



**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**  
September 9, 2021  
**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT**  
**DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
**By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces**



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Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

**Today's Inspiration in one sentence**

**“I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.”**

(Jonah 4:2)

**Did You Know?**

- **Jeremiah** – also called the “*weeping prophet*” was a member of the priestly household of Hilkiah. His hometown was Anathoth. (1:1) The Lord commanded Jeremiah not to marry and raise children because the impending divine Judgement on Judah would sweep away the next generation.
- His book is dated between 626 and 586 BC. It was a period of storm and stress, when the doom of entire nations – including Judah itself – was being sealed.
- But the very God who compelled Jeremiah to denounce sin and pronounce judgement was the God who authorized him to announce that the divine wrath had its bounds, its 70 years. (The NIV Study Bible; Jeremiah)

**Personal Insight**

As my daughter started her fall semester at the university after the September long weekend, - and this time she had a chance to do it by going to the campus and meeting other schoolmates in flesh, and professors in real - the meditation below resonated with my soul. An academic who is truly concerned that his students would do well! That's amazing! And it is remarkable because – based on the students' experience - not all the university teachers are like that.

In our adult lives, when we enter the ‘labour market’, we might also find that bosses and managers of employing companies represent both type of attitude: some genuinely want us to do well, while others might care more about their own advance.

The Scriptures tell us that when we come to the evaluation of our existence, and we stay where we are at birth, we **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23). The good news in this situation is that the Almighty calls us out from this condition. And the Holy One also provides us the tools and means to **“be transformed by the renewing of your mind”**. (Romans 12:2)

God has sent Jesus Christ through whom we may gain a rehabilitated identity, and also sent the Holy Spirit to be with us always and to provide us guidance as we work towards growing in faith and in the likeness of our Saviour. God wants us to prosper, and tells us through Isaiah: **“Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.”** (Isaiah 55:3)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



## Help from the Holy Spirit

*Return, faithless people. I will cure you of backsliding.*

Jeremiah 3:22

### READ Jeremiah 3:11–15, 22

While my classmates and I used to skip the occasional lecture in university, everyone always made sure to attend Professor Chris' lecture the week before the year-end exams. That was when he would unfailingly drop big hints about the exam questions he'd set.

I always wondered why he did that, until I realized that Prof. Chris genuinely wanted us to do well. He had high standards, but he would help us meet them. All we had to do was show up and listen so we could prepare properly.

It struck me that God is like that too. God can't compromise His standards, but because He deeply desires us to be like He is, He's given us the Holy Spirit to help us meet those standards.

In Jeremiah 3:11–14, God urged unfaithful Israel to acknowledge their guilt and return to Him. But knowing how stubborn and weak they were, He would help them. He promised to cure their backsliding ways (v. 22), and He sent shepherds to teach and guide them (v. 15).

How comforting it is to know that no matter how big the sin we're trapped in or how far we've turned from God, He's ready to heal us of our faithlessness! All we need to do is to acknowledge our wrong ways and allow His Holy Spirit to begin changing our hearts. – By **Leslie Koh**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Loving God, thank You for Your merciful love that enables me to be holy like You are. Please help me to let Your Spirit heal me of my faithlessness and transform my heart. Amen.**

Where do you struggle to follow God faithfully and obediently? How can you ask God to heal you and help you?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The faithlessness of Old Testament Israel is a story that began at the foot of Mount Sinai. There, a covenant agreement between God and Israel (Exodus 24:3) established the new nation as a people of God. This covenant was quickly forgotten. Having been rescued from bondage by the God of their ancestors and having witnessed numerous acts of wonder by that same God, the Israelites turned their backs on Him—seeking instead a god of their own making, a golden calf (Exodus 32). Even worse, the architect of this false idol was Aaron, chosen by God to be the high priest of the nation of Israel! Similar patterns would continue throughout the days of the judges and the kings, ultimately culminating in exile as God lovingly disciplined His people to bring them back to Himself. Israel's frequent faithlessness stands in stark contrast to the constant faithfulness of God. – By **Bill Crowder**

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