

Bible Study - March 25, 2020

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 0 0] Good evening, everybody. Pastor Tom Kraft for our Wednesday night Bible study. I'm here at our First United Methodist Church. Thought I'd just come and share a little bit of their sanctuary with everybody tonight.

We're going to be looking at a Bible study this time from the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah, that's in the Old Testament. And we're going to be starting at chapter 30.

So if you're getting out your Bibles, you can turn to Jeremiah chapter 30. What we're doing is we're taking a look at passages from Israel's exile.

As we're a church in exile, we're looking at words that they use that help them to figure out how to get through these kind of times as they spend time looking forward to what could be.

So Jeremiah chapter 30, it begins by saying, this is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord. And Jeremiah was a prophet who spoke to God. And it says so. In fact, it said before he was born, God called him to be a prophet.

[1 : 0 6] In verse 2, it says, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says, write in a book, all the words I have spoken to you.

Write it down. Write it down because sometimes if we don't write it down, we forget. My father used to carry a little notebook in his pocket so he could write down notes. I do it on my computer. I find that if we don't write it down, sometimes we don't remember.

That's why we have this book so that we can turn back to it again and again and again and learn from it and remember it. It's a book with a lot of pages, a lot of words. It would be hard to remember all of it.

Maybe if you're that guy in Big Bang Theory, you could, but not me. It's helpful to have it written down. Write it down in a book. Everything that I've spoken to you, the days are coming, declares the Lord.

When I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their ancestors to possess, says the Lord.

[2 : 1 2] This passage is actually written before the children of Israel got off into captivity in Babylon. What had happened was God gave them a promised land, a wonderful land, a land that he called flowing with milk and honey.

They were prosperous. They had wonderful things. Under King David and King Solomon, the kingdom became an empire. They actually, and sometimes were possibly the most powerful empire in the entire region.

God blessed them with abundant blessings, but they forgot about God. They turned to other things. They started to rely on things that really were not real.

Kind of like what we're doing, isn't it? This is the most blessed and most prosperous country that ever existed on the face of the earth. But sometimes we take that for granted.

And we start to think that what we did is what created us. That it wasn't the hand of God. That it isn't the blessings that God gave. We did it. We don't need God. I had a friend of mine once who said a blessing over dinner.

- [3 : 21] He said, I work for the money to pay for the food service, so thanks for nothing, God. Sometimes I think that's how people really think. When we come into times like this and a crisis like this, we start to remember whose we are and where we came from and who really is the one that holds the world in the palm of his hands.
- And Jeremiah is living in a time when the people had lost their prosperity. They were taken into captivity. And God says that he will restore them.
- There is a promise after the pain. And there is a promise for our country. There is a promise for us as a people of God after the pain of this coronavirus.
- He says in verse 4, These are the words of the Lord spoken concerning Israel and Judah. This is what the Lord says.
- You notice they repeat it. Because sometimes if you don't hear it a couple times, you don't get it. This is the word of the Lord. Every once in a while, God gives me something to know.
- [4 : 34] There are a few times I can say to you, God told me. More often than not, I have to say, Just me guys, doing the best I can to try and figure it out.
- I believe that I'm inspired by the Holy Spirit. I believe that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit. But sometimes we're actually reading what God said to say.
- That's amazing stuff. Revelation means that the greatest wisdom we ever get is when God reveals wisdom to us.
- Much more important than when we just come up with it on our own. This is what the Lord says. Cry of fear. Cries of fear are heard.
- Terror, not peace. Boy, that sounds familiar, doesn't it? Some people seem to be courageous in the face of this coronavirus.
- [5 : 34] And others, I mean, my gosh. They're worried. They are trying to make sure that they scour every germ that could ever possibly come near them away.
- And I understand that. It's fearful, especially when we're facing a scourge, an enemy we can't see. It's frightening.
- Cries of terror, not peace. Ask and see. Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor?
- Every face turned deathly pale. So the picture is strong men who are kind of like this. Oh! You know? Feeling as if agony has taken them and overtaken them. And I think sometimes that's how we feel. I've been sick in the past.
- [6 : 36] I understand that feeling. That feeling of helplessness. That you are strong. And now it's as if there's nothing you can control. Strong hands on the stomach.
- I get it. How awful. How awful that day will be. No other will be like it. Sorry, I can't get the page turned.
- I touched it to my lips. It's my Bible. I'll wash my hands when I'm done. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob. But he will be saved out of it.
- Jacob is the ancestor of Israel. And so when they talk about Jacob in America, it would be like saying, it will be a time of trouble for Washington. As our first president.
- Jacob was the ancestor of all these people. And it will be a time of trouble. But God won't leave them in despair.
- [7 : 39] God will pull them out of the brokenness. Because God is still with us. Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. God is with us.
- In that day, declares the Lord Almighty, I will break the yoke off their necks. And will tear off their bonds. No longer will foreigners enslave them.

