**BCM Bible Study: Oct 24/25, 2017**

**Jeremiah: Restoration & A New Covenant (30-31)**

**“Think no more of Jeremiah as exclusively the weeping prophet; for the flashes of his delight make the night of his sorrow brilliant with an aurora of heavenly brilliance.” (Spurgeon)**

*The setting of this sermon is taking place in the reign of Zedekiah (597-587 bc). Judeans are currently in the middle of an 18-month siege that will result in the destruction of Judah by the Babylonians. The situation is dark for the Judeans, currently in the midst of a famine and on the brink of having to surrender to the Babylonians. In this time, Jeremiah has been a prisoner of the court. Despite the current situation – Jeremiah delivers a hopeful word from the Lord himself. [David Guzik & Ray Stedman)*

* Can you think of a time when you felt all was hopeless, but then you received unexpected encouragement from God?

**Read Jeremiah 30:1-11**

* How is this passage different than most of the ones that we’ve read up until this point?
* If you were to sum up this section in what word, what word would you use?
* Look at v. 4 – although the destruction and judgment that we’ve read about has been for Judah, the prophecy is also including Israel. Why do you think this might be significant?
  + “*The mention of both kingdoms is another hint that this written prophecy speaks of something later and greater than the return from Babylonian exile. It is true that the Kingdom of Judah did contain people from all the tribes (2 Chronicles 11:13-16) so these words don’t demand a greater fulfillment, but they do suggest it*.” - David Guzik
* What one command is given to Israel and Judah in v. 10? What reasons does God give them to not be afraid?
  + How do you view this in light of the current situation the Judeans are in?

**Read Jeremiah 30:12-15**

* What is your initial reaction to this section right after what we previously read?
* Look at v. 15a. God asks “Why do you cry out over your hurt?”
  + “And not rather for thy sins? Cry not *perii,* I have died, but *peccavi;*I have sinned, not, I am undone; but, I have done very foolishly.” (Trapp)
  + How often do you find yourself lamenting over your situations more than your own sin? How might we as Christians keep a healthy perspective of our sinfulness vs. our situation?
* In your own mind, do you struggle with these passages following one another? How do you reconcile God’s love and his heart for His people with the punishment and destruction?
* Have you ever seen God’s love through your own struggles or “punishments”? Can you think of a time when you’ve been cut down in order to grow?

**Read Jeremiah 31:1-14**

* What is God describing that is about to happen once the 70 years of captivity are over?
* Look at v. 1, “I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.”
  + Does this language sound familiar? Where might we have heard it before?
    - *This is covenantal language that we’ve heard before in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy (Ex 29:45; Lev 26:12; Deut 27:9)*
* In v. 3, we see God proclaim “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you.”
  + Discuss the meaning and depth of “everlasting”. What does everlasting mean to you? How should this truth change how we navigate life in the midst of trial, temptation and hardship?
  + *“It is not, ‘I have pitied thee,’ nor ‘I have thought about thee,’ but ‘I have loved thee.’ God is in love with you.”* *(Spurgeon)*
* How does this section contrast with the actions that we’ve seen of Judah so far? What is the ultimate purpose of Judah’s destruction and returning?

**Read Jeremiah 31:31-37**

* What is the prophecy stating here?
* *Note:* *Although many OT prophecies reference the idea of the new covenant, this is the only Old Testament passage to speak so directly and specifically about the new covenant.*
* What are the characteristics of the new covenant?
* In v. 35 & 36, God is giving the Israelites the only circumstance in which the covenant will cease – what are those circumstances? What power does this give the new covenant that the old ones did not have?
* How does this inform your concept of the old covenants and the new?

**Read Matthew 26:26-29**

* What in this passage was necessary for the new covenant to officially begin?
* Why ought we rejoice that there is a new covenant?

*The two problems that separate people from God are solved in the new covenant: the first is the guilt of sin (taken away by the shedding of Christ’s blood), the second is rebellion or the tendency to run away from God and follow destructive suggestions of the world (which is solved by writing his law on our hearts). – John Piper*

* What are we really celebrating when we have communion?

**Small group/conclusion questions:**

* How has studying Jeremiah begun to open your eyes to the intricate connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament?
* How does the new covenant give you hope, life or revive you?
* Where are you currently praying for redemption right now? How can we pray for one another in seeking redemption?
* How has your concept of God’s punishment been informed or changed through the study of Jeremiah thus far?

Resources: David Guzik commentary (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/jeremiah-31)>, Ray Stedman commentary (<https://www.raystedman.org/old-testament/jeremiah/the-secret-of-strength)>, John Piper article (<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-new-covenant-and-the-new-covenant-people)>, ESV Study Bible