

Playing the Long Game Part 6: Happily Ever After

Objective: To encourage us to live like Jesus in a world that is hurting and trust that God will use our lives to bring change to others.

Read together:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 “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.” 8 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. 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. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 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 will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

Jeremiah 29:4-14

- Do you think most Americans expect life to turn out well? Why or why not?
- Have you ever had a 'happily ever after' turn into a 'happily never after'? How did you handle that?
- What is your natural response when it becomes obvious that your plans are not going to work out the way you want?
- Do you believe that God's plans for you are bigger than your plans for yourself?
- When someone or some circumstance is the cause of your 'happily ever after' becoming a 'happily never after', what is your response to that person or situation? Based on Jeremiah 29:7, what does God say your response should be? How does that look in practical terms?
- What does it look like to "obey now and trust for later?" Why do we struggle so much with immediate obedience and delayed blessing?
- Is there an area of your life where you need to obey now and trust God for later?

Final Thought: God is always working for our benefit, even when we can't see it. Our responsibility is to obey him now and trust that he will come through for us in the future.

This Week: Where do you need to trust and obey God in your life? Who will you ask to help you be accountable?