Indeed, they will serve the Lord their God. And David their king. Whom I will raise up for them. So, for the people of Israel in this time, they actually were facing the fact that they were going to go serve a foreign king in Babylon.

Eventually Persia. And so the bond or the yoke that will be broken is to bring them back from a foreign land, foreign dominion. All the passages in the Bible speak to the people at that time.

And they speak beyond them to the people of our time. So to the people of their time, they're saying that they will be brought back from captivity. From a terrible time when their nation will be destroyed.

[8 : 45] For our people, it says God will be with us in our problems, in our struggles. And will bring us back from the bondage to fear. To brokenness. To feeling like we have no control over life.

They also speak to the future, especially the prophets. That when the day of the Lord comes, even strong men on the day of judgment will not be able to stand before God.

But he will rescue his people out of it. And he will reestablish David as their king. David, of course, was a king thousands of years ago.

But his descendant, Jesus, lives forever and ever. So don't be afraid. I love that.

Don't be afraid, Jacob, my servant. Don't be dismayed. Israel declares the Lord. Don't be afraid. People of God.

[9 : 47] Because you are the people of God. I will surely save you out of a distant place. Your descendants from the land of their exile.

Jacob will again have peace and security. No one will make him afraid. God will be with us. He will pull us out of our struggles.

Don't be afraid. I am with you. And I will save you, declares the Lord. You know, we really struggle to find salvation somewhere.

We're looking for our governor to save us. Our president to save us. Our nation to save us. Our business world to save us. The only one who really ultimately can save us in this life and from this life and past this life is God Almighty.

It's important that we know that. When we're facing all the struggles we have and even facing death itself, to know that God is with us who can save us out of anything.

[10 : 55] Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you.

I will discipline you, but only in due measure. I will not let you go entirely unpunished. You know, we struggle with the discipline of God.

Because the discipline of God is designed to cause us to have proper behavior like a child. We don't want to hurt our children. But if a child is reaching their fingers into the fire on the stove, we are likely to just pull them back.

And maybe even because it's worse if they get their fingers in that fire. God wants to discipline us so that we will pull back from brokenness and danger and sin that destroys our lives.

If other people want to destroy their lives, they may find themselves completely destroyed because they don't care about God. But for the people who live for God, his discipline is measured by the sense that he's only doing this out of love.

[12 : 07] The difference between discipline and abuse is that discipline is done for the person who's being disciplined. Abuse is being done because somehow it's satisfied as a sickness or brokenness in the people who are making and doing the abuse.

God never abuses us. He simply wants to discipline us. But if he leaves us go unpunished entirely, do we change?

Are we going to be the same? I wash my hands an extra five, six, seven, eight times. I don't know how many times I wash my hands now. We practice physical distancing from each other.

We consider whether or not the door might have germs on it and we have to wipe down the door now. We wonder about the mail, the newspaper, everything. Wash our clothes more.

Now, we could have been doing all of this to prevent the flu, which would have been a good thing. We wouldn't have gotten sick as much. But we needed to learn. We needed to learn.

[13 : 13] This is what the Lord says. Your wound is incurable. Your injury beyond healing. There is no one to plead your cause. No remedy for your sore. No healing for you.

All your allies have forgotten you. They care nothing for you. I have struck you as an enemy would. And punished you as would the cruel.

Because your guilt is so great and your sins are so many. One of the difficult things is that we like to say to people, everybody's good or there's good in everybody or something like that.

When really what God is saying to us is brokenness in all of us. And really of our own accord or even the help of others. The people we rely on. There is no way that we can fix ourselves.

Because we're that broken. He was talking to the nation of Israel too. And he was saying to them, you know, you're relying on Egypt or Babylon or Syria or somebody to come and help you out.

