

Out Of Context

Week 4: God (Still) Has Plans For You

Weekly Summary: These words from Jeremiah 29 are found on coffee cups and Pinterest art. They remind us that God has plans to bless and prosper his suffering people. But make sure to read the context. Jeremiah spoke these words to people who had been taken captive in war. And they were not about to go home. God had great plans for his people, but they didn't involve a quick fix to all their earthly problems. In the same way, God's plan to prosper your spiritual life might not be the path you prayed for.

◆ Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

◆ Jeremiah 29:1-4 - This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2 (This was after King Jehoiachin^[a] and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) 3 He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said: 4 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

Jeremiah 29:5-7 - "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

Jeremiah 29:8-10 - Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. 9 They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the Lord. 10 This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place."

◆ Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

- ◆ Despite our **sins**, God **still** has plans.

- ◆ Jeremiah 23:5-6 - “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up for David[a] a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.”

- ◆ Jeremiah 29:11 - “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Points to Ponder

1. What unwise/sinful choices from your past have left you with consequences in the present? Do you expect God to make those consequences end soon? Why or why not?
2. Which word from Jeremiah 29:11 gives you the most encouragement? Which word would come in second place?
3. Read Hebrews 12:4-13. Find three truths that will help you handle the tough seasons of life when you are weary and losing hope.

Homework For Next Week:

Google “one another passages” to prepare your heart and mind for God’s reasons for doing life together in a Group of fellow Christians.

“Only in loss do we begin to grasp how overly dependent we had become on the gift for our joy rather than on the giver of the gift.”

*~ Daniel Deutschland,
The Theology of the Cross*