NOTES

SERIES TAKEAWAY

What you're rooted in decides how you weather the season you're in.

EVERY NATION
BRISBANE

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Week 1: Rooted in Faith

OPENING PRAYER

Father, as we open your Word tonight, show us where our roots really are. Draw us toward the water, the living water that is Jesus. Amen.

OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

Have you ever kept a plant alive, or killed one? What happened?

WORD

Jeremiah 17:5–8

5 Thus says the Lord:
“Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,
whose heart turns away from the Lord.
6 He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.
7 “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.
8 He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

Hebrews 11:1–6

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS

Jeremiah spoke these words to a nation in crisis. Judah was squeezed between empires, and its kings kept looking for safety in political alliances, especially with Egypt, instead of in the Lord. Just before this passage, God says Judah’s sin is written “with a pen of iron” on their hearts (17:1). Their trust was set in the wrong place. So Jeremiah gives them a picture they would know well from the land itself. One picture is a scrubby desert shrub in salt country, alive but barely. The other is a tree planted by a stream, green and fruitful even in a drought. The poem deliberately echoes Psalm 1. There are two ways to live and two places to sink your roots, and only one of them holds up when the heat comes.

Look closely at verse 7. The blessed person “trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.” Jeremiah says it twice. God isn’t just one of the things this person relies on. God is what they rely on. That’s where Hebrews 11 picks up the thread. Faith is the assurance of what we hope for and the conviction of what we can’t yet see (11:1). It isn’t a feeling we work up. It’s a settled leaning of the whole life toward God. Verse 6 names its two roots. Faith believes that God is, and that he rewards those who seek him. That makes faith active. It goes looking. It reaches toward the water.

Jesus is the stream. He told a thirsty woman at a well that he gives living water (John 4), and he calls himself the vine we abide in (John 15). Paul prays that we would be “rooted and built up in him” (Colossians 2:7). Here in Logan, droughts come in many forms: rent going up again, a visa that still hasn’t come through, night shifts that wear you thin, a diagnosis, a quiet loneliness in a full house. Droughts don’t decide who we are. They show where our roots already go, and if we let them, they push us deeper.

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS

Key Reflections:
Everyone is rooted in something. Money, approval, achievement, comfort. We all draw life from somewhere. Be honest about where your roots go. Pot-bound is still bound. A plant left too long in a small pot circles its roots round and round and stops growing. Many of us are pot-bound in things too small to hold us up. Ask God to break you out of that. Your first reach shows your root. When things go wrong, where's the first place you reach? Your phone? Your bank balance? Your people? Practise reaching for God first. Faith isn't passive. It reaches. A river red gum's line along a dry creek bed tells you where the water is. Faith sends roots toward God on purpose. Seeking is reaching (Heb 11:6). Droughts reveal. They don't create. The heat doesn't make shallow faith. It shows it. Let the dry season show you the truth, not shame you. God sometimes lets the surface dry. Farmers water deeply but less often so the roots are forced down. Shallow, frequent watering grows shallow roots. If God feels quiet, go deeper. Rooted people still bear fruit. The tree "does not cease to bear fruit," even in the year of drought. Your faithfulness in hard seasons is fruit. Plant trees you'll never sit under. The heroes of Hebrews 11 "died in faith, not having received the things promised" (11:13). Their fruit outlived them. Live for a harvest bigger than your lifetime.

Gospel Invitation:
Turn from the desert. If you've been trusting in your own strength, name it before God tonight and turn back. That's what repentance is: turning around and planting yourself by the stream.
Come to the living water. Jesus invites the thirsty to come to him (John 7:37). If you've never put your trust in him, tonight can be the night you start, not by trying harder but by receiving.
Surrender the drought. Bring the dry places in your life to Jesus and ask him to use them to grow your roots deeper, not to drive you away.

Missional Activation:
Reach first. This week, each time something goes wrong, pause and pray before you reach for anything else. Notice the pattern, and share it with the group next week.
Be shade for someone in a drought. Who around you is in a dry season: a neighbour, a workmate, a uni friend, a relative waiting on a visa? Bring them a meal, send a message, or offer to pray with them.
Plant something you won't see. Invest in someone younger, whether a child, a student or a new believer, with a conversation, a scripture or an invitation to church. Leave fruit for the next generation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Jeremiah 17:5–8, what differences do you notice between the shrub and the tree? Which detail stands out to you most?

2. Jeremiah says the person who trusts in human strength has a heart that "turns away from the LORD." Why do you think trusting in people or ourselves pulls us away from God?

3. Where do people around us in Logan usually put their roots: money, security, reputation, family, achievement? Which of these do you feel pulled toward most?

4. When things go wrong, where's the first place you reach? What does that tell you about your roots right now?

5. Hebrews 11:6 says faith believes God is and that he rewards those who seek him. What does "seeking" God look like in an ordinary week with work, kids, shifts and bills?

6. Think of a dry season you've been through. Did it show shallow roots, deepen them, or both? (Leaders: this is a good moment to invite someone to share a short testimony, and to model it yourself.)

7. Is there a "small pot" you need to be repotted out of: something you've been drawing life from that can't hold you up?

8. What would it look like to reach toward the water this week?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, what we're rooted in decides how we weather the season we are in, so root us in you. When the heat comes, keep us from fear, and when the year is dry, keep us bearing fruit. Draw our roots deep into Jesus, our living water. Amen.