Jeremiah: Is There Any Hope When God is Angry?

The lesson from last Sunday reminded us of the importance of having leaders who are truthful, humble and repentant when they fall short. God is indeed angry at the people of Judah, but is this anger characteristic of the very nature of God? How might we understand God's anger and the best way to respond? Chapters 7-10 in Jeremiah are often known as the prophet's "temple address," particularly focusing on false religion. Jeremiah stood at the entrance of the temple to announce God's message to those coming there to worship. The people of Judah saw the temple as a kind of good luck charm that would ward off any attack by a foreign adversary. They were obviously wrong – about many things!

Grounding Scripture: Jeremiah 7:1-11; Exodus 34:6-7; Isaiah 29:13-14

1. After reading Exodus 34:6-7, and in your own words, how would you describe God's nature?

2. When considering what we have learned thus far from studying Jeremiah, the people of Judah did not only sin, their sin was persistent. They sinned without ceasing. The sin was pervasive in their society, from the least to the greatest. And their sin was horrendous. The prophets, including Jeremiah, condemned that which was especially horrible, including the exploitation of the poor and needy as well as slaughtering the innocent, including child sacrifice, and the worship of other gods.
   What would you humbly say to those who do not want to worship a God who gets angry and allows punishment?

3. Although we might quickly rush to conclude that thankfully we are "not all that bad" – what do you think occurring in present society might result in God's anger? Reflect particularly on Jeremiah 7:5-7. Are any of these sins present today?

4. What would you say to those in the church who proclaim that now, especially on Reformation Sunday, it's all about grace, that there is no need to dwell on these Old Testament passages where God gets angry and lowers the boom?

5. On this Reformation Sunday as we celebrate God's grace in and through Christ Jesus, and in light of what you have learned and been reminded of, for what are you most grateful? To honor God more faithfully, what might you do differently in response to the truth of God's word to us?

Verse to Remember: ***…the Lord, a God who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness…forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin…*** (Exodus 34:6-7a)