

Let us pray... Eternal God, gather your Spirit in this place. Open our hearts and minds so we may find you in all that we do. Guide our journey together, with you at the center. Amen.

Can you believe it, Lent is almost over... And Holy Week is almost here...

I'm not sure how Lent has been for you, but for me it has been a long journey, that has somehow gone by very fast...

Like the popular saying goes, the days are long but the years are short...

And the days, as we heard in our reading from Jeremiah, are surely coming.

We hear, "The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant. 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."

These are beautiful words and have become quite popular today... They are printed on coffee mugs, pictures, notebooks, stickers, and much more...

However, these words were spoken to a very specific group of people, as we see in the text it was said to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

So, to help us break down what this means... Lets take a brief tour into the house of Israel, as the house of Judah came from the house of Israel...

And the house of Israel comes from Jacob... As Jacob's name was changed to Israel, after he wrestled with God for a blessing.

Jacob or Israel was the son of Issac, and Issac was the son of Abraham...

And Abraham was blessed by God to be the father of many nations.

And before Abraham was blessed by God, his name was Abram...

And Abram enters our story after the fall of the tower of Babel...

Abram comes out of a world of chaos and deep division. Where he is trying to start a new tribe and a new kind of people...

And while he is working to do this, he meets a king whose name is Melchizedek. And Melchizedek is translated as king of righteousness...

And we are told that not only is he a king of righteousness, but he is also a Priest of God Most High...

And during this brief encounter, Melchizedek blesses Abram and gives him wine and bread...

And then... Melchizedek disappears from scripture, only making one appearance in the Psalms, and then another in our reading from Hebrews.

So very interesting... So very strange... Which should make us wonder... What in the world is going on here?

Especially since, Melchizedek is not from Abram's lineage and therefore is not included in God's chosen people...

And yet Melchizedek knows God... He blesses others in the name of God... He breaks bread and shares wine...

Melchizedek is proof that God works in places we don't expect God to be... Which challenges our very structure of religion...

And is why Hebrews claims Jesus as a Priest in the order of Melchizedek...

As this claim, especially during Jesus' time, would have challenged all the Priestly structures in the Jewish faith... The only structure they knew...

It would have shattered their understanding of God, as they believed they were God's chosen people and nobody else could possibly know God...

This implies that God is larger than any religious' institution, tribe, or people.

And brings us back to our beautiful passage on Jeremiah and our search for who these words are meant for...

Knowing what we know now, it would stand to reason that God desires this new covenant to be with all people...

As God said, the days are surely coming, when I will make a new covenant. 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...

And yet, the current state of the world would suggest this covenant has yet to be completed...

But that doesn't mean it isn't working in our hearts...

As God has been working on the fulfillment of this covenant through Christ. Christ who became flesh and lived among us... Who lived with God's new covenant fully on his heart...

Christ who taught us how to love, by sharing God's love with the world God so loved...

Love that became so vivid and tangible in the body of Christ, people started to notice... Jesus was drawing attention...

In fact, the word of God was reaching people outside the house of Israel.

And people who never knew God, recognized something in their hearts about Christ...

As we heard in our gospel today... Greek outsiders made their way to a Jewish festival, found Phillip and said, we wish to see Jesus...

Again, like we saw with Melchizedek, God was at work in places and in people nobody expected...

God stirred the hearts of those Greek outsiders...

Because God's love transcends all places, it is not just where we think God should be...

Which is a challenge for us, as this invites us to share God's love in places outside our comfort zone.

By sharing God's good news and God's love beyond the walls of the church, beyond the comfort of our daily routine, and our family and friends...

God's love is bigger, deeper, and wider than anything we can grasp...

Which is good news... As this means that God's love will continue to show up.

God's love will continue to surprise and delight us when we least expect it, and especially when we need it the most...

God's love can blossom hope in our hearts, peace in our souls, joy in our spirits, and love in our breath...

Because God's love lives in all places... Even in the unexpected...

From the obscure character of Melchizedek, to the depths of the cross, to the joy of Easter, God's love lives.

And God's love will continue to live... It is written on our hearts... Inviting us to share God's love in all we do, even when it's unexpected. Amen.