



A Call to Lament

January 13, 2021

Rachel Yates

Any idea where I can buy sackcloth? I feel like it's time to don it, cover my head with ashes, and heed the words of Jeremiah (here, in Ch. 6), like so many of the Old Testament prophets, who called the people and nation to a time of repentance and mourning.

To whom shall I speak and give warning,
that they may hear?
See, their ears are closed,
they cannot listen.
The word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn;
they take no pleasure in it.
But I am full of the wrath of the Lord;
I am weary of holding it in.

Pour it out on the children in the street,
and on the gatherings of young men as well;
both husband and wife shall be taken,
the old folk and the very aged.
Their houses shall be turned over to others,
their fields and wives together;
for I will stretch out my hand
against the inhabitants of the land,
says the Lord.

For from the least to the greatest of them,
everyone is greedy for unjust gain;
and from prophet to priest,
everyone deals falsely.
They have treated the wound of my people carelessly,
saying, "Peace, peace,"
when there is no peace.

They acted shamefully, they committed abomination;
yet they were not ashamed,
they did not know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
at the time that I punish them, they shall be
overthrown,
says the Lord.

Turns out, Amazon has a good price on bulk burlap. I checked. It can ship today.

Are we ready as a nation to repent and mourn? If we continue to believe that only "they" need to repent, not "us", then division still controls us. I fear that unless we find unity in our lament, as a nation that has lost its way, we will collapse.

Thus says the Lord:
Stand at the crossroads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls.
But they said, "We will not walk in it."

Also I raised up sentinels for you:
"Give heed to the sound of the trumpet!"
But they said, "We will not give heed."
Therefore hear, O nations,
and know, O congregation, what will happen to them.
Hear, O earth; I am going to bring disaster on this people,
the fruit of their schemes,
because they have not given heed to my words;
and as for my teaching, they have rejected it.

...O my poor people, put on sackcloth,
and roll in ashes;
make mourning as for an only child,
most bitter lamentation:
for suddenly the destroyer
will come upon us.