

## Hope in Troubled Times

Jeremiah 29: 11-13

Have you ever known a time more desperate than this? We are in the midst of a crisis here in America. Many of our financial institutions are on the brink of collapse. Businesses and large corporations are going bankrupt and closing their doors. Unemployment has hit the highest percentage in decades. Folks are losing their homes with no place to go. The moral climate in America continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Everyone is looking for someone to shoulder the blame and searching for a way to improve their desperation.

The church continues to face the advance of the liberal agenda and the serenity that we once knew is vanishing before our very eyes. It is often easy to look at the trouble that we face and feel overwhelmed and forsaken.

These are not the first of troubles for the people of God. Jeremiah ministered in a day much like ours. The sin and excess of the day had run its course and then the time came to pay the price. Babylonian captivity was looming on the horizon. God had been gracious in His offer for repentance, but the people refused. Their judgment was on the way, but yet hope remained. These verses deal with the time following the captivity, [v.10](#).

I really can't say what lies ahead for America and the church, but I know that we serve One who is faithful to His own. We will likely have to deal with the effects and circumstances of the coming judgment, but we have hope. This morning I want to look at these verses and discover the [promises](#) that we can claim as we consider: [Hope in Troubled Times](#).

**I. The Desire of God** (11) – We must keep in mind that God had no desire to bring judgment upon His people. He was merciful in that He sent prophet after prophet to preach repentance unto the people. God had brought them out of bondage into the land so that they might enjoy His goodness and blessing.

- We serve One who desires the best for us if we will but live according to His will. He reveals His desire for His people here and that includes us as well. There are a couple of interesting words in [V.11](#). [For I know the thoughts that I think toward you](#). The word [thoughts](#) literally means “*an intention or plan*.” God knows the plans that He has for us. The word [think](#) has the idea of “*weaving or fabricating, plotting*.” God has a plan and he will weave that plan through our lives. Notice God desires:

**A. Our Peace** – God has thoughts or intentions and plans of peace for His people. His peace includes our safety, welfare, and happiness. The Almighty God plans and intends for His people to dwell in safety and happiness, caring for our welfare.

- That is God's desire. We are loved of Him and He desires to meet the needs of His own. Often we live a life that lacks real peace, but it isn't the Lord's fault. He has that intention for us; He is seeking to weave peace into the very fabric of our lives. If we could fully grasp all that God has for us, we would do all we could to obtain His abundance!

**B. Our Prosperity** – God desires to [give us an expected end](#). What a promise we find in His Word. There is a plan for each of our lives. We live in a day where most believe that life just happens. Many feel that those who are successful and blessed have been the recipient of a “lucky break.” They were just in the right place at the right time.

- There is no such thing as chance or luck with the child of God. We are not wandering aimlessly along hoping for a lucky break. Our lives don't just happen; they are ordained and orchestrated of God. He has a plan and a purpose for each of us.

- God has an expected end for us that we could achieve if we would follow Him. I stand amazed at the power and wisdom of my Lord. I can't see 2 seconds into the future, but God sees it all. He knows exactly what He has in store for me.

- I fear that we miss so much in regard to the Lord's blessing because we are not where we should be with Him. I am not a health and wealth preacher, but the Scriptures reveal that God has an intended plan for our lives! Times are tough, but we can continue to prosper in the Lord. [Lam.3:22-23 – It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.](#) We are not here today by mere chance; we are here by the providential hand of God. You are where you are in life because God has allowed it. I can assure you that the end that God has planned is better than anything we could work out ourselves!

## **I. The Desire of God** (11)

**II. The Design of God** (12-13) – We have established that God has an intended plan that He desires to weave into our lives. So, what is the key to seeing that plan fulfilled? It is simple; we are to pray and seek Him. There are some aspects of prayer that we need to consider. First we see:

**A. The Practice of Prayer** (12a) – [Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me.](#) I know that this is hard to grasp, but if we ever expect God to hear our prayers, then we must first offer them up to Him. I am well aware that God knows our hearts and our lives better than we know them ourselves. He is aware of our needs before we even realize them. But God still wants us to pray.

