

Lent Devotional March 29, 2025

Scripture

Jeremiah 13:1-11

1 Thus said the Lord to me, "Go and buy yourself a linen loincloth, and put it on your loins, but do not dip it in water." 2 So I bought a loincloth according to the word of the Lord, and put it on my loins. 3 And the word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, 4 "Take the loincloth that you bought and are wearing, and go now to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a cleft of the rock." 5 So I went, and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. 6 And after many days the Lord said to me, "Go now to the Euphrates, and take from there the loincloth that I commanded you to hide there." 7 Then I went to the Euphrates, and dug, and I took the loincloth from the place where I had hidden it. But now the loincloth was ruined; it was good for nothing.

8 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 9 Thus says the Lord: Just so I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. 10 This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own will and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing. 11 For as the loincloth clings to one's loins, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, says the Lord, in order that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory. But they would not listen.

Devotion

Raymond Pelling '23

Please don't be grossed out or offended; I'm just the messenger. I didn't expect to have underwear as a subject for Lent, either.

So, if my feet are uncomfortable, I know it all day. One day in shoes that don't fit, and I'm done with them. The same goes for other clothing. If my pajamas aren't a good fit, I know about it all night long. I'm miserable.

Two main points in this passage need our attention: pride and intimacy. God says that the pride of the people needs to be broken, because they have become as useless as underwear buried in the ground down by the river for "many days." God would have God's people close—as close as underwear. But the elastic quit. The underwear does what it wants.

This is what pride does: we do what we want. God says God loves people. We find ways to demonize them. God counts acts of love far more than any sacrifice, but we outsource our obedience, letting others serve on our behalf. We make excuses to do and think what we want, searing our conscience against the truth.

Where have we placed our pride this season? Do we grow in love or tell the scriptures what we want them to say? Can we face our issues of intimacy with God and tell the truth to our Lord, our loved ones? Will we soberly admit the truth to ourselves? The alternative is not the best use, like my old boxers in the rag box.

Thankfully, no matter how worn out we think we are, or may feel, God continually beckons us to redemption. Our Lord is quite taken with salvage, repair, and growth. God wants us close. Don't blame me, I'm just the messenger.

Prayer

Lord God, our redemption; abide with us, even when we try to ignore you. Holy Spirit, work to keep our pride in check. Help us, Holy Spirit, pride in the God who is Love, and learn to look to Love first. In the name of Jesus we pray, amen.