

07 WORKING & WAITING

KEY TEXT: JEREMIAH 29:4-14

CENTRAL truth

Everywhere the exiles looked, it appeared as if their story with God was over. But in the middle of their most challenging situation, God's people received a letter from Jeremiah. The letter's main point: it's not over. Judah was promised a certain and glorious future in God. His promises for the future were intended to focus Judah's faith in that challenging present. No matter the difficulties we face, **our future in God focuses our faith today.**

key question

How do God's promises for our future strengthen our faith in the present?

Judah wasn't instructed to just wait around for their situation to change and their exile to end; while they waited for their certain and glorious future in God, they were to faithfully serve in Babylon. Their faithfulness in the present would lead to a future restoration. Our certain and glorious future with God ensures that every challenge we face is temporary and every act of faithfulness has a sure reward from God.

keep in mind

- Jeremiah 29:11 is among the most quoted verses in the Bible, but often it's quoted out of context. Emphasize that our future and hope is in God's plans, not our own. Judah was exiled in Babylon for their refusal to embrace God's plans. The future that gives us hope is one of thriving in God's perfect plans for us.
- Some students may be experiencing the lowest, most discouraged season of their lives so far. They may feel hopeless. Remind them that Jeremiah's letter of a certain and glorious hope for the future came right in the middle of Judah's greatest crisis. No challenge can triumph over God's plans for our lives.

application

What kinds of things does Jesus restore in our lives that have been broken through sin?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: The promises to the exiles in Jeremiah 29:12-13 are our reality now. Students can seek God and know for certain they will find Him. If they call to Him, He will answer them. Jesus gives us bold access to His throne of grace. We're not in exile, but in the forever family of God!

FOR THE LEADER: Emphasize that God sees past, present, and future perfectly. He knows what He's created us for and where we're headed in Him. We simply trust and obey the One who has the whole story of creation gently resting in His hands. You may want to share some examples of times in your life that trusting in His plans have led to your thriving.