

STRAIGHT OUTTA CONTEXT

WEEK 2 STUDY GUIDE

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CENTRAL
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Monday, September 18, 2023

Read: Jeremiah 29: 11 (Jeremiah 29:4-14)

Scripture Verse: *“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon” Jeremiah 29:4*

Today's Thought:

For a better understanding of the verse, let us give you an overview of the book of Jeremiah. This book was probably written between 630 and 580 BC. Jeremiah is the author of this book. He announced to the Jewish people an imminent destruction of the nation if they did not repent of their idolatry and immorality. The Lord used Jeremiah, his prophet, to call Judah to repent of idolatry and immorality. This book is a book of the Lord's judgment on Judah because of its persistence in idolatry. We read: “The people of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the Lord. They erected their detestable idols in the house that bears my name and defiled it.” (Jeremiah 7:30-34)

After the death of Josiah, the last righteous king, the nation of Judah had almost abandoned God and his commandments. The prophet Jeremiah compared them to a prostitute. Jeremiah warned them that God would punish them for their idolatry and immorality. Because of their rebellion against God, the Lord had left King Nebuchadnezzar to subject them to his rule (Jeremiah 24:1). After Judah rebelled again, God brought Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies back to destroy and annihilate Judah and Jerusalem (Jeremiah 52). Even through this severe judgment, God promises the restoration of Judah and their return to the land God had given them (Jeremiah 29:10). Despite their rebellion against God, in his love he has a loving plan for them, and he has set a time to deliver them from their oppressors.

We read: “This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my beautiful promise to bring you back to this place.” Jeremiah 29:10. The people of Judah went into captivity because of the violation of two great principles established by God. They left the true God to worship idols which God had forbidden; and they indulged in immorality. Despite everything, God continues to prove his love for them. The people hurt him in their action, but he continued to show them love because his nature is love. We read: “Because of the great love of the Lord we are not consumed, for his mercies never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithful-

ness." Lamentation 3:22-23. Despite our sins, our faults, he loves us, and he proved his love in his Son Jesus Christ. "Still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. Don't you find that wonderful and fascinating!

Lord, thank you so much for your sincere love for me. I was lost in my transgressions, but in your love, you saved me. You gave me new life with a new name. Help me never to practice idolatry and immorality because you hate them.

- When and who wrote this book?
- What was the purpose of this book?
- Why did the Lord use Jeremiah?
- What happened to Judah after Josiah died?
- What were the two great principles that Judah violated?
- What did God show him?
- What does God show us in His Son Jesus?

Further Reading: Romans 5:9-11

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Read: Jeremiah 29: 11 (Jeremiah 29:4-14)

Scripture Verse: *“Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.” Jeremiah 29:5-6*

Today’s Thought:

We have seen that God let his people go into exile because they refused to obey God and walk in obedience to his commandments. Instead of obeying God and walking in the way of God, they preferred not to listen to him, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil heart. They preferred to follow the voice of the false prophets. We read: “But this command I gave them: Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ But they did not obey or incline their ear but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.” Jeremiah 7:23-24 Their disobedience to God brought them to exile. Despite their disobedience, God continued to reach out to them. He continued to show them compassion. Something very important to notice, amid exile, God continues to love them. Although they have offended God, he still loves them with an incredible love.

In verse 5 that we are studying, God gave them some advice to show them that, despite their mistakes, they are still his children and that he cares about them. He encouraged them to continue to progress where they are. Even if they are in exile, they must have in mind that exile will not be the end and that it will not last forever. God has appointed a time of deliverance. The lesson we found in these verses: as Christians, we don’t have to sit around moaning and lamenting our situation. Whatever the situation and the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we must continue to plan, reflect, and hope because our good God sees us where we are, and he has a wonderful project for us.

We must act, not going backwards but moving forward. We must advance with the times because time will not wait for us. Although we are suffering and are burdened here on this earth, we yearn for deliverance. We must not be discouraged; we must trust God in good times and bad. His assurance of eternal life revives our strength and increases our faith

and hope. We are not the first people crossed by anguish, calamity, suffering and obstacles. What we must keep in mind is that just because we are children of God doesn't mean we won't go through difficulties, anxieties, and obstacles. Jesus did not come to abolish such a thing; on the contrary he went through it. He endured exile, anguish, obstacles, suffering from birth to the cross but never abandoned his mission.

