

Life's Ultimate Questions
What about My Future?
Jeremiah 29:11-12

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Text Introduction: Again, this morning, our text comes from the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah. The amazing thing about God's word is that it speaks to every generation. In its historical context, first from the lips of Jeremiah, this word had immediate impact and application on Israel. Still today, this word speaks to our generation. We are in a series of messages that we are calling "Life's Ultimate Questions." Today, we ask the question: "What about my future?"

Text: For I know the plans I have for you"—this is the LORD's declaration—"plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² You will call to Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

Introduction: It's kind of fun to think about our future, don't you think? A popular question in job interviews sometimes asks about the future. "What do you see yourself doing in five years, ten years, etc? Sometimes, high school graduates are asked to make a list of what they hope to accomplish in the future. It's always interesting to go back to those lists that maybe we once prepared. It's fun to think about the future.

I would also very quickly add that it is sometimes scary to think about the future. "What if," we might ask. What if I can't find a job, what if I get sick....Those kind of questions and speculations that we have no business asking, but we sometimes do. And, what if our present is bleak, and as a result so is the future? One aspect of all of our lives is that our future in this life is uncertain. An astronomer was asked by a newspaper to write an article on the subject, "Is their life on Mars?" in 500 words. The scientist wrote "Nobody knows," 250 times. Though our future is uncertain and unknown to us, our future is not uncertain and unknown to God.

The text before us today is a letter of encouragement to those already living in exile. It is a letter of encouragement about the future, and because it is a letter of encouragement about the future, it becomes then a letter of instruction about the present.

What about My Future?

God declares a plan for my future.

- God's plan is known by Him.
Application: Better to know God than the future.
We could be unnecessarily frightened by the future. I love the words that come from the writings of Corrie Ten Boom, that Dutch Christian woman who helped many Nazis escape the Holocaust of World War II. She is often quoted as saying, "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."
- God's plan is good.

Application: Trust Him.

Our present often derails God's plans for our future.

- Your present is yesterday's future.
Have you ever thought about this? Verse 19 cannot be missed. God reminds them of the reason for the exile. The exile was not God's original plan for them. His plan was for them to live in the Land of Promise and be obedient. Their sin derailed this plan, and so it is in our lives.
- Your present is also tomorrow's future.
So, what is true in the past is true in the future.

God has a good future for us, but sometimes because of disobedience we miss that good future. Rather than choose God's good way, we choose a different way. That's the story of history. While it is true that God shapes our future, it is also true that our present choices shape our future.

Our future is not destroyed by our present and past failures. (Jeremiah 29:12-14)

Don't forget repentance, forgiveness, and the grace of God.

What Do I Do While I Wait?

1. Seek the positives of your present position.

This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles I deported from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵“Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters. Take wives for your sons and give your daughters to men in marriage so that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease. ⁷Seek the welfare of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the LORD on its behalf, for when it has prosperity, you will prosper.”

2. Seek God's purpose for your present.

⁸For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “Don't let your prophets who are among you and your diviners deceive you, and don't listen to the dreams you elicit from them, ⁹for they are prophesying falsely to you in My name. I have not sent them.” This is the LORD's declaration.

¹⁰For this is what the LORD says: “When 70 years for Babylon are complete, I will attend to you and will confirm My promise concerning you to restore you to this place.

3. Seek to be pleasing to God wherever you are.
4. Seek the good plan that God has for your life.

Charles Dickens so famously wrote it *The Tale of Two Cities*, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” I don't know for you if you think these are the best of times, or the worst of times, but I know this: It's the time we have.