



*"...The heart of the sons of men
is full of evil,
and madness is in their heart
while they live..."
(Ecclesiastes 9:3)*

*Wherewith shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before the high God?
He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;
and what doth the LORD require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God?
(Micah 6:6, 8)*

a homily on just society and our mad state of rebellion

healing our brokenness inadequately (part 9):

the iniquity of inequality... bigger, deeper, higher, grosser than ever

*"They heal my people's brokenness inadequately, asserting:
'It's OK! It's OK!'
But nothing is OK!" (Jeremiah 6:14, author's translation).*

Introduction

Judicial inequality and injustice. Economic inequality and injustice. Rampant greed and fraud on the part of wealthy individuals and essential institutions. Bribery and corruption of government officials. Inordinate influence of the wealthy of laws and public policy. Unjust laws and policies favoring the powerful and influential while disadvantaging the less powerful and influential. The infliction of the vulnerable with hunger, homelessness, sickness, and anxiety. Self-righteous justification of the mad state of rebellion. Stubborn refusal to acknowledge these and a host of other societal ills.

No, I am not talking about America of 2024. However, if the shoe fits...

I am talking about late 6th and early 5th century B.C. Judah. These, and many other evils undermined the temporal, moral, and spiritual health of the nation. All the signs were there.

The nation was on the verge of collapse. It was in desperate need of truth, however sour it might be to the national palate. But the nation's shepherds fed the populace an empty diet of propagandistic myths of nationalism. Many of Israel's prophets joined the fray. Israel's watchmen, Jeremiah charged,

“Heal my people's brokenness inadequately, asserting:
‘It's OK! It's OK!’”

“But nothing,” Jeremiah replies, “is OK!”

Does this, too, sound familiar? Strike close to home? It should. Too often, today's religious leaders—whether they go by the name, “prophet,” “priest,” or “pastor”—seem to lack both discernment and courage. They seem utterly blind to and mute about sin and evil, unless, of course, it involves some form of real or imagined sexual deviance. If they do speak out, it is often with muted, vague, delicate, and generalized voices and statements. These shepherds seem not up to the challenging task of bold and clear truth telling of the sort that our society so desperately needs. Now is not the time for delicacy and caution.

This homily is the ninth in an ongoing series entitled, “Healing Our Brokenness Inadequately,” based on Jeremiah 6.¹⁴ In this series, we explore specific examples of individual and societal sins about which political and religious leaders all too often remain willfully blind or, if sighted, stubbornly mute... and therefore complicit. Tragically, sometimes their complicity is even active and enthusiastic. With these examples in mind, we will often call upon the classic Hebrew prophets as well as other ancient and not so ancient prophets to speak as if from the dust. We read these discerning writings in light of the societal ills and injustices that abound in our modern world. Sometimes we even imagine and take a stab at replicating what a Hebrew prophet might have to say if he were to come to us from the past.

In today's homily, we offer another example of our brokenness about which too many remain silent and worse, in which too many engage themselves. Such moments as ours desperately

cry out for the type of discernment, boldness, and truth-telling so characteristic of the Hebrew prophets.

Some fun facts

I have shared this fun fact before, but it is simply too juicy to not be partaken of again and again.

“It would... take a typical worker two lifetimes to make their [CEO’s] annual pay.”

“The median pay for workers at companies included in the AP survey was \$77,178, up 1.3% from \$76,160 the previous year. That means it would take that worker 186 years to make what a CEO making the median [CEO] pay earned just last year.”¹

Here’s another fun fact.

“The wealth of the five richest people in the world, they found, has more than doubled, from \$405bn (£320bn) in 2020 to \$869bn in late 2023. That’s an increase of about \$14m an hour...”²

What are the wealthy doing with all their wealth? Well, lots of fun stuff. But we’d be here for a lifetime if we enumerated all their waste. Here’s something, though, that they are *not* doing with their wealth.

“Thousands of high-income earners have not filed tax returns for several years, but the cash-strapped Internal Revenue Service did nothing to get them to pay what they owe....

“About 25,000 cases involve people whose income is known to the agency to be above

¹ By Alexandra Olson, May 31, 2023

² “The Big Idea: Should We Worry About Trillionaires?” *The Guardian*, Duncan Weldon.

\$1 million, IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel said...”³

These wealthy American bandits get away with it because America’s political right have strangled the IRS through funding cuts. These tight-fisted American cheats feel no responsibility to society. They do everything in their power to avoid contributing to society’s welfare. And when they do pay a little tax? They have rigged the system so that they pay the absolute minimum possible.