Since Jesus faced suffering and death and overcame them all, it is a guarantee that God is with us in our earthly pilgrimage. Sometimes in your journey it seems that you feel alone, you don't feel him next to you, you don't feel his presence. Don't be dismayed; he is with you. If he was with Jesus from Bethlehem to Egypt, from Egypt to Jerusalem, from Gethsemane to the cross, from the cross to the tomb, and from the tomb to heaven, I am sure he saw your misery, he heard you crying, he is worried about your suffering. Through Jesus Christ, we are children of God. Despite what you endure, you can continue to dream, to plan, to set goals for a better future because with God you will have victory and he will trample the enemy of your soul.

Lord, thank you for your word. Lord, sometimes, instead of focusing on you and your promises, instead of planning and setting goals for tomorrow, I complain, moan, and lament my fate. Now I know you have a better plan for me. Help me surrender my life to you while I apply your advice.

- What drove God's people into exile?
- What does God continue to do to his people?
- What was the advice God gave them?
- As Christians, what should we do?
- What should we know amid suffering?

Further Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:16-18

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Read: Jeremiah 29: 11 (Jeremiah 29:4-14)

Scripture Verse: *"For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place."*
Jeremiah 29:10

Today's Thought:

We saw in verses 5 and 6 that God encouraged his people to organize their lives during their exile. Instead of complaining, lamenting, and moaning about their situation, they must set goals and plan their future and that of their children because exile has an end; it won't last forever. In verse 10, which we are studying, we obviously see that God has appointed a time for their deliverance. The Lord said, "When seventy years is finished for Babylon, I will visit you." What catches our attention is that God does not forget his children no matter what condition they find themselves in. What is important is to focus on God, not on your own ability.

Let us remind you that you are not forgotten. You are children of God. He knows you; he sees your suffering and your misery. Do you remember the people of Israel in Egypt? We read in Exodus 3:7: "The Lord said, 'I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them cry out because of their slavers, and I worry about their suffering.'"

God created us, he knows us by name, he thinks of us constantly and he has set a time to topple the mountain that stands against us. In the meantime, we must remain in God's plan. Everyone has their own 70 years of exile before God. It can be literal or symbolic, but, either way, what we must know is that we are in God's plan. Whatever the situation and the circumstances that come our way, always remember that we are the flock of his pasture. We are his children; he will not leave us alone and he will not abandon us. We read in Isaiah 49:15-16, "Can a mother forget the babe in her womb and show no mercy for the child she has brought forth? Even if she can forget, I won't forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are always before me."

We are his workmanship, we carry his image within us, he cares for his image in us and, for this reason, he will never forsake us. Moreover, while we were astray, he redeemed us with a great price. In his love, he voluntarily decided to send his Son to die on the cross to redeem and forgive us. This is proof of a sincere love for us. "The grace of our Lord has been

showered upon me in abundance, with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy word that deserves full acceptance: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst." 1 Timothy 1:14-15 God wants you to draw near to Him, to constantly seek his presence in prayer, in meditation on his word, in fellowship, in adoration and praise. If there is one thing never to be forgotten, here it is: "God will never forget you, he will come to you and fulfill his good promise to bring you peace, joy, happiness that the enemy has stolen from you." I encourage you to continue to seek God, confess his Son Jesus Christ, pray to him, stand in his word, believe in his promises, lean on him and he will fulfill his promises to you.

Heavenly Father, you know where I am and how important I am to you. You did not forget me, and you never will. In the name of Jesus.

- What did God say he would do after 70 years for his people?
- What did God say about his people in Exodus 3:7?
- What should we remember in difficult times?
- How has God proven that he will never leave us?

Further Reading: Hebrews 13:5-6

Thursday, September 21, 2023

Read: Jeremiah 29: 11 (Jeremiah 29:4-14)

Scripture Verse: *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11*

Today's Thought:

We have seen that God never forgets his children. Sometimes our troubles and trials make us think that God does not care about us, we are not his children. We even ask the questions, "If I'm his child why did he leave me in this situation? Why are all these evils falling on me? That's enough! I cannot stand it anymore!" I believe that the people of Israel asked these same questions. They even doubted the power of God. They got angry with God. Do you remember their speech against Moses and God?

We read in Exodus 17:2, "Then they quarreled with Moses and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses answered, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?'" Moses made it clear to them that all their murmurings were not against him but against God. The people did not understand God's plan. They wanted to put God in their own plan but not fit God's plan. Sometimes when we don't understand God's plan, we speak in a way that offends him. Whatever circumstances you face, instead of murmuring, you better show gratitude to God, take the time to number the blessings and wonders of God in your life. Murmuring will not change circumstances. God knows his plan for you, so ask him to reveal to you his plan for your life and ask him to give you endurance and patience to wait for him.

