



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

1, 2 Peter, Jude Sermon Series

Supports Session 7: Our Faith

Sermon Title: "Truths About God's Will" (Jeremiah 29:10-14)

Connection to Session 7

We learned in our group study this morning that believers grow in spiritual maturity when we seek to do God's will. We will learn in today's sermon that God has a plan for us, which is His will, and we are called to seek Him to discover this plan and thereby grow in maturity.

Introduction/Opening

How many of us have played hide-and-seek with our children and grandchildren? When the game starts, we tell them to go hide while we count to twenty. When we get in the mid-teens we hear from the living room, "I'm ready." Of course, we start in the kitchen and say, "He is not in here." The response back is, "I am in the living room." When we walk into the living room, we find our child hiding behind the lamp in plain view. We all need to know that the object of the game is not to hide, but rather to be discovered. Let's apply this truth to God's will for our lives. We discern from the Bible that God has a plan and will for us. He is not trying to hide this from us, but rather wants us to discover Him and thereby discover His will for our lives.

Outline

1. God has a plan for our lives (vv. 10-11)

- a. We must deal with context to understand what is being taught. The children of Israel were in captivity in Babylon, hence the reason for God saying that "when seventy years for Babylon are complete" (v. 10). They were not where they wanted to be, and they still had an extensive amount of time remaining in captivity. It would be easy to see how God's people may not have felt like God had plans for them or even that God was good. Instead, they may have been letting their feelings dictate their belief in God. Some of us may be able to relate to this when our circumstances are less than ideal.
- b. Yet, God, through Jeremiah, stated, "I know the plans I have for you . . . plans for your well-being, not for disaster" (v. 11). We can learn at least two truths from this passage.
 - i. First, God has plans for us. If we plan to go on vacation, we know where we are going before we set out. We know when to leave to help avoid traffic problems in major metro areas. We gas up the car prior to leaving, etc. We don't simply hop in the car and start driving randomly. If we plan a weekend getaway and work on the details, how much more will the God who loves us beyond measure have plans for us? He is not random in His plans for us. As we grow in spiritual maturity, His plans are to use us for

His kingdom. He desires us to grow spiritually so that we are increasingly more like Christ.

- ii. The second truth we can learn is that His plans are for our well-being and not for disaster. This may be the more difficult truth to embrace because our circumstances are less than ideal. The children of Israel could have easily felt the same way. Ultimately, God's promise to them, and to us, is that He will one day restore all things. Believers can count on an eternal future in His presence. The key to overcoming difficult seasons is learning to trust God more than self. His ways are not our ways because His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9). We must trust God more than our feelings.

2. We have a responsibility (vv. 12-13)

- a. Learning responsibility is a good thing. When we started our first job, we learned to get to work on time. If we failed to do this, we may have learned that our services were no longer needed. We have learned that God has plans for our well-being, even when our circumstances are less than ideal. Even in having plans for us, we have a responsibility in discovering what these plans are.
- b. First, we are to call on Him and pray to Him. The words "call" and "pray" are both verbs written in the present tense. A verb is an action word and the present tense shows that the action is to be completed in the now. When we find ourselves in the midst of a struggle, we are to call on the Lord because we know that He has great plans for us. We need not delay in asking Him to show us His plans and give us the wisdom we need to navigate our circumstances.
- c. Second, we are to seek Him with our whole heart. How do you think the father of the bride might feel if the groom stated that he would love his bride with 94% of his heart? That would not be a happy wedding party. Nothing less than 100% is expected from both the bride and groom. If we are willing to give another 100% of our heart, then it shows this is doable. In the same manner, God wants our whole heart to pursue Him and the plans that He has for us.

3. God responds to us (v. 14)

- a. Have you ever called out to someone and had zero response? It is easy to get discouraged or feel alone when something like this happens. We can be encouraged that God is not like this. No matter what our circumstances may be, we can trust in the fact that God will be found. We can trust in the fact that not only does He have great plans for us, but He will also share those plans with us when we seek Him with our whole heart.
- b. We can also trust in the fact that He will restore us. The children of Israel had lost everything. Babylon had rolled in, destroyed Jerusalem, and taken them into captivity. Yet, God declared to them that He would restore what had been lost. This did not mean that He instantly removed them from their difficult circumstances because they were still in captivity. But He did guarantee restoration. The same God who promised to hear and restore is the same God who knows and loves us today.

Conclusion

Our final question for today will be, what do we do with a passage like this? What is our truth to take home? For those of us who know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, let's be encouraged to know that God has a plan for us, and He wants to show us this plan. Our responsibility is to search for Him with our whole heart and walk in obedience to His revealed plan. If, however, you are here today and do not know God personally. You too can be encouraged as He wants to offer you restoration. Just as He restored Israel to her glory, He wants to restore you in a relationship with Himself through Christ. This is His plan for you, and He is not hiding it. Just like the child who wants to be found while playing hide-and-seek, God wants you to find Him in and through a relationship with His Son Jesus Christ.

Tod Tanner has degrees from Texas A&M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee. He and his family reside in Wartrace, TN, and he is serving as the Executive Vice President of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation.

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