

Real Change

2. Heat: how does God enable me to grow in response to my situation?

Jeremiah 17:5-14

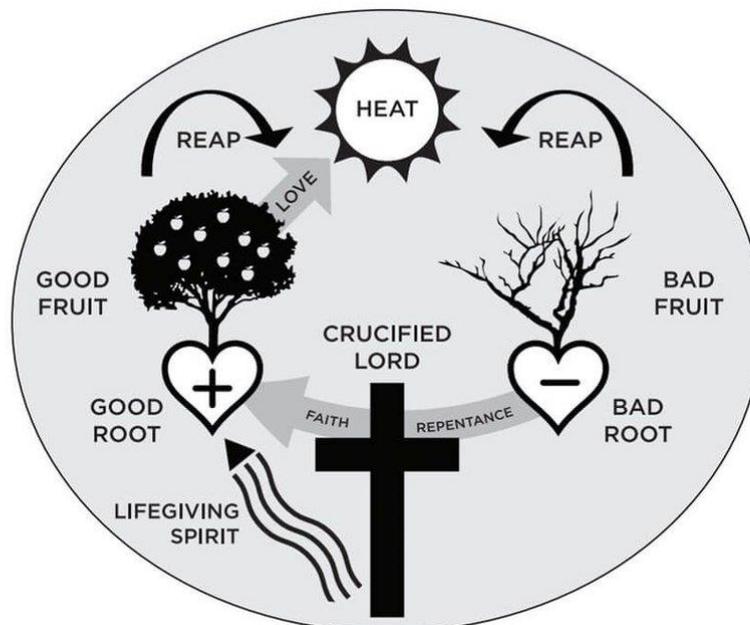
Recap from week 1: Why change?

- God created us in his image to reflect his glory
- We have broken that image by going our own way
- Jesus came to restore the broken image of God in us
- God is continuing to change us into the likeness of Jesus with ever-increasing glory

Introduction

- What do you think it means in Romans 8:28 that *'in all things God works for the good of those who love him'*?

A model for understanding change



The 'heat' in the above diagram and mentioned in Jeremiah 17:8 describes the situations we all face that put us under pressure. These could be struggles such as: a challenging relationship, physical health, work problems, disappointments, injustice, your circumstances, unwelcome news or being treated badly. They could also be good things such as a new relationship, good health, career success, moving to a new home, getting married that can put us under pressure by making God seem unnecessary or irrelevant.

Group discussion

- Jeremiah 17:5-8 describes two different types of tree: 'a bush in the wastelands' (v.6) and 'a tree planted by the water' (v.8). What different types of people are they meant to represent?
- How do we turn from being 'a bush in the wastelands' to a tree that 'never fails to bear fruit'? (v.9, 13-14)

With a discussion partner

- What is the specific heat you noticed in your life last week? In what ways do you tend to respond to that heat? (*Write a summary sentence about your discussion partner's struggles*)

Group discussion

- Why does the one who puts their trust in the Lord not need to fear or worry when heat comes (v.8)? See also John 7:37-39.
- How does drinking from Jesus as 'the living water' change our attitude to heat? See also 1 Peter 1:7.
- Think about one of the things you worry about (eg the future, getting ill, difficult decisions, being rejected). How will trusting in God more help remove that worry?

With a discussion partner

- Reframe your summary of your discussion partner's situation so it includes some beautiful truths about God and his good purposes. For example, if your summary was 'Bob has been struggling with a huge workload and a very unsympathetic boss who regularly expects the impossible', your reframing could be 'God has allowed the burden of Bob's work to grow a great deal recently. It's hard for Bob to love the job like he used to, but God's love for him has not changed, and he has a plan to bless Bob as he leads him through this time.'

Pray together.

Homework

Next week we will be thinking about thorns: our ungodly reactions to heat. Over the next week, each time you notice yourself responding badly to your heat, ask yourself these questions:

- What am I thinking?
- What am I feeling?
- What am I saying?
- How am I saying it?
- What am I doing?
- What am I not doing?
- What is the result of my response?