

MONDAY
14 MARCH
 Daniel 9:4-10
 Psalm 79:8-9.
 12. 14
 Luke 6:36-38

TUESDAY
15 MARCH
 Isaiah 1:10. 16-20
 Psalm 50:8. 16-end
 Matthew 23:1-12

WEDNESDAY
16 MARCH
 Jeremiah 18:18-20
 Psalm 31:4-5.
 14-18
 Matthew 20:17-28

THURSDAY
17 MARCH
 Jeremiah 17:5-10
 Psalm 1
 Luke 16:19-end

FRIDAY
18 MARCH
 Genesis 37:3-4.
 12-13. 17-28
 Psalm 105:16-22
 Matthew 21:33-43. 45-46

SATURDAY
19 MARCH
 Joseph of Nazareth
 2 Samuel 7:4-16
 Psalm 89:26-36
 Romans 4:13-18
 Matthew 1:18-end

REFLECTION

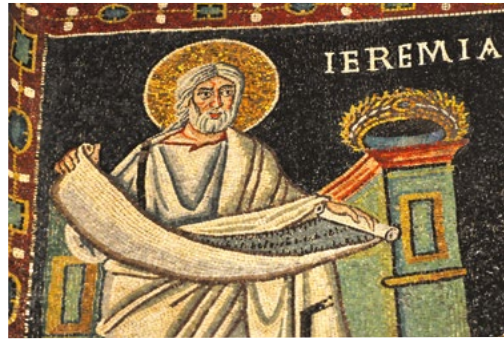
In Lent we rightly think about personal repentance and discipline. We think about the habits, many of them small and apparently harmless, that are actually shaping and driving us far more than we would like to admit.

And that kind of self-examination is vital and can be life-changing, but it is also important to hear the bigger context, as we do in this week's Old Testament readings. Daniel, Isaiah and Jeremiah are not thinking about themselves but about their nation. They are full of anger and sorrow at the corporate life of their people.

Perhaps this Lent we, like the great prophets of old, could take time to pray and sorrow for our nation. There may be a cost to this, as Jeremiah knew. We may think we are too small and insignificant to make any difference. But as we watch the start of the Joseph story on Friday, we are reminded that small beginnings can lead to unforeseen outcomes. The jealousy of Joseph's brothers is going to take him to a place where he can save thousands of lives. God can do extraordinary things. Let's be part of the tiny change that will bring huge transformation.

PRAYER

Almighty God,
 By the prayer and discipline of Lent,
 may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
 and by following in his way
 come to share in his glory.
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Jeremiah holding a scroll. Basilica of St Vitale, Ravenna, Italy

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CHRISTIAN CLASSICS – A LENTEN STUDY COURSE

MERE CHRISTIANITY BY C. S. LEWIS – PART II

Jane Williams continues her study of C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*. C. S. Lewis spent many years fighting against belief in God, and he draws on the arguments he used to make against the existence of God to good effect in *Mere Christianity*.

The most important one, and one that all Christians continue to encounter, is the problem of why a good God could make a world in which there is so much evil and pain. But while Lewis, when he was an atheist, used to scoff at the incoherence of Christian claims about God, he was aware that there was a certain break in his own logic, too. Where did the idea that the world is "bad" come from, unless there was, somewhere deep in us, a belief in "goodness"?

Lewis puts it like this: "A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line." So what we have is a universe that has much evil and meaninglessness but also has within it people who are aware of evil and meaninglessness.

Lewis concludes that there are only two explanations that fit this situation: either Christianity or dualism. Dualism believes that good and evil are equal and eternal powers. But the very fact that we call them "good" and "evil" means that we know they are not equal. We know that one is good, and more to be valued than the evil one.

And that means that only Christianity really makes sense. This is a universe made by and for the "good"; but it is what Lewis calls "enemy-occupied territory".

Questions for thought or discussion:

- What do you think of Lewis' argument that the fact that we know something is "bad" suggests that there must be something "good" by which we are measuring it?
- Is it your experience that the problem of evil is the biggest reason people give for not believing in God?
- What questions are raised by the idea that we are in "enemy-occupied territory"?

LIVE
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



Second week of Lent

Monday 14 March to
 Saturday 19 March
 2022

WEEK