

Following Faith, Hope, Love & Grace

Week 3

What are we seeking?

Jeremiah 29:10-14

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. 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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 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.”

1: when things are completed v10

Jeremiah 29:10 (NIV2011)

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.

1. Here in this passage it is the punishment that is to be completed. The Jews sinned, God punished.
2. Sometimes it is finishing what was started.
3. Sometimes it is doing What God said to do before He gives us the next thing to go on with.

But it is **God’s timing**

And

2: I will bring you back to this place – what is this place?

The place God designed for them

Where does God want to bring us to? His place for us. The place God designed us to be.

The safest place to be is where God wants us to be, yet the scariest place to be is where God wants us to be.

3: God’s plans – for our good V 11

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV2011)

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.

Notice it is about God's plan – not what we think, not what we want – but God's plan.

And that plan is good for us, actually it is best for us.

Prosper – what does God mean

Not harm – what does God mean

Give hope- what does God mean

A future – what does God mean.

We usually look at these thought processes from a corporate perspective

But

What if we took this personally?

Look at our own self – what does God want us to prosper in, what does God want to protect us from, what hope does God want to give us, what is in our future?

4: Then we will call. V13

Jeremiah 29:12-13 (NIV2011)

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.

Some would think that it appears here that when we get our life together we will call on God.

That's a bit backwards according to these verses. It is too easy to isolate the verses from each other. The context is that God is bringing things together in His time, He knows what is ahead, and He knows the purposes of it. THEN when it is all laid out for us –

Then we get it. THEN we respond.

I think we get the point here that it isn't our seeking which enacts God's purposing but God who pulls things together so we will reach out to Him, and to use the term used in the passage "Seek" him.

But what is seek? What does it mean to us.

Well to seek is more intense than to look, it is to search out with a purpose, it is to identify something significant.

So let me say it again.

Notice it is after God has set the plans that we will prosper, not be harmed, have hope and a future.

After God has done His thing we get with the program.

John Stickl, Follow the cloud) Pg 23 – “We often believe that Jesus was inviting Peter to follow and he is inviting us to follow because he needs us to do things for him”..... “But the truth is Jesus invites us to follow him for our good not his.”

When we recognise God’s good intent – we want to know what He has for us!

Too often we think it is our obedience that enacts God working. That is backwards. **God works THEN we respond**. Sure, God answers prayer and listens to our concerns and He responds yet it is God who calls the shots and we need to be in tune with that.

Now look at v 13 again:

Jeremiah 29:12-13 (NIV2011)

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.

You will seek me and find me when you seek me **with all your heart.**

This is not about us being enlightened by knowing God, it is about recognising God’s rightful place in our lives and responding to that and to Him.

And notice too it is holistic. It is about all of your heart, all of our being. It’s putting it all in the ring for God. The whole thing that got the Israelites sent into exile was that they weren’t fair dinkum with God. They still worshipped but they didn’t live the lifestyle God wanted them to. There was no justice and mercy in their expression of who God is, there was no living for God daily, it was all about loving for self. Sounds a bit like today doesn’t it.

And notice- it is about getting back to God, it’s about being where God designed us to be.

Jeremiah 29:14 (NIV2011)

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.”

God wants us to be in His spot. He wants us to be where He thinks we will be best. In the context of this passage – God wanted His people back in the land that He set aside for them.

AND

He wants us where He has best designed us for. Locationally, physically, vocationally, ministry wise, mission wise and of course from a spiritual development perspective.

Where is your God spot?

Now it would be nice to leave it there.

BUT

The context carries us to the next bit.

Jer 29:15 “Because you have said, ‘The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon,’

Jer 29:16 thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile:

Jer 29:17 ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten.

Jer 29:18 I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them,

Jer 29:19 because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the LORD, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the LORD.’

Jer 29:20 Hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I

sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

Jer 29:21 `Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying a lie to you in my name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall strike them down before your eyes.

Jer 29:22 Because of them this curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: "The LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire,"

Jer 29:23 because they have done an outrageous thing in Israel, they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, and they have spoken in my name lying words that I did not command them. I am the one who knows, and I am witness, declares the LORD."

See the underlined verses:

Jer 29:17 `Thus says the LORD of hosts, behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten.

Jer 29:19 because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the LORD, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the LORD.'

Because they haven't listened God will keep dealing with them.
Oh.

You see there are consequences of our actions, our decisions, our thought processes. Now, where do we put that????
I'll let you work that through.

So, what has this to do with us now?

Isn't that where we say we want to be? In the spot God wants us to be.

Isn't it the direction we want to go? Following God's plan.

I think we need to be realistic about our evaluations.

Here is a few things to think about, and yes, some I have had to grapple with.

A. **Have we finished tasks God has given us?** Think here firstly, as yourself then as a church. The answer is probably no.

If that is so, we have to before God takes us on the next step.

B. **What is the God Spot we need to be in?** Where does God want us a a church, where does he want you as an individual? And what about me. I was asked at the church meeting if I am reevaluating my job here. I have been for a while and God is saying, among other things finish the job first. Blunt enough for you?

But I have to ask you to do the same – finish you responsibility to BBC.

C. The third thing here is a bit different. **Are you willing to be blessed by God?**

Then this becomes a template for us now. This passage gives us some practicalities.

1. Finish what we started.
2. Be willing to go to the place God designed us to be at
3. Be aware it's God's plans
4. Seek God with everything you've got (I've got) .
5. Expect God to keep working