

SERMON: THE RIGHT LETTER AT THE RIGHT TIME

Jeremiah 29:1

Jeremiah 29:8-11

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Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Jeremiah 29:8-11

(8) For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. (9) For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord. (10) For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. (11) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Introduction

Jeremiah was writing to his peers who were in exile. They had lost their homes, their jobs, many of their traditions, and their hope. Nebuchadnezzar had carried away prophets, priest, elders, and others from their homes in Jerusalem to Babylon. For some unknown reason –scholars do a lot of speculating- Jeremiah was left in Jerusalem. He communicated with his exiled contemporaries often through letters. In fact, much of the Book of Jeremiah is the letters he wrote to them.

Before we get into my points, let me say that everyone has been in exile in a personal Babylon at one time or another. A devastating diagnosis, loss of a loved one, loss of a job, difficulty with school work, difficulty fitting in with others, or a conflict in a relationship that seems to be irreconcilable are all examples of contemporary exiles in

Babylon. The exile is real because sometimes it is too difficult to even talk about it. You can't even discuss it because you have trouble processing it and you don't know how to articulate it to others. Sometimes our trouble comes from the judgement and chastening of God such as the case in our text. Sometime, like the plight of Job, it is innocent suffering. Let's face it, no matter the causes, we all have to endure difficult circumstances. That's a part of life.

Of all the letters Jeremiah wrote to his brothers and sisters in exile, I believe this one met the most people at their most critical point of need. (This is just my humble theological opinion.) God is still meeting us at our most critical points of need. This letter is really a how-to guide- *How To Survive In Babylon*. Let see what Jeremiah told his peers in this letter. (I am preaching from the entire 29th Chapter.)

Exposition

1. Make The Most Of Every Situation, Whether Good Or Bad.

(Bloom Where You Are Planted.)

(Everyone Has A Mental Image Of The Flower Blooming In The Crack Of The Concrete.)

(Grow Like A Weed-Bloom Like A Rose.)

2. Ignore Disinformation.

(False Prophets Were Giving False Hope.)

(Face The Truth And Fight The Lies.)

3. Believe God Has A Customized Plan Just For Your Life.

(God's Plan For You Will Override All Of Satan's Plots Against You.)

(His Plan Unfolds Gradually –Patience Is Needed.)

(It's Good To Dream, But Make Sure Your Dream Aligns With God's Plan For You.)

(You Cannot Imagine The Good Things God Has In Store For You.)

Closing Thoughts

Jeremiah's letter to those exiled offered words of comfort and hope as they faced the future. He told the truth in love. He did not "sugar coat" their plight, but let them know God is able to deliver them at his own set time. In essence, he said, "It's dark now, but the future is bright. God has not abandoned you. He will see you through. There is light at the end of the tunnel and it is not a train barreling out of control coming down the track in your direction. The light is the sunshine coming from the opening of the exit ramp."

This belief in God, who will deliver, gave rise to the spiritual, *Trouble Don't Last Always*, and the hymn *Blessed Assurance*. If you have not accepted Christ as your personal Savior, please do so right now. Then you too can have this blessed assurance that comes from knowing that God delivers and that trouble don't last always.

Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

Related Scriptures

Psalm 31:19; Isaiah 64:4; 1st Corinthians 2:9

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