says **I am with you**;
- ⇒ why we can say **I can do all things thru Christ who strengthens me.**

AMEN? AMEN!

Pray

Sing Sovereign over us:

There is strength within the sorrow, there is beauty in our tears,
You meet us in our mourning, with a love that cast our fear

Benediction 2 Cor 13(14) The grace of the LJC.

The love of God

The fellowship of the HS be w you, now & for evermore.