

Sermon for 19 October 2025 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost/Laity Sunday

Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalter (*Insert; Alternate leader/people*) Psalm 119:97-104; 2

Timothy 3:14-4:5; Luke 18:1-9

Sermon: Finally, our last reading this year of Jeremiah! Appropriately, the echo of hope we have spotted from time to time in our readings comes on strong, and we are assured that the same God who has been behind our suffering and loss, the darkness of defeat and banishment to a foreign land, will see that we return, or start over fresh, to new opportunities, as well as to rebuild on former solid beginnings.

To go along with that, the psalm selected provides us ample opportunity to celebrate and build up what our past has always provided of solid ground and the security of building on God's covenant with our ancestors. "O, how I love your law!" and "through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." It's enough of a reminder to bring us around and make solid our sound impulses and plans.

Still gaining insight from Paul's gentle but firm advising of his younger disciple, Timothy, we have useful advice and encouragement in all the resistance of the second and third generations of the church and, in our case, the craziness and ill-will that fills our daily news.

Then today Jesus gives us another wierd example of somebody who is not admirable an unjust judge ... and a persistent widow who just won't give up begging and pleading for justice in her case. It's another case of a tale that we can't get loose from ... which may be why Jesus told it, like the other story of the unjust steward who avoided punishment by lowering his master's bills and thereby getting them paid fast.

It's all good stuff. We just squeak by There are some heroes, but look around, see how many you can count here in church.

Let us pray. Dear Lord Jesus, let these Bible verses sink in today. As we come here for healing together, and for inspiration, give us the strength to face our failures and our fears. Cover us with your grace. Let sink in the news we have lived by so far, again and again confessing the whole truth of our lives, not covering up but bearing the burden of confession, for things long ago and things yet facing us. In that act, in that fellowship with other believers that we accept, tie us together with the beautiful cords of love that we begin to feel once more with these fellow-travelers. You are the center of our energy. You renew our hope. You give us the plain, simple thoughts and feelings that bring us back to solid ground and good friends and present examples of right living.

You are Jesus, our brother, and we are with you, now and forever. Amen.