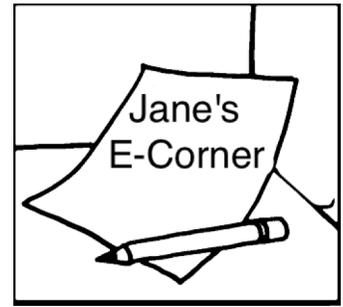


Dear Friends,  
Today I am reading from Jeremiah 2:4-13



*Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord; “What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?” They did not say, “Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?” I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination, the priests did not say, \*Where is the Lord?” Those who handle the law did not know me; the rules transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Ba al, and went after things that do not profit. Therefore once more I accuse you, says the Lord, and I accuse your children’s children. Cross to the costs of Cyprus and look; see if there has ever been such a thing. Has a nation changes its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit, Be appalled, o heavens at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says that Lord, for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.*

I have often heard that part of the human condition is the idea that the grass is greener somewhere else. Sometimes when we come from humble beginnings we want more and more and more. God gave the Hebrew people so much. They had status as God’s chosen people. They were given the Law as a gift to guide them in living their lives. They had great leaders like Moses and Joshua, who helped them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. But even with all that God had provided, the people were not satisfied. They did not show gratitude properly, they did not respond rightly to the graciousness of God and they were exiled to Babylon. And Jeremiah reminds them in this passage that they will eventually lose all they had because they were greedy and ungrateful.

Even when it seems like our lives are not the greatest--even when we look at someone else and think they have greener grass--we are blessed by the abundance of God. The blessings come in the opportunities we are given, the faith we can share, the talents we have been given, and even in the responsibilities that our lives demand. It is so easy to want more and more and never be quite satisfied with what we have. We often fail to be thankful to God for all we are given. We are SO good at asking God for what we want,

sometimes even demanding that God give it to us and give it right now. We are even pretty good at praising God as Creator, Redeemer, Loving Parent, Sanctifier, but too often we fail to acknowledge--maybe we don't even see-- the good things we have and to give thanks. Rather than thanking God, we almost assume we deserve what we have and even more.

Are we teaching our children that we are thankful? Do we model thankfulness? Do we thank those who help us at work, at church, at home? Just a little \*thank way. Maybe we assume store is doing his/her job but what if we said \*thank

What ARE You Thankful for?

you\* can go a very long the person at the grocery by bagging our groceries-- you?\*

At church, are we thankful responded to God's gifts use them to benefit others

"I'm sure glad I don't have to do it, but I don't like the way he/she does this? Do we participate in every way we possibly can knowing that the body of Christ is strengthened when we all pitch in? Do our attitudes express a lack of gratitude?

for those persons who have of talents and abilities and in our church? Do we say,

Perhaps we can look around us with new eyes, thankful for the responsibilities life presents us. Very often these responsibilities are not what we would have expected--caring for an elderly parent, attending to a wayward child, answering the call of the community of faith in service--and very often they are not easy roads to walk.

The failure of God's chosen people to demonstrate their gratitude to God led to their exile in Babylon. My prayer for all of us is that we not follow this same path, but instead we express our gratitude with our words, our attitudes, and our given of time, talents, and treasures. All we have to do is look outside ourselves to see the green grass all around.

*Please Pray For:*

- Tony Woodall and his family (Judy Story's son-in-law) in hospital at Emory University, Atlanta.*
- Martha Hauff, recent hospitalization*
- Donna Wilkinson, continuing challenges with parents, loss of her aunt this week, and her husband's bad reaction to bee-stings last week.*

- Children and teachers back in school. College students soon to start back.
- Unspoken--God knows our needs.

*Coming Up on the Calendar:*

- Thursday August 8 at 8 am FINANCE COMMITTEE
- Tuesday August 13 at 7 pm Pillar Chairs meet
- Sunday August 18 at 4:30 Acolyte, Crucifer, Bible carrier training
- Tuesday August 20 at 7 pm Leadership Pillar
- Wednesday August 21 5:30 FALL WEDNESDAY NITE KICKOFF at Powell Park
- Saturday August 24 10 am Food Pantry Distribution

*"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words." St Francis of Assisi*

*Blessings,*

*Jane Taylor,*

*First United Methodist Church, Johnson City, TN*