



Steädfast / Sumud

FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Presented by the Just Love Ministry

Week 5: A HEART COVENANT

Meditate JEREMIAH 31

³¹The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Explore



Excerpts from deep listening with Palestinian leaders and recommendations (RSR)

Ongoing settlement creation and the development of a permanent Israeli occupation apparatus (Fourth Geneva Convention notwithstanding) have made a two-state solution largely impossible. Respondents advocated shifting to an understanding and discourse that lays bare the humanitarian crisis of the occupation in depriving an entire population of basic human rights, and in creating two separate systems of rights and status in the same areas, based solely on ethno-religious identity. This crisis has led to a number of deeply concerning effects: the withdrawal and emigration of Palestinians, especially young people; the acute despair and anger that fuel violence; and long-term trauma that affects the mental and physical health of all Palestinians, including those who stay and remain committed to nonviolence. Respondents acknowledged a diversity in current Palestinian thought about possible solutions (one state with equal rights for all; cantons similar to Switzerland's, or others) but generally agreed that an international emphasis on ending the occupation and on advancing equality, human rights and land-sharing now promises the best way forward (p.17)

All respondents agreed that too much has changed since 2005 for the ELCA to continue basing its approaches, engagement and discourse on the 2005 strategy. “Peace Not Walls” and other “peace” and “conflict” language can normalize the

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Explore CONTINUED

occupation by framing the issue as an equal conflict between two sides that must reconcile to create peace, rather than as the unjust occupation and deprivation of human rights of Palestinians by the wealthier and more powerful state of Israel. The issue identified by respondents is not just linguistic or semantic but theological and conceptual. The theological perspective must shift from a focus on peacemaking and reconciliation that ignores power analysis to one that advocates justice for a marginalized people. (p.20-21)

Statements that appeal to “both sides” to end violence are often received as attempts to avoid criticizing Israel, which minimizes the seriousness of Palestinian suffering and inequality and contributes to Israel acting more aggressively, with impunity and without meaningful consequences. Some respondents clearly call for use of “apartheid” terminology and approaches such as BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions). Other respondents suggest that the debate over specific terms can be a distraction and that more specific description of circumstances (killing and detention of children, no freedom of movement, etc.) is more helpful. All agreed that the goal and the language must be clear: not peace but justice, not an end to walls (which some interpret as outdated, since the walls are built) but an end to the occupation of Palestine by Israel (p.20-21)

Reflect

God is Love. God is Justice. God is Merciful.

Jeremiah dedicated his life to warn the people of Israel of the kings they appointed, kings that disgraced God’s purpose for his humanity. Jeremiah shared God’s love, justice, and mercy but the people betrayed God. Although Jeremiah suffered many life-threatening abuses by the order of these vicious kings, he continued to brave God’s righteous indignation regarding their choice to worship makeshift idols, power, violence, money and sex, that resulted in the abuse, discrimination, and oppression of the poor and vulnerable. Through Jeremiah, God proclaimed the new covenant. God stressed that he would renew a covenant with the people of Israel not written

on tablets, as he had with their ancestors, but rather in all people’s hearts. Today, we witness and feel God’s love and law, written and ignited in our hearts through one unified world action for justice in a ceasefire and healing through Christ-inspired forgiveness.

God gave us Jesus and through him changed all hearts with grace, love, and forgiveness. Jesus was mocked and crowned with branches of thorns as the “King of the Jews.” Although nailed to the cross until death he still never bowed to power and greed. Jesus’s loving sacrifice gave all people in the Holy Land the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of forgiveness.

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Reflect CONTINUED

1. Imagine Jeremiah speaking to Americans today in 2024. He says, "This is what the Lord says..." What do you think the Lord will say to you?
2. Holocaust is defined as a mass slaughter or reckless destruction of life by fire or burnt offering. Many Jewish people relocated to Israel amidst the Holocaust during WWII seeking refuge and safety. Now, the country of Israel, comprised of many of those Jewish refugees, enforces a similar holocaust on Palestine. Why do humans recreate cycles of injustice and violence?
3. As Christians, we commit to love, justice, and mercy. Crucified on the cross Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" Like Jesus, how will you strengthen the spirit of forgiveness to those who harmed you and others? What steps will you take to prioritize the inner work required to help you practice a healing journey?

Präy

*Dear Heavenly Father, our lives are proof of your new covenant, which you spoke through your chosen Prophet Jeremiah. You have delivered on your promise, and we are witnesses to it. Your words, written in our hearts, are guidance for our souls. Driven by your original purpose for life, we recharge ourselves by listening to your soft inner voice when tempted to "eat from the tree of life" and to learning from our descendants' mistakes after the Exodus when they betrayed and abandoned your will. We commit to justice, as evidenced by your righteous indignation when you protected the victims of ancestral discrimination and oppression. We forgive all iniquities as you repeatedly forgive the pleas of the conscience-stricken sinner. We vow to uphold through practice the greatest commandments spoken through your son Jesus when he said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself." May thy will be done as your heartfelt written words increase the unity of love for all life and humanity. **Amen.***

Sing

ELW 704 When the Pain of the World Surrounds Us
ELW 792 When Memory Fades
ELW 665 Rise, Shine, You People

Additional Resources

- **They Called Me a Lioness a Palestinian girls fight for freedom by Ahed Tamimi and Dena Takruri (Memoir)**
- **My Jewish People: Poem by Dr. Tema Okun, a religious, anti-zionist Jewish advocate for Palestine**
- **Churches for Middle East Peace**