



Main Passage: Jeremiah 29

Theological Theme

No matter the circumstances, we can rest assured that God's plans for our future are for our good.

Introduction

- ❓ What makes a story like this stand out? What is unexpected about it? How did Smith show the heart of Jesus for her enemy?
- ❓ When have you had a chance to witness to or bless someone who treated you badly? How did you respond?

1. Word of Instruction (Jeremiah 29:1-9)

Jeremiah wrote from Jerusalem to the Israelites who had been taken captive and were in exile in Babylon. He specifically addressed the leaders of the exiles who had influence over the large community of Jewish people who now resided in the foreign, enemy territory of Babylon. This letter was a prophetic word from the Lord and was to be treated with the same respect and attention as a prophet's spoken word.

- ❓ How can circumstances that are difficult or less than ideal cause you to miss opportunities to be a godly influence? How can you seek to take advantage of these opportunities?
- ❓ When was a time you faced consequences of choosing your own way over that of the Lord? What opportunity was there for you to glorify Him, even in those consequences?
- ❓ Application: When have you been tempted to believe something you wanted to hear over what you knew was God's will?

2. Promise of Hope (Jeremiah 29:10-14)

The exile of the Israelites would not be open ended. God assured them that it would not last longer than seventy years. Even though this would be a long season of judgment, Jeremiah gave a clear timeline, according to the plans of the Lord. This was both good and bad news: it was good news that there was a designated end but bad news that it would not be immediate. Most of the current generation would die off, but the next generation would be blessed to return home.

- ❓ Where do you need the hope of a promised future today?
- ❓ What threatens to draw your focus from the Lord? How can you guard against this?
- ❓ Application: What needs to change for you to seek God with your whole heart?

3. Message of Judgment (Jeremiah 29:15-32)

The exiles Jeremiah wrote to in Babylon were not the only Israelites who faced judgment. There were still some of the people in Jerusalem and Judah who were as guilty of sin against God as those who had been taken into captivity. Some may have believed those who remained in the land were somehow superior to the ones taken captive, but God made it clear that all would face the punishment they due for their sinful ways.

- ❓ What are some ways we might look down on others, believing our sin to be less offensive to God? What is the danger in this?
- ❓ How does it encourage you to remember that God will answer those who reject His messengers in the world today?
- ❓ Application: What's a situation where others oppose God and His message that you need to trust God's care for you in? How can you seek that these people also come to know Him?

Conclusion

- ❓ How is conviction over our sin and even facing the consequences for our sin ultimately good, even when very difficult?
- ❓ How can we as a group seek faithfulness to God during hard seasons?
- ❓ How can you seek the benefit of those around you so that you might have opportunity to point them to the truth about God?