As he said in verse 11, "I know the plans I have for you." He knows the plan, but you don't know the plan. It's like two friends making a journey. Whoever knows the way and has the GPS should be in front and the other would follow. God is the one who knows the way, he has the GPS, and like his children we must follow him to the end. If we follow him, we will not be deceived. He tells us the kind of plan he has for us: a wellness plan, not an evil plan. A better future and a hope, not a plan of destruction and condemnation. Don't let the situation of pain, sickness, torment, anguish, persecution make you forget God's plan for your life.

Sometimes we quickly forget what God has done for us when we find ourselves in difficult situations and start blaming God. It is very important to know that the God who delivered us from the previous situation

is still able to act for the present before which we find ourselves. If he doesn't, may his name still be glorified. No matter what, we're still in his plan. We must have faith in God and His plan for us. We read: "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Hebrews 11:6

In a nutshell, whoever believes in God must know that God has a wonderful plan for him. God's plan for us is above all earthly expectations. His plan for us is in his Son Jesus Christ. We read: "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3:2 Therefore, God's plan for us is to share "God's standard of existence forever, as his happy and loving family, to reign and possess with him his vast kingdom." Isn't it wonderful to hear that God has a wonderful plan for us?

Lord, thank you so much for this wonderful plan you have for me. All other plans are futile, but yours is permanent and eternal. Help me to stick to your plan no matter what.

- What did the people of Israel do to show you that they did not understand God's plan?
- What did they want to do?
- What should be your reaction when circumstances are not as you want them to be?
- As a child of God, what must you do in your journey with him?
- What must you have to stay in God's plan?
- What is God's final master plan for you?

Further Reading: Philippians 3:20-21

Friday, September 22, 2023

Read: Jeremiah 29: 11 (Jeremiah 29:4-14)

Scripture Verse: *"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:12-13*

Today's Thought:

We have seen that God has his own plan for us. All he wants from us is to submit our will to his will, our desire to his plan. Beyond the other plans God has for us, such as peace, joy, and happiness amid the sufferings, trials, and troubles of this world, he has a wonderful plan for us in His Son Jesus Christ. God's plan for us is above all earthly expectations. We said that God's plan for us is to share "God's standard of existence forever, as his happy and loving family, to reign and possess with him his vast kingdom." Something you should never forget, those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are in God's plan. Don't let the enemy make you doubt that you are in God's plan. Don't let the enemy make you think you're a failure. Always remember that you are children of God.

We read in Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." If there is a problem between you and your God, he has given you a way to solve it. There is no question of walking away from him. The people of Israel offended him; he always left room for them in his heart and held out his arms to them. God's love for us is still the same. Our God does not change because he is unchanging in his character, in his promises and in his plans for us. He gave us a way to settle our indifference with him. In Jeremiah 29:12-13 that we are studying, God told his people what to do when things went wrong with them. He said: invoke him and come to pray to him, seek him with all your heart. If they do, he will listen to them.

The problem is in us, not in God, because he gave us the secret to find his presence and feel it in us. He said we should seek him with all our heart. In the world we live in, we may experience failure and trauma, anguish, and hardship. We may have dark times in our life, but always remember that God remains the same. He is in control. We may feel abandoned by our loved ones and feel alone, but God will never leave us. What we must do is seek him in prayer with all our heart. He did not ask us to seek him with our lips but with all our hearts because if all our hearts belong to him, our life belongs to him too. So, he asked us to seek him with our hearts, not with our lips. He remarked to the Israelites, his

people: "These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but human rules." Matthew 15: 8-9. What God expects of us is to submit our lives to his will and to follow his commandments. It is for our good to seek God with all our heart and to abide in his word.

To follow the will of God with all our heart is to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior and to abide in his word. Thus, we will have perfect peace and joy in Christ. We read: "If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask what you will, and it will be given to you." John 15:6-7.

Lord, you are my heart's desire, you who want to be my joy forever. I want to experience the peace and joy of your presence. Lord Jesus, in your mercy, incline my heart to your requirements so that I may remain in your presence until the end.

- What should Christians always remember?
- What was God's action when the people of Israel abandoned him?
- What is his reaction to us when we offend him?
- What is the secret that God has given us to find his presence?
- What does God reproach his people for?
- What does it mean to you to follow God's will?

Further Reading: 2 Chronicles 15:2-4

Today is Friday. Saturday and Sunday are coming. "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." Psalms 84:10. I encourage you, whatever condition, and circumstances you find yourself, remember your personal encounter with Jesus Christ or, at least, making the decision to allow Jesus to meet you today.

NOTES



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