A. Jeremiah establishes a dichotomy between the unrighteous who trusts in human beings, and the righteous who trusts in God. This same dichotomy is being made in the Gospel by Christ giving the four ‘blesseds’ to the righteous, and four ‘woes’ to the unrightoues.

1. Christ uses the language of rich and poor, and while this certainly can be understood in a literal sense (i.e. in terms of monetary wealth), the the context of the lectionary readings for the weekend, it can also be understood in terms of the rich and poor in faith — those who trust in God, and those who do not.

2. The righteous in both Jeremiah and in the Gospel is the one who knows his faults, who doesn't trust in his own ability, who puts God before all else.
   a) And, Jeremiah doesn't pretend that the righteous are free from struggles. He uses the image of a tree planted besides waters: “It fears not the heat when it comes.”
      (1) In other words, Jeremiah knows that both the righteous and the unrighteous will face trouble, but because the righteous has faith and trust in God, he is able to be nourished by grace to have the strength to carry on, just as a tree will be nourished by a stream during a drought.
      (2) And, not only is the tree nourished. Jeremiah says that this tree will produce fruit, when it seemed most impossible for fruit to grow. In the same way, we are more prone to produce spiritual fruit when we are tested and stay faithful to God, than we are when we are not struggling.
   (a) Perhaps this is what Pope Francis means when he says that the Christian needs their faith to trouble them.

B. Saint Paul says that “If Christ had not been raised, your faith is in vain.” We can tease out a connection here to the other readings, that even if we are living well and doing virtuous things, if our life isn’t rooted in Christ, it will not produce spiritual fruit.

1. Archbishop Fulton Sheen said that Judas could have been the “saint of social justice” for his call to sell the expensive ointment and give the money to the poor; except, Judas was advocating for a good while not wishing to associate that good with Christ. So, he missed the entire point and grew cold with a dead spirit.

2. It all goes back to the garden. God gave our first parents literally everything: the whole world, all of creation—and it wasn’t enough. They had to taste the one thing that God told them wasn’t good for them. You see, thats always the Enemy’s claim: that if we put everything on the line for God, put it all in his hands, that he will ruin it for us and throw it away, that we will starve, that it won’t be enough, that God won’t provide. But, the truth of it all is that without God, all is in vain. Nothing has value. Nothing.

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