[14 : 17] They're not going to be there. The only one that we can rely on in the end is God. And the only one that can save us from the brokenness we have. The only one that can remove our sin and take it from us is God.

And without him, we're left defenseless, desolate. Because our sin is that great. Why do you cry out over your wound?

Your pain that has no cure. Because of your great guilt and many sins have done these things to you. When we live a life that is intended towards hurt and pain of others and ourselves, God punishes us and then we cry out.

But really, the hope is that we're crying out remembering our guilt. We're saying, God, forgive me. Save me. Help me.

Change me. Cause me to repent. And turn around. All of you who devour, you will be devoured.

[15 : 32] All your enemies, excuse me, I read that wrong. All who devour you will be devoured. All your enemies will go into exiles. Those who plunder you will be plundered.

All who make spoil of you, I will despoil. Sometimes when we're going through the brokenness and the pain and the struggle, whether it's from God's discipline or just the brokenness of this world, which we talked about last week, when we're going through that, we feel like there's other people out there that are doing fine.

And somehow God actually is helping the broken people, the evil people. Jeremiah himself in chapter 12 complains about that.

God, why do the wicked prosper? You're the one who put them here. Why are they doing so well? But God says he won't let that happen forever.

At some point, he's going to turn things back around. I will restore you to health. And heal your wounds, declares the Lord. Our self-inflicted wounds. Take away our sin.

[16 : 44] Because you are called an outcast. Zion, for whom no one cares. No one cares. Sometimes it feels like we're an outcast. Sometimes it feels we've gotten that broken.

And this is what the Lord says. I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents and have compassion on his dwellings. The city will be rebuilt on a ruin and the palace will stand in its proper place and God will restore this nation.

I believe that. I believe that. In the midst of our brokenness, if we live for what God wants us to live to, if we use this as an opportunity to remember what really matters, God will turn everything around in our country and in our lives and make this something that in the end will lead to good.

Not that it's good. Brokenness, evil, death, pain, that's not good. But God can make all things work for good for those who love the Lord, is what the scripture tells us.

If we will allow him to. From them will come songs of thanksgiving and the sound of rejoicing.

[18 : 00] I love that. I was watching the people in Italy singing to each other from the balconies. Don't you love that? My wife said, if we're still closed down at Easter, we have to tell everybody at Easter morning at a certain time that we're all going to go out and say, he is risen, he is risen indeed, and we'll sing to each other.

I like that idea, but I'm hoping, I'm hoping we'll celebrate Easter for Easter. I will add to their numbers. They will not be decreased.

You know, in the midst of all of this, babies are being born. My nephew, his wife is pregnant. Alexia, and we're looking forward to the birth of a new little baby.

In the midst of this, I will bring them honor. They will not be disdained. Their children will be as in days of old, and their community will be established before me.

I will punish all who oppress them. God will take care of us and bless us, and our children will sing the songs and dance and play, and live like they have for so many years.

[19 : 12] The joy of the Lord will be our strength. That's what the scripture tells us. Their leaders will be one of their own.

Their leaders will be one of their own. Not somebody outside our midst, but somebody who follows after God himself.

Their ruler will arise from among them. I will bring him near, and he will come close to me. For who is he who will devote himself to be close to me, declares the Lord.

Oh God, give us a leader that wants to follow you. God wants to please us. God wants to make Congress happy.

God wants to follow what CNN says, or what Fox says, or what somebody else tells them they should believe, but wants to follow the Lord.

[20 : 20] Of course, this is a perfect kingdom. And what he's describing, and what is coming forth is not altogether about what we live in, but what we look forward to.

See the storm of the Lord will burst out in wrath, the driving wind swirling down on the heads of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purpose of his heart.

In the days to come, you will understand this. Or another way to interpret that is, in the last days, you'll understand this. The latter days, the days of the end of time. People have asked me, are we at the end of time?

Maybe. God always places the signs of the ends of the time available for us, for us to think this is the end. But for each of us, we need to be ready for that to happen to us individually anyways.

So we should always be prepared for the end of time because at the end of time, God will, will take care of his own. And God will destroy the evil of the world.

[21 : 24] Now, one of the best passages in the Bible is chapter 31 of Jeremiah. So moving on to chapter 31, it says, at that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel and they will be my people.

