**BCM Bible Study: Oct 19/20, 2022**

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

The next four chapters of Jeremiah are frequently called the “Book of Hope” due to the change of tone that occurs here. Much of these chapters drip with a hopeful word from the Lord for how God still cares for the Judeans and ultimately will redeem the situation that they find themselves in. There is uncertainty about when in Jeremiah’s ministry the two chapters of 30-31 were written, with many commentators suggesting that it was actually rather early on. This would suggest that some of the worst actually might have still been to come for the Judeans.

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

**“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)**

**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 one word, what word would you use?
* Here in verse 4 we see this prophecy specifically including Judah and Israel, although all of the destruction and judgment we’ve seen before has only been for Judah. 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?
	+ **Read Hebrews 12:4-13** How does this help you to understand God’s discipline in your own life?
	+ What might the distinction between discipline and punishment be?

**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 wound?”
	+ 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?
* How do you understand God’s love and his heart for His people along with the punishment and destruction?
* Have you ever seen God’s love through your own struggles or “disciplining”? Can you think of a time when you’ve been cut down in order to grow?
* How do Jeremiah 30 and your personal experience point to the presence and need for God’s mercy and grace?

**Read Jeremiah 31:1-20**

* What is God describing that is going to happen once the 70 years of captivity are over?
* Look at v. 1, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will 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; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.”
	+ 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?
	+ “Signs of redemption should point not only to what has already been accomplished in Christ but also to what still lies ahead. There is always a future tense to the life of believers.” (Dearman)
* What do God’s words to Israel in v.15-20 and that symbolism add to your understanding of God’s love?
	+ How do these words add to the image of Israel’s restoration?
* Where you have seen the process of God’s redemption be very unexpected (like Israel’s)?
* 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?
	+ What does it mean that God “will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts”?
	+ Are there any ways that we can help Him with this work?
* 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 one did not have?
* How does this inform your concept of the old covenant and the new?

Why do we as followers of Jesus today still need to be looking ahead with our faith?