

Sermon: Pentecost 15, Year C, 10-09-05
Jeremiah 18:1-11; Psalm 139:1-5, 12-18; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-37

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: “Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.”

God speaks to us wherever we are. We don’t have to be in church to hear God’s words. We can be in the midst of the world, and God speaks to us. We can be doing the shopping or the housework, earning our living or sitting with the cat on our knee. God’s near to us and God is interested in us. Do we think we have to hear the divine voice thundering pronouncements from the skies? Not at all! The still, small voice – the voice of coincidence that is not coincidental, of the accidental that is no accident – this is how God speaks with us, reassuring us of God’s loving kindness towards us, God’s longing to make us whole. Reminding us, too, that we are created in God’s image, and so it’s vital for us to respect and act on our integrity – or else we insult God’s creation, insult the divine within us. And as we treat ourselves, so we are called to treat one another – loving one another as we love ourselves, loving ourselves as we are to love God ... loving God as the very breath of life.

God called Jeremiah to the potter’s house – to the then equivalent of the shopping mall. In the very midst of the bustling life of Jerusalem, God spoke and Jeremiah listened.

God spoke – the God who has formed us and knows us, who is close and intimate and gives us life.

Jeremiah listened – as we are to listen, to the invitations of God, the promises of God, the reassurances that we are known and precious and shaped by God’s hand.

Even in the midst of the hustle and bustle, the commerce and the manufacture, Jeremiah could hear God’s voice. He heard it because he wanted to hear it – because there was nothing more important to him than the messages God gave. We hear God’s voice – because deep down, in our heart of hearts, and the quiet places of our mind, we long to hear it. We’re desperate to hear the truth about ourselves – not the brutal truth that our critics will heap on us, nor the harsh and condemning words that we hear daily in our heads, but the small and gentle truth, the deep and lasting truth, that we are important, that we are blessed, that God has made us because God wants us to be., to be whole and happy and full of blessing for ourselves and everyone else on this gracious, blessed planet! That’s at the heart of it! That is the point of it all. God has made us and we are God’s own – and we are putty in God’s hands, miraculous clay fit to be shaped into all manner of beautiful and wonderful things – and all for God’s delight, and our own!