“The wealthiest Americans are reaping the most benefits from regressive tax codes. In 41 states, the report found, the top 1 percent richest households pay a lower proportion of their incomes than the rest of the population, despite having the most ability to part with their incomes; and in all but four states, the top 1 percent are taxed less than the middle 60 percent, a group often categorized as the ‘middle class’ by economists...”

These upside-down tax rates have led to tax structures that worsen wealth inequality...

“...Those with the lowest 20 percent of incomes are taxed at an average rate that’s three times higher than the rate of the wealthiest earners in the states with the 10 most regressive tax codes — Florida, Washington, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas, Illinois, Arkansas and Louisiana...”

“In Florida, which ranked the worst on ITEP’s inequality index, the top 1 percent pay only 2.7 percent of their incomes on taxes on average, while the lowest 20 percent pay 13.2 percent — nearly five times more.”⁴

“Taxation regimes have generally become less progressive. In 1979 the top marginal rate of income tax was 83% in the UK. In the US it was 70%. Nowadays, the rates are 45% and 37%, respectively. In summary, not only have the super-rich benefited from rising

³ “Thousands of Millionaires Haven’t Filed Tax Returns For Years, IRS Says,” *Washington Post*, Julie Zausmer Weil.

⁴ “In 41 States, Richest 1 Percent Pay Lowest Tax Rate of Any Group,” *Truthout*, Sharon Zhang.

asset prices and higher profits, they are taxed at half the level they were two generations ago.”⁵

Many Americans “live” on a minimum wage. America’s wealthy class lives on minimum humanity.

And then there’s the companies for which America’s wealthy “work” and lead. The companies are no less rapacious or any less the moochers than their wealthy CEOs.

“Senior executives at 35 different firms – from Tesla to T-Mobile US – received compensation worth more than the net tax payments of their respective employers between 2018 and 2022, the research found. All the companies generated billions of dollars in profit over the same period.

“Analysis by Americans for Tax Fairness (ATF) and the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) found the collective net federal income tax bill of all 35 companies was negative \$1.72bn over the five-year stretch – meaning they collectively received more money back from the government in refunds than they paid.”⁶

Still, they are never satisfied with exorbitant profits. They must stick it to the consumer.

“The average global mark-up, the difference between the price of production and the sale price, rose from 7% in 1980 to 59% by 2020...”⁷

We could go on. And on. And on. There is no shortage of reportage of such social deviance. It’s almost as if the press has taken the place of the prophets in revealing and decrying such iniquity.

⁵ “The Big Idea: Should We Worry About Trillionaires?” *The Guardian*, Duncan Weldon.

⁶ “Companies Paid Top Executives More Than They Paid In US Taxes – Report,” *The Guardian*, Callus Jones.

⁷ “The Big Idea: Should We Worry About Trillionaires?” *The Guardian*, Duncan Weldon.

the madness and absurdity of it all

Call me crazy, but there is no way, none whatsoever, that one individual's efforts in one year are worth any other individual's efforts over 186 years—not one, but two lifetimes. No way. There is no way—no way at all, anywhere, ever—that any individual can work hard enough or produce such benefits to self or others as to justifiably earning 14 million dollars *an hour*—nearly one to two million times more than the minimum wage earner, depending on the state. I mean, really! It's ridiculous. No one, even those benefiting from the insanity, can believe such nonsense.

Such wealth is so utterly irrational, preposterous, and wasteful as to boggle the mind. There is truthfully, no language sufficient to express the insanity. Indeed, only a mind twisted by nightmarish and godless logic could condone or justify such gross sin. Only utter sociopaths could accumulate such wealth and then demand that laws be established that allow them to keep their wealth from contributing to society's welfare. Only social deviants would craft and pass laws that make such inequality possible and allow such inequality to flourish. One could easily be persuaded that the wizards of this iniquity are actually possessed, warped by evil spirits from another dimension.

The fact is, no one needs more in their private life than another. A wealthy person does not need more caloric intake of food for health and survival than the poorest of the poor. No wealthy person requires cooler temperatures in heat or warmer temperatures in cold to survive the climatic variations of season weather. No individual requires more square footage of living space than another to be comfortable and happy. No ill person, wealthy or poor, is more deserving of access to a good doctor or life enhancing and preserving procedures and medications. To deny these and many other truths concerning the equalities of daily life is to deny the worth of souls—souls that are all of equal worth in the eyes of God. To deny the equal worth of souls in God's sight is to deny God, Himself.

