Jeremiah: Worldly and Godly (Holy) Sorrow

Grounding Scripture: Jeremiah 8:18 – 9:3

A common question posed by Christian and non-Christian alike during times of tragedy and heartbreak is, "Where is God?" Even the most biblically literate Christian, who accepts God as all powerful, all present, and all knowing, will wonder aloud or silently if God is not too distant, not close to us as we mourn. As we continue our study of Jeremiah and read this Scripture, we may ask, "Who is really speaking in this passage? Who is it that is really weeping?"

We have learned in the last weeks that anger is not a divine characteristic, but rather God can be provoked by sinfulness and the fallen nature of all creation. Then anger and wrath become a response out of the steadfast love of God, who is altogether holy and righteous. In addition, we consider this Sunday if God sorrows with us, both when the darkness is due to our own rebellious choices as well as when it comes to us out of no fault of our own.

Consider the following:

1. From what we have learned thus far, what were the people of Judah doing that so offended God and provoked God to wrath?

2. Who is speaking in the Scripture for today? Is it Jeremiah, is it God, or perhaps both? Who is saying: ***"The harvest is past, the summer, is ended, and we are not saved?"*** (20)

3. Specifically, who is weeping? And what is the cause of the weeping?

4. What does it mean, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" (v. 22a)

5. When we consider the question – "Does God weep?" we need only look at the example of Jesus, God incarnate. Did Jesus weep, and if so when and for what reason?

6. To what extent do we sorrow for the right reasons? Does what breaks God's heart, break ours too?

Verse to Remember: For it is better to suffer [sorrow] for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered…. (1 James 3:17-18a)