



### **Grain**

“Where there is no forgiveness and no forgetting, society is fated to replay forever the same old hostilities, resentments and alienations.” Water Brueggemann

### **Field**

“31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt--a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

### **Thoughts**

The purpose of prophesy was to protect God’s covenant. When people broke the covenant, especially through economic systems that abused vulnerable populations, the prophets interfered. “The major activity of a prophet was interference,” said Abraham Heschel. Prophetic cries about the long-term violations of God’s covenant left the prophets extremely unpopular as they sported their ancient Stop Bullying stickers when few others would. Why didn’t more people speak up? Heschel attributes the silence of so many to an admiration of power. Among the people who were seduced by leaders who held illusions of being more than God were those who suffered at their hands.

What kind of covenant do we have with God and one another today? What do we teach about relationships to youth who become vulnerable to sex trafficking while the kind of demand from adults that puts them at risk remains high? What kind of planet are we leaving them? How do we support the voices of youth who don’t feel safe in schools and have inherited cycles of inequality? How do we support policies that reflect how we care for seniors and people with disabilities living in poverty? Will there ever be restorative justice? Will forgiveness, not to be confused with the acceptance of abuse, be part of the prophetic interference?

Not all was gloom and doom for Jeremiah, though a lot was. In chapter 31, we get a glimpse of God’s immense generosity and forgiveness, which could translate into a community’s ability to get out of cycles of hatred and retaliation, and to actually start over. God offers a new covenant to the people coming out of the profound displacement of exile. As we live on the cusp of change in our communities and world, will there be real transformation? Forgiveness is a large part of our journey and God’s covenant with us. Happy Monday!

### **Prayer**

Highly recommended.

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy