

JEREMIAH 31:7-14

FROM ISOLATION TO FAMILY

Jeremiah 31:7-14 – “For thus says the Lord: “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save your people, the remnant of Israel.’ Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. “Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’ For the Lord has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the Lord.”

Advent – “a coming into place, view, or being; arrival”

Because of his advent, Jesus our Savior brings us from isolation to family.

Q: What is *isolation*?

A: To detach or separate so as to be alone.

Q: What are some causes of *isolation*?

A: secret sinful behavior, new job, loss of a job, new baby, parenting a special needs child, infertility, foster or adoptive care, social anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, lack of joy in circumstances, racial tension or differences, relational issues

Proverbs 18:1 – “Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.”

3 Truths About Isolation and Family:

1. Our sin has isolated us and the enemy looks to keep us there (vv.7-9)

Isaiah 59:2 – “Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”

Colossians 1:21-22 – “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.”

1 Peter 5:8 – “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

2. The Father delights in gathering his children at home (vv. 9-11)

Luke 15:11-22 – “And he said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

J.I. Packer – “Adoption is a family idea, conceived in terms of love, and viewing God as father. In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship, and establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the father is greater.”

3. In the family, there is great joy and celebration (vv. 12-14)

Ephesians 2:12-13 – “Remember that you were...separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Matt Merker – “This moment in history is just that—a moment. But our identity as believers is rooted in something—someone—who transcends this age. Jesus has ushered in the age to come. We stand firm in him, even as we suffer with him. He has already endured the ultimate suffering for our sake. And so, we have every reason to rejoice in him.”

Response:

1. Come to the table and experience life in the family.