I will be their God and they will be my people. He says that when he's talking to the children of Israel on Mount Sinai, he says that in Revelation.

I will be their God and they will be my people. There'll be no more suffering or crying or sorrow or pain or death for that order of things will have passed away.

This is what the Lord says. The people who survive the sword will find favor in the wilderness and will come to give rest to Israel. The people who survive the pain and the hurt, the destruction, in this case, the destruction of a city, of a nation, of Israel.

In our world, we do need to know that some will survive and some won't. It's interesting that he mentions the wilderness where there's healing and health and the ability to get our minds back to God.

[22 : 42] You have a lot of time, a lot of you. You're sitting at home doing nothing. Turn off the TV for a little while. You know, you really don't need to feed on that 24-7.

It'll only make you crazy and anxious. And take an hour or two and read the book. Pray to God. Remember whose you are.

It's a Bible study. I'm expecting, I'm talking to the people of God. Remember whose you are. The Lord appeared to us in the past saying, I have loved you with everlasting love.

Chesed, God's chesed, his everlasting love and mercy. I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. God's chesed is when God loves us in a way that's unmerited.

In the New Testament they talk about it as agape love. A love that is greater than what we would do. A God that can only be understood through the grace and mercy and love of God himself.

[23 : 43] That's what he had for the children of Israel. That's what he has for his people today. I will build you up again and you, virgin Israel, will be rebuilt. Now this is really kind of a much more powerful verse than most of us would understand because in the prophets a lot of times the way God describes Israel as a unfaithful wife he used in the story of Hagar that he had to go down and purchase his wife who was a prostitute to be his wife.

and Gomer came and lived with him. Can you imagine that if I took a prostitute as my wife? And it was okay but then she decided after a while she wanted to go back to the old life and God said you have to go down and buy your wife back again.

You see when God purchases us back when God pays the price for our sin which is the same way that we as parents pay the price for our anger when we forgive a child you know our children for all we do for them we give them their food we give them their home we give them love and care they should at least be perfect right?

I mean that's that's the least we could expect that they'd be perfect and do everything we want but we know they won't and so we have to forgive them and in forgiving them we take the pain that they deserve and take it unto ourselves.

That's what God does for us and when he did that he takes all the sin away it says he takes the sins of the world unto himself which means that God who is sinless becomes sin that's what the death on the cross shows us is the pain of God the perfect God letting that sin into his presence and when he does that his love destroys the sin and we actually are made perfect so that's why he uses the term virgin Israel which is not what the prophets call her they call her the harlot the prostitute the unfaithful one chasing after lovers and now he says that she has been made clean fresh new as if none of the brokenness ever happened powerful powerful that's what God does for us changes us as if our brokenness our sin never happened

[26 : 12] Wesley wrote a hymn once he breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoners free you know a lot of Christians they've been forgiven by God he took away their sin it's cancelled but they hold on to it for some reason I don't know why back in my past I did this wrong or I did that wrong I'm such an evil person God has made you perfect he has restored Israel to be a virgin he has restored you to your perfection absolute innocence amazing love of God again you will take up your timbrels and go out to dance with the joyful dance for joy that's what God wants for us dancing with joy we will dance with joy again we will celebrate I know right now we're struggling but we will celebrate again God wants us to you should be doing it now a little bit sing with your family if you watch our worship on Sunday sing with us celebrate

God is with us still he goes on to say in verse 5 of chapter 31 again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria the farmers will plant them and enjoy their fruit or in other words believe it or not our lives will come back our businesses will start up again our country will find its way towards prosperity the brokenness we're facing right now is only for a short time we need to use it to learn to grow to be disciplined but then God will restore us if we turn our hearts to God if we turn our hearts to God we will enjoy that fruit there will be a day in verse 6 when watchmen cry out on the hills of Ephraim come let us go to Zion to the Lord our God when people will say it's time to go

I'm fascinated to see how many people come to church the first week the first week we're back you know if it's Easter it'll be Easter and we'll celebrate Easter if it's not Easter we'll celebrate Easter after Easter will we all be there will we use this time to turn back to God are we creating a hunger oh for the time when the watchman will say come to the house of the Lord this is what the Lord says sing with joy for Jacob shout for the foremost of the nations you know we shout at our at our at our football games and sports celebrations but how often do we shout hooray for God hallelujah we almost think it's wrong to shout in church it's right make your praises heard and say the Lord save your people the remnant of Israel see I'll bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth they're gonna come from everywhere