Less genteel, Micah likened those who brought suffering on others through their own self-centeredness to cannibals, who

“pluck off their skin from off them,
and their flesh from off their bones;
³Who also eat the flesh of my people,
and flay their skin from off them;
and they break their bones,
and chop them in pieces, as for the pot,
and as flesh within the caldron.”⁸

This seems more than apropos to 21st century American society.

laying in the harlots bed of sin

Such inequality as America imbibes is indicative of a deep veil of sin and wickedness that darkens a world that has come to accept darkness as light. There is simply no way in heaven or on earth that God is in any way pleased with or condones such inequality as we have lightly touch upon or the behaviors and policies that make it possible—indeed, that institutionalize and lionize it. Such inequality and the behaviors and policies that make it possible are, however, utterly consistent with what is found, founded, and revered in hell, below. It is appropriate, then, that the practitioners of such inequality will open their eyes in hell.

“Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation, and of judgment, and of indignation: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!”⁹

This is not me being angry. This is not me being political or partisan. This is me being theological. This is me speaking truth as it always has been, as it is, and as it always will be,

⁸ Micah 3.²⁻³

⁹ DC 56.¹⁶

notwithstanding the insistent propaganda and false doctrines of America's economic sorcerers. This is me simply repeating what God, Himself, has so unmistakably and uncompromisingly stated. So, once more, here is the irrevocably word of God. Hear!

“It is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin.”¹⁰

“*It is not given.*” American style inequality is not “given.” It is not inevitable. It is not irresistible. It is not permissible. And it is not acceptable. God does not approve of it. Never in his wildest dreams did God intended the sort of vile inequality to exist that exists in America today. It is a gross lie that the wealthy are self-made. It is a damnable lie that the wealthy are God-made. American style economic inequality is sin of the blackest hue, utterly inconsistent with everything God is and stands for. It carries in its blackness devastating and life-threatening consequences for its practitioners.

“Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld.”¹¹

Equality is not something to be avoided. It is not to be sought grudgingly. It is to be energetically and gladly embraced, advocated, and labored for. It is not without its spiritual benefits. Economic equality brings an “abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit.” Conversely, God unequivocally affirms that inequality of any kind, and most certainly of the type of which a drunken America imbibes, decreases the Holy Spirit's influence and manifestations, making the discernment of reality and truth all the more difficult. A tragic and deadly loss.

Conclusion

Inequality in America has reached absurd levels. It is not accidental or inevitable. It is a

¹⁰ DC 49.²⁰

¹¹ DC 70.¹⁴

matter of wicked choice. It has been made possible through individual wickedness and unjust societal laws and policies. No society that chooses, allows, and propagates such absurd levels of inequality can be called sane. No society that chooses, allows, and propagates such absurd levels of inequality is safe. No society that chooses, allows, and propagates such absurd levels of inequality can endure. No society that chooses, allows, and propagates such absurd levels of inequality knows God, loves God, serves God, or can abide God. Any society that chooses, allows, and propagates such absurd levels of inequality is in the grasp of sin, the devil, and hell. Any society that chooses, allows, and propagates such absurd levels of inequality is in self-destructive rebellion against God.

But, you'd never know any of this from America's priests, prophets, or pastors. Such black wickedness goes largely unrecognized and uncensored by the watchmen on the tower whose calling it is to warn against just such gross wickedness. Their trumpets lie unused. Their voices mute. Their sheep scattered and slaughtered. This is consistent with the behavior of so many prophets in Jeremiah's day about whom he complained:

“They heal my people's brokenness inadequately, asserting:

‘It's OK! It's OK!’

But nothing is OK!”

Once more, Isaiah was less genteel in his complaint against the dereliction of duty on the part of Israel's watchmen of his day.

“His watchmen are blind.

All of them are unqualified watchmen.

All of them are mute dogs.

They cannot bark

as they are deep in dream, asleep,

enjoying their slumber.

These dogs are inherently greedy.

They can never get enough.

They are unqualified shepherds.

All of them consider only their own interests.

Each of them considers their personal gain the be all and end all.”¹²

May they repent of their dereliction of duty. May their wondering sheep heed the call to repent and begin to feel, think, and act more consistent with the exemplary and divine character of God.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

(edition: april 6, 2024)

¹² Isaiah 56.¹⁰⁻¹¹, author’s translation