

God's Thoughts Toward Us Jeremiah 29:11

Have you ever felt that God was punishing you or had stopped hearing your prayers and turned His back on you? While in the midst of trials and hard times it's easy for us to turn our focus on self and begin to feel sorry for ourselves and start believing the lie that God doesn't love us anymore or that is mad at us. We do this instead of standing on what we know about our Lord and His faithfulness.

There is an old saying that says, *“When you find you don't know, fall back on what you do know.”*

We know that God loves us, His word assures us of this fact in many places.

1John 4:9-10, *“In this, **the love of God was manifested toward us**, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, **that we** might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us** and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*

And again in Romans Paul writes:

Romans 5:8 *“But God demonstrates **His own love toward us**, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

PK- And when we feel God has left us, God Himself assures us.

Isaiah 41:10 ESV *“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

And again

Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV *“It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you nor forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”*

PK- The prophet Jeremiah was tasked by God to be His spokesperson to His people Israel. This was not an easy task for sure, these were stiff necked people especially after they had been taken captive by the evil empire Babylon.

You see Israel had taken to worshipping idols above Yahweh the true God. And so God used Babylon to discipline Israel.

God had not turned His back on them nor forgotten them, on the contrary, He desired that they repent and return to Him that He might bless them according to His plan and return them to their land.

You see, God loves His own as a loving father.

Heb. 12:6, *“For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as His child.”*

PK- Listen to this loving Proverb of Solomon,

Proverb 3:11-12, *“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.”*

PK- God’s loving discipline has one goal and that is to bring repentance and reconciliation to restore that righteous relationship with His children.

Revelation 3:19 *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”*

PK- One of the great examples of God’s unwavering love is found in the account of Israel’s exile in Babylon found in Jeremiah 29.

Jeremiah 29:10-13, *“For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with **all your heart**.”*

We see here that God had a plan and the power to complete it. It would be seventy years of discipline for the disobedience toward God they had shown. God knew that’s how long it would take for the people of Israel to come to repentance.

The false prophets promised a quick return, but God, through Jeremiah told Israel His timing, in seventy years God said, *“I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.”* It was seventy years, *from the Babylonian victory at Carchemish in 605 BC to the return of the first exiles in 536 BC”* **God’s word is true.**

The prophet Daniel believed God’s promise when he read this letter while in Babylon captivity and realized that the 70 years were almost up.

Daniel 9:2-3, *“2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified **by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah** the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.”*

Daniel’s faith was in God’s promise and word.

Pastor David Guzik comments on the heart of this promise,

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD: God knew His own **thoughts** toward these exiled Jews in Babylon. *They* did not know or did not remember His thoughts toward them, so God wanted to state them in writing through Jeremiah’s letter.”

PK- At times it might be easy to think that God has forgotten us, His children here in America in AD. 2022. But we must not allow the enemy to put such thoughts in our minds and replace God’s promise of hope with fear. As His children we are to stay close to our Lord by feeding on His word through prayer and meditation as well as staying in close fellowship with His body.

King David wrote of God’s innumerable thoughts toward His people in **Psalm 40**: *“Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.”*

Spurgeon puts in his comments, “Brethren, when we cannot know the thoughts of the Lord because they are too high for our conception, or too deep for our understanding, yet the Lord knows them.”

PK- And these are not just any thoughts, these are thoughts from God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth but also our loving heavenly Father. God's thoughts are, "***Thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.***"

Pastor Guzik gives us perspective, "The exiled Jews lived in the experience of God's judgment upon their nation. It was easy for them to think that God was against them; that He intended **evil** for them. Through Jeremiah, God assured them that His thoughts toward them were **of peace**, and that in His heart and mind He had a **future and a hope** for them."

PK- We as children of God through Jesus Christ must take hold of these thoughts and promises from our Lord, thoughts of ***peace with a future and a Hope.***

I love what Guzik conveys here, "This promise was made to ancient Jews under the Babylonian exile, but they express the unchanging heart of God toward His people. Indeed, these were God's thoughts toward Israel under the Old Covenant; **we should not dare** to believe that He is less favorable to those who come to Him in faith, through the Messiah, in the New Covenant."

This story has a happy ending because God knew the future and that future was that Israel would repent and turn back to God.

Jeremiah 29:12-13, "*Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*"

As we leave today let us leave **knowing** that our God has us on His mind with **thoughts** of our **future** filled with **hope** that will carry us through any trials and tribulations we might encounter until we are eternally together with our Lord Jesus. But let's not fail to seek after our loving God with ALL our hearts knowing that He will be found, for He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Let's Pray