

In this passage we are about to read, God was giving promises to His people who were exiled because of their sins and idolatry. That is why this passage is so astounding as you read it. Not only for the original hearers of this message from the prophet Jeremiah, but even for us here today.

Text: Jeremiah 29:10-14 NIV

Vs 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. Vs 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. Vs 12 Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. Vs 13 You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. Vs 14 I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you, "declares the Lord, "and I will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."***

1 - The Promise of Restoration!

Vs 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."*

A- God promised restoration for His people. It was certain to happen! God is a God of restoration!

The Bible is the story of restoration! Recovering what was lost and brought back into original condition. There are so many stories of restoration in the Bible!

On a National Level – Israel coming out of Egyptian Slavery

On an Individual Level – The Book of Ruth, (God restoring a widow named Naomi and her Gentile daughter-in-law, Ruth)

New Testament Stories – whole villages reached and multitudes, healed, fed and blessed

The lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. Blind Bartimaeus, and on and on...

*God promises restoration for His people who will call upon Him.

There will come a day when God will restore this whole universe from the effects of sin and darkness.

Acts 3:21 2 Peter 3:13

B- God promises restoration in His way and in His time

"when seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise..."

Many of the Israelite exiles wanted to return to Jerusalem immediately, but **God gave the parameters of His restoration.** He would do it, but it would be **in His timing...He had a plan!**

When God specifically promises something, He is sure to fulfill it!

2 Corinthians 1:20 "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And through Him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." NIV

The work of Restoration He started in you at Salvation He will complete!

Philippians 1:6 "being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

2 - The Promise of His Plans

Vs 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.

God emphatically said that He has plans for His people. They are good plans! Plans to prosper you. Not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future.

Have you really contemplated the fact that God promised good plans for you? He really does have some great things lined up for you! He knows your name, your address and each strand of hair on your head! If you really believe that, wouldn't you want to know His plans? Do you think He has just left you to fend for yourself and to barely survive? No he hasn't.

This brings us to a crucial element - TRUST. Will you trust, HIS PLANS are BETTER than YOUR PLANS?

*Last week, we as a staff took a day to celebrate Christmas, hang out and do some fun stuff together. The surprise of it all is that it was called a 'mystery day.' Pastor Tony, since he is the Youth Pastor was given the responsibility of planning out our 'mystery outing.' We didn't know WHAT we would be doing for the day. We didn't know WHERE we would be going. All we knew was that we would leave at 9am and be back at 3pm. **The only thing we knew was that we HAD TO TRUST Pastor Tony with our lives!** But since we sort of believed he had our best interests at heart, we trusted him. And, it turned out to be an exciting, safe and fun-filled day!*

This goes back to **the heart of the matter! Do we really believe that God loves us and has good plans for our lives? We can say that we do, but yet **stubbornly make our own plans and do our own thing!***

The Apostle James rebuked the early church because many of them **didn't really believe God had good plans** for their lives and **they were bent on doing their own thing apart from seeking Him.**

James 4:13-16 "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil."

This brings us back to considering this new year of 2019. Can you guarantee that you will be alive this time next year?

Shouldn't we be as the Bible say, 'Sober-Minded and have the Mind of Christ?' In other words we should...

Realize we are temporary on this planet.

We should **live with eternity in mind.**

We should live to **find out what God's will is for our individual life and do His will.**

We should **live to please God and not just ourselves.**

***We can FOLLOW OUR PLANS** or we can **FOLLOW HIS PLANS.** But **WE CAN'T FOLLOW THEM BOTH** at the same time. The **ONLY** place we find His tailor-made plans for our lives is in the place of **PRAYER** and the place of **HIS WORD** when we seek His face!

3 - The Promise of Answered – Prayer

Vs 12 Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. Vs 13 You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.

Calling on God – What does it mean to Call upon the Lord?

It signifies a **deep cry of the heart**. It's not a surface prayer. It's not a casual prayer. Que, sada, sada...

No, it's a deep cry of the heart that says, "God, I really want to know you, I really want to hear your voice, I really want to follow your leading!" "I really want to be in right relationship with you, I really want my sins forgiven." "I really want you to reveal your plans to me and help me to follow."

Example: Jonah the Prophet – The prophet with anger issues.

Jonah knew the Lord, Yahweh, but he didn't have the heart of God. He was angry all the time.

God speaks to him to go to Nineveh and warn them of impending judgment in hope they would repent and find restoration. Jonah rebels and goes the opposite direction. Many of you know the story...

Jonah 1:17 "Now the Lord arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights." NLT

Lord sends a powerful storm and a hungry fish to swallow Jonah. **AFTER THREE DAYS and THREE NIGHTS in the belly of the fish, hard-headed Jonah FINALLY CALLS ON THE LORD!**

2:1 "THEN JONAH PRAYED to the Lord his God from inside the fish. He said, I CRIED OUT to the Lord in my great trouble, and He answered me. I CALLED TO YOU from the land of the dead, and Lord, you heard me." NLT

When you call on the Lord and He Answers...there is **nothing like it in the world. God helping you!**

4- The Promise of Himself

Vs 14 I will be FOUND by you declares the Lord and will BRING YOU BACK from CAPTIVITY, I will GATHER you from all the Nations and places where I have banished you.

When you **CALL ON HIM** and **SEEK HIM**, you **FIND HIM**.

Jesus Himself IS THE PLAN... He isn't going to give you a blueprint of His will.

He will give you **HIMSELF...** in that closeness of relationship, **He reveals His plan ONE STEP AT A TIME!**

The Apostle Thomas wanted to know the way to the Father's House, to Heaven. He wanted the plan or blueprint.

John 15:5 "Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" vs 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Colossians 2:2-3 NLT "I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious PLAN, which is Christ himself. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Jesus Himself is the Plan. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!

Conclusion:

- 1- God promises **RESTORATION** to those **'exiled'** because of their idolatry **through Jesus Christ**
- 2- God promises that **He has PLANS for you** in **JESUS CHRIST**
- 3- God promises to **ANSWER – IF – YOU CALL ON HIM** and **SEEK HIM** with **ALL YOUR HEART**
- 4- **God** promises **Himself! He is the plan! His presence will lead you!**

***Every day we must choose whose plans we will follow.**

Do we believe God has good plans for our lives – or not?

Will we follow our own plans – or – will we seek Him with all our heart to follow Him and His plans.

Will you dedicate the first week of 2019 to join in Corporate Prayer and Fasting?