

Sermon for 12 October 2025 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore, Md

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scriptures: Jeremiah 1, 4-7; Psalter (*Insert: Alternate leader and people*) Psalm 66:1-12

Response: 70 "Gloria Patri (*Sing after the Psalm*); 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

Sermon:

Just a hint of sunrise after all these weeks of darkness reading Jeremiah and, last Sunday, Lamentations! Thank God we never neglect a promise, even if it's a silent one, walking with Jesus! In today's case, Jeremiah himself speaks what we've heard throughout history during bad times, "This too shall pass..." but God orders the exiled Hebrews to settle down into life in Babylon, making the welfare of their enemies their welfare, and promising seventy years ... two generations ... before they may begin to return to rebuild Jerusalem and take up again the staff of example as God's people.

Then we get another terse passage from Paul, in his second letter to his disciple and now church leader, Timothy. It fits what God's had Jeremiah insist: This is a long walk we're on, and don't you forget it. Follow the pattern Jesus laid down: Let what's basic about your current situation absorb you. Apply loving your neighbor to the details you deal with daily. "Remind them of this," he says, "a worker who has no need to be ashamed." Learn your faith afresh every day. God cannot be unfaithful, no matter how often you are.

Then we close with the ten lepers on the road to Jerusalem where Jesus is headed now, closer and closer to what nobody yet believes but he's told the disciples more than once ... and he heals them all and sends them off to thank the priest up ahead.... and the last one turns back and thanked him, and he was an outsider ... a Samaritan ... and Jesus tells him his faith has made him well.

How does that work? I'm slogging along, trying, staying as close to good behavior as I can, although I learn something new about that every day, old as I am ... I still get ashamed. I watch. Maybe I wake up in the dark and see something I've never learned until now ...and sometimes, I go back to sleep more peaceful, grateful, insightful. Have you ever just made a phone call to a friend and thanked him or her for something she said in group yesterday? Did that lead to ten minutes of better chatting with her than you've ever had?

Learning is unending. We've been looking at troubled times with Jeremiah for months now. Are we out of the troubles? What's your take?

Let us pray. (*Extempore*).

God bless us, every one.

In Jesus' name, Amen.