- He has ordained that men should pray and make their supplications known unto Him. It is amazing that we so often find ourselves in difficult situations and have failed to pray. Quite often prayer is a last resort for the average Christian. Many times we feel as if we can handle our problems or just fail to see the need.

- I don't know about you, but I am interested in acquiring all that God has planned for me. If I am to achieve His will for my life, I must seek Him in prayer. I fear that we miss a lot that God has for us because we are unwilling or even unable to pray. [Jam.4:2-3 – Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.](#) Prayer is something that we should practice on a daily basis, throughout the day. How is your prayer life? Are you practicing prayer unto the Lord?

**B. The Promise of Prayer** (12b) – God has promised that He will [hearken](#) to those who call upon Him in prayer. We have the assurance that God will listen when we pray. There is never a time that a heartfelt prayer falls on deaf ears. Our Lord is mindful of us and He hears us when we pray. [Ps.18:6 – In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.](#)

- Many today are searching for someone to hear their cries. They are looking for someone to help them in their desperate situation. We have the blessed assurance that God will hear us when we pray. [Is.59:1 – Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:](#) We can go directly to the throne room of grace and make our requests known unto our God.

**C. The Persistence of Prayer** (13) – We know that we are to pray if we are to receive all that God desires for us, but how are we to pray? There are many today who have no concept of genuine prayer. Many simply want to run to God in times of distress, making a quick, hurried plea, and expect God to move immediately.

- The sad truth for many is that they are in no shape to pray in the first place. We must have our hearts and lives free of sin if we are to be effective in prayer. That is why it is so important to keep short accounts of sin. A time of trouble is not the time to have to deal with personal sin in order for our prayers to be heard.

- God wants us to be persistent in prayer. It is something that each of us should be familiar with and something that we are confident in. God's design for prayer in this text closely resembles the words of Jesus. [Mat.7:7-8 – Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.](#) Persistent prayer involves:

**1. Seeking** – [Ye shall seek me](#). We are to seek God when we pray. That means we are to search Him out and strive after Him. I have found myself praying, many times just out of habit, and I wasn't seeking the Lord. In fact if we aren't careful our minds are on the things of life even while we are praying. God commands that we seek Him while we pray. He is the only One who can supply our needs. We must seek Him.

**2. Serving** – [Search for me with all your heart](#). On the surface this looks much the same as seeking, but this is a different aspect all together. To [search](#) means we are "*to follow, specifically in worship.*" If we are to be effective in prayer, and we surely need to be, we must follow the Lord in an attitude of worship. We must recognize who we are praying to and have a holy reverence for Him.

- God is able to supply whatever need we have, but it will not be received with a flippant or arrogant attitude. If we will humble ourselves in service to Him, then we are more likely to get through to God. Prayer must be accompanied with a sincere heart.

**3. Securing** – God makes a profound promise to those who seek Him in an attitude of worship. We are promised that we can find Him. Isn't that a blessing? While the world is seeking a solution for their problems, we can go to the Lord and know that He will be available to hear and answer our prayer.

- I don't have to fear being denied access when I pray. If my heart is right with God, then I can pray in confidence that He will hear me and attend to my needs. He may not always answer as I think He should or in the time frame that I would like, but He hears me. There is no greater power available to mankind than prayer. It is through prayer that we make our requests known to One who has the power to move on our behalf.

I don't know where this day finds you. I don't know the burdens that you carry, but I know One who does. The Lord has an intended plan that He wants to weave into our lives. He has a path that He desires for each of us to take.

If we are to see God's will fulfilled in our lives then we must seek Him in prayer. Are you troubled today? Has life brought circumstances that are beyond your ability to handle? Remember, life doesn't just happen. God is in control. He has just what you need this very moment if you will seek Him. Why not come and seek the Lord for the need in your life?