Jeremiah 17:5-10 *(11)*

5 Thus says the LORD:
Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals
and make mere flesh their strength,
whose hearts turn away from the LORD.
6 They shall be like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see when relief comes.
They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

7 Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.
8 They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.
It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

9 The heart is devious above all else;
it is perverse—
who can understand it?

10 I the LORD test the mind
and search the heart,
to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings

11 Like the partridge hatching what it did not lay,
so are all who amass wealth unjustly;
in mid-life it will leave them,
and at their end they will prove to be fools.

Reading the Prophet This Week

Introduced as incised on heart and altar,
Oracular curse, blessing, threat, promise
a prophet speaking in wisdom proverbs

Cursed, a shrub in desert sun
Blessed, a tree by a stream
One insensible to coming relief
One resistant to periods of drought

In whom (or in what) do we trust?
Added in italics, v.11, summary *mashal*
Lest we lose the prophet's targeted denunciation

Does a shrub or tree have agency –
'planted' may be read 'transplanted'
Does it reach out for water?

The 'heart' or will – is suspect
Literally from Hebrew, 'kidneys'
Is that your take on human nature & bad judgment?

As we try on 'epiphany affirmations' of creeds,
What's your sense of 'sin and salvation'
Language of finitude and relief, or moral rule-breaking?

Is the divine testing,
Likened to drought or water,
gracious or abusive?

In 2004, 3rd of a set of 3 reflections:
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2004/02/call-or-conversion-3.html

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

12 Now if
Christ is proclaimed
as raised from the dead,

how can some of you say
there is no resurrection of the dead?

13If
there is no resurrection of the dead,
then Christ has not been raised;

14and if
Christ has not been raised,
then our proclamation has been in vain
and your faith has been in vain.

15We are even found to be misrepresenting God,
because we testified of God that he raised Christ—
whom he did not raise
if it is true that the dead are not raised.

16For if the dead are not raised,
then Christ has not been raised.

17If Christ has not been raised,
your faith is futile
and you are still in your sins.

18Then those also who have died in Christ have perished.

19If for this life only we have hoped in Christ,
we are of all people most to be pitied.

20 But in fact
Christ has been raised from the dead,
the first fruits of those who have died.

Reading the Epistle This Week

This 2nd of 3 lectionary weeks on 1 Cor 15
we may avoid these texts at funerals,
but can we duck them 3 times in epiphany study?

Given our demographics, 'cramming for our finals'
And the certainty of our co-religionists' interpretations
What do we preach of resurrection?
(my 'aha': 'organism needs environment')

The logic of Paul's argument here
ties Christ's resurrection to our own hope as Christians
denying us his exceptionalism – or do we just share it –
and must we then deny it to non-Christians?

The challenge to Corinth is futility,
the pathos appeals to our community bereavements
the threat of being 'most to be pitied' for our delusions

Graves in Grey County still face east
Preparing to be raised when dawn breaks
first fruits of what harvest?

In 2004, 3rd of a set of 3 reflections:
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2004/02/call-or-conversion-3.html

2019, with the epistle:
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2019/02/0-0-1-1240-7073-foothills-uc-58-16-8297.html

2022, last time amid COVID and blockades in Alberta:
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2022/02/raised-blessed-woe-is-us.html

Luke 6:17-26

17 He came down with them
and stood on a level place,
with a great crowd of his disciples
and a great multitude of people
from all Judea, Jerusalem,
and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

18 They had come to hear him
and to be healed of their diseases;

and those who were troubled
with unclean spirits
were cured.

19 And all in the crowd
were trying to touch him,
for power came out from him
and healed all of them.

20 Then he looked up
at his disciples
and said:

'Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 'Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

'Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

22 'Blessed are you
when people hate you,
and when they exclude you,
revile you,
and defame you
on account
of the Son of Man.

23 Rejoice on that day
and leap for joy,
for surely
your reward is great
in heaven;

for that is what their ancestors did
to the prophets.

24 'But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

25 'Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

'Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

26 'Woe to you
when all speak well of you,
for that is what their ancestors did
to the false prophets.

Reading the Gospel This Week

Luke's beatitudes – and woes – begin his Sermon on the Plain
less familiar than Matthew c5's Sermon on the Mount
4 'blessed', 'congratulations' and 4 'woe to you', 'damn you'

Poor – not 'in spirit'
Hungry now – not 'for righteousness'
Weep now - will laugh – not 'mourn will be comforted'
Hated, excluded, reviled, defamed – not 'falsely'

Luke's Jesus matches with 4 'woes'
Rich – already got yours
Full now – will be hungry
Laughing now will mourn and weep
All speak well of you - as they did false prophets

In 2001, at a baptism:
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2001/02/bless-you.html

2004, Couples Club and Remembrance Sunday:
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2005/11/woefully-blessed.html

2007, being 'Un-Spiritual':
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2007/01/being-un-spiritual-luke6.html

2019, with the lectionary epistle:
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2019/02/0-0-1-1240-7073-foothills-uc-58-16-8297.html

2022, last time, amid COVID and blockades in Alberta:
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