

MONDAY

25 JULY

James the Apostle

Jeremiah 45:1-5

or Acts 11:27 – 12:2

Psalm 126

Acts 11:27 – 12:2

or 2 Corinthians

4:7-15

Matthew 20:20-28

TUESDAY

26 JULY

Jeremiah 14:17-

end

Psalm 79:8-end

Matthew 13:36-43

WEDNESDAY

27 JULY

Jeremiah 15:10.

16-end

Psalm 59:1-4. 18-

end

Matthew 13:44-46

THURSDAY

28 JULY

Jeremiah 18:1-6

Psalm 146:1-5

Matthew 13:47-53

FRIDAY

29 JULY

Jeremiah 26:1-9

Psalm 69:4-10

Matthew 13:54-end

SATURDAY

30 JULY

Jeremiah 26:11-

16. 24

Psalm 69:14-20

Matthew 14:1-12

REFLECTION

This week we spend some time in the company of a heartbreaking prophet. Jeremiah lived through the period in which

Jerusalem was conquered and the Temple destroyed, in 587 BC. But Jeremiah's great and painful burden was to speak God's words of warning and coming judgement in the years before this terrible catastrophe. Over and over again, Jeremiah brought his nation the warning of what was to come if they did not change their ways, but his prophecies were met with anger and derision.

In this week's readings Jeremiah is shown a faulty pot, which the potter simply reworks into another vessel. The people of Israel had come to assume that they were essential to God, and could afford to take liberties. But God reminds them that they are there to serve him, not the other way round.

Perhaps all of us who think of ourselves as God's people need to be reminded that we are called to shape our lives around God, not to take God for granted.

PRAYER

Lord God,

When we assume we are essential to you,
rework us to become the vessels you need us to be.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.



Jeremiah lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem. Brussels Cathedral. [Jeremiah / Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com)

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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

PART II – EARTHQUAKES AND VIRUSES

Theologian and writer Jane Williams continues her series about evil.

If you listen to some contemporary opponents of Christianity, you would think that no Christian before the twenty-first century had ever noticed that there was a problem about the existence of evil in a world made by a good and powerful God. But actually, of course, Christians have pondered this question for centuries. In the fourth century, Augustine of Hippo came up with a theory which has lots of strong points, though it may not be entirely convincing. Augustine argued that since everything that God made is good, there is no such thing as evil. Evil has no real existence. Instead, what we have are things that are, in themselves, good, but have got themselves into damaging relations with other good things, so that they start to hurt and distort each other, and the more this happens, the more the cracks in the goodness of the world begin to run through everything and wreck it. So Augustine's theory might suggest that an earthquake, for example, is morally neutral. It is only when there are people living in its path that it becomes "evil". Similarly with a virus: it isn't, in itself, "evil"; but if it gets into a human being, it can be devastating.

The strength of this idea is that it allows us to assert the genuine goodness of all that is made: if only we could keep out of the way of earthquakes and viruses, all would be well. Augustine was not suggesting that the results of evil are negligible. On the contrary, the damage done as created beings grind and destroy each other, as they get out of their proper relations with each other, is tragic. But Augustine held out the hope that because evil has no ultimate being, when everything is restored to its proper place in the kingdom of God, the wolf really will be able to lie down with the lamb, with neither contradicting its true nature.

Does that work, as a theory?



Sixth week after Trinity

Monday 25 July to
Saturday 30 July
2022

LIVE
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
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and
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