

Jeremiah 18:1-11

October 28, 2012 – 22nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Any Time to Turn?

↪ **God's point at the potter's house. (vv.1-10)**

↪ **Now is the time. (v.11)**

In the name of LORD of nations, dearly redeemed people of God:

Voice recognition is everywhere. It used to be the only “Siri” I knew was Pastor Gawrisch’s wife at Christ Lutheran. Now I have a “Siri” on my iPhone who can recognize my voice and give me directions almost anywhere. There are a few problems. One columnist wrote that following Siri’s maps in Washington, D.C., will either get you arrested or in a collision with a 747 at Dulles Airport. And spiritual matters are out of the question. Ask Siri, “How do I get to heaven?” You end up with fifteen possibilities, including: Kate Haven Golf Course, Chicken and Fish Soul Food, Smokers Haven, Seventh Heaven, and Twelve Volt Heaven. Technology from man’s mind cannot get you to the heart of God.

First, you need to know where you are, then where you’re going and how to get there. We need directions before it’s too late. In your heart of hearts is there **Any Time to Turn?**

↪ **God's point at the potter's house. (vv.1-10)**

Long ago when apples were for eating, God took a busy prophet on a field trip one day. *This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.”* We don’t know the name of the potter – not important. The LORD wanted Jeremiah to watch the potter’s hands. It’s a good thing you kids play with Play-Doh. Most of us have never seen a potter working at his potter’s wheel, but you can still see **God’s point at the potter’s house.**

So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. When I’m with my grandsons making things out of Play-Doh, if they don’t like what they made, you know what they do? We used to call it, “Mashy-smashy.” Smash it down, mash it up and start over. You don’t even stop to think that cute little bear you were working on might have hurt feelings. If it was a picture of yourself, don’t worry, it won’t hurt your face to “Mashy-smashy.”

Are you beginning to get **God’s point at the potter’s house?** *Then the word of the LORD came to me: “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.”* Now there’s a scary thought. This is not Halloween make-believe. The LORD God Almighty wanted His people to first realize where they were: *“in my hands.”* It is a dreadful thing to be held in the hands of an angry God.

God’s hands are big enough to hold our whole nation. The Creator of the universe spoke clearly, but Adam and Eve failed to recognize His voice. They fell for Satan’s lie, “Did God really say?” So God could have smashed them or mash us up whenever He wants. *“If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.”* God speaks. Do we recognize His voice?

After the Revolutionary War, Great Britain still wanted control over America. They defeated Napoleon, then focused across the Atlantic on their former colony. The summer of 1814, was one of the hottest on record. Fires were easy to start by British soldiers marching into Washington, D.C. President Madison was away, but his wife, Dolly Madison, was busy rescuing national treasures from the Presidential Mansion. She barely escaped as enemy troops marched up Pennsylvania Avenue. The

British burned every government building they could as the sky grew darker. Washingtonians took cover, but the British ignored what they thought would be a little thunderstorm. Soon a mighty tornado roared through the city and tore into the British army. Uprooted trees, flying cannon, falling buildings and debris killed many British soldiers. Two hours of torrential rain doused fires. When the British retreated to their ships, two were washed ashore. The British reported more losses from the storm than by American guns.

Be careful how you judge national or natural disasters. Was God angry with America by letting her capital burn? Or was it the British who upset Him? God often uses wicked people to punish wicked people. God calls everyone to repentance. He said to Jeremiah. ***“If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman.”*** (15:9) What will God do with America? What will God do with you? Is there **Any Time to Turn?**

↪ **Now is the time. (v.11)**

Election Day may never come. The last trumpet could sound today. Elections cannot solve your troubles or the turmoil of your soul. Whether folks are still saying, “It’s the economy, stupid,” or more concerned about foreign policy – nothing trumps God’s personal concern for your immortal soul.

He commanded Jeremiah: ***“Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, ‘This is what the LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.’”***

Can you recognize what God is saying to each one of us? If we had perfect rulers and perfect civil laws, we could still go happily to hell. Israel got its laws directly from God, the best they could be. A few of their kings were really good like King Josiah. But the rest of the government officials and the people refused to follow him. And Josiah finally died in a battle he did not have to fight.

Look where you are – like clay in the hand of the potter. Look what God wants to do – form you into a vessel to hold His loving kindness and tender mercy. You know this is true because the cross of Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, proves it. Look where God wants to take you. My iPhone “Siri” may not know the way to heaven. But Jesus says, ***“I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life.”*** (John 14:6)

Whatever happens to the Marriage Amendment for our state Constitution, there’s something more important: Do you support God’s gracious gift of marriage as He designed it – one man and one woman *for life*? I added those last two words because many Christians have gone soft on marriage God’s way – “till death us do part.” The writer of *Meditations* (p. 63) last Thursday asked some piercing questions:

“The last time you learned that a couple you knew was living together without the blessing of marriage, how did you react? Were you upset, or were you largely indifferent? In your conversations with people who are single and sexually active, do you ever suggest that what they are doing is wrong? Do you tell them that you are concerned about their souls? Do you say anything at all?”

“People who commit adultery and sexual immorality place themselves under God’s judgment, but so do people who see their friends and family members sinning and by their silence give them tacit approval. We may not be guilty of adultery, but we are still guilty of not honoring marriage.”

That’s why I’m so glad that Jesus died for me. I have not always honored God as the Giver of every good and perfect gift. But look at His hands. They still hold the trophies of His love for you and me. Now into your hands He puts the weapons of the Spirit which demolish human arguments. **Any Time to Turn?** The Psalm writer puts it this way: ***“For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD.”*** (149:4-9 NIV84) Christian, use your weapons of prayer and praise. **Now is the time.** Amen.