God will fill his house will we be among them among them will be the blind the lame expected mothers women in labor a great throng will return all kinds of people are gonna come to God at that end time I think it's gonna happen sooner they will come with weeping and they will pray as I bring them back that's what verse 9 says to us why will they come with weeping you know I know that there are people out there listening to this we miss being in the house of the Lord if you're from Niagara Falls you miss me being in this space this is our holy space if you're from our Pendleton Church you miss being in that holy space if you're from some other church you miss being there it's missing the building I know because it's a space that has holy meaning to us it changes who we are when we walk in the door because we feel

God even though God is everywhere when we come here our minds go God and we miss that and we miss being with each other we miss seeing each other and greeting each other we miss sharing love with one another they're going to be weeping because they're weeping in some ways tears of joy because God has given them the opportunity to come back and they may be weeping because they feel the guilt of all the cause the brokenness in the first place they will pray as I bring them back I will leave them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble because I am Israel's father and Ephraim is my first born son such a wonderful passage yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death

[31 : 43] I will fear no evil he leads me beside still waters he makes me lie down in green pastures maybe that's what God is doing slowing us down for a minute stopping us pausing us because we wouldn't pause we were so busy oh my gosh busy busy busy busy busy we stopped being human beings and we became human doings go go go go go go go go go go we never stopped and what were we doing that was so important and were we forgetting the most important things our God spending time with our family and so God is making us take some time could be I leave them beside streams of water on a level path where they won't stumble because I am Israel's father I remember in one passage where Hosea

I believe it is chapter 11 where where he says I took Ephraim like a little child and I took him by the hand he's led our church he's led our people he's led our lives by the hand he loves us he loves us do we love him and do we pay attention to what God wants hear the word of the Lord verse 10 it says you nations proclaim it distant coastlands he who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd a good shepherd for the Lord will deliver Jacob and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they doesn't matter who people think are strong right now we're watching what we thought was great power just collapse the only real power is in the hand of the Lord the Lord is our shepherd and so long as the Lord is our shepherd we won't want they will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion there's that shouting again hallelujah they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord

God can bless us he can pour out abundance remember God is the only one that can make something out of nothing and he can take care of us the grain the new wine the olive oil the young of the flocks and herds they will be like a well watered garden and they will sorrow no more life will be good again believe it if we trust in the Lord then young women will dance and be glad young men and old as well I will turn their mourning into gladness I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow God has a way of taking us even in the midst of brokenness and reminding us of joy I deal with Mr.

Death a lot probably more than most people and I don't deal with it like the undertakers after the fact I do that too I deal with it as we're entering into it it's hard when it's people we love it's hard when we miss somebody in our lives but we need to remember that they still remain in our hearts and they are alive in our lives so long as we keep their memories and God holds them in eternity if their hearts are with God and so we'll see them again so not only will we dance and will we sing and will we celebrate then God gives us the ability to break through the brokenness and find joy again you will dance you will sing you will shout you will rejoice in verse 14 he says

I will satisfy the priest with abundance and my people will be filled with bounty declares the Lord we're all going to be doing good even pastors that's okay I like that it's okay verse 15 this is what the Lord says a voice is heard in Ramah see if you remember this a voice is heard in Ramah mourning and great weeping Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are no more remember that from the Christmas story of the children in Bethlehem this is where that comes from and what they're talking about is they're talking about Rachel who is the mother of the nation of Israel and what they're saying is that Rachel as if she has come from the dead and looked at the nation of Israel and they've been taken away into Babylon they're no more see these chapters they weave back and forth they go from conviction to comfort to a declaration that the nation is going to be broken to a promise that the nation will be restored and right now we're back to the conviction and we're back to that sense that the nation will be destroyed and Rachel is crying because she looks out over all the children she had such a great nation and now it's no more but let's not do that to our country let's not let it become no more because we anger the only one that could possibly destroy

[37 : 34] America God himself let's not do that let's be her children faithfully anyways he says this is what the Lord says restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears for your work will be rewarded declares the Lord they will return from the land of the enemy they'll return don't worry Rachel I'm going to bring them back and you'll be blessed to see your children again don't worry God will bring us back God will restore us this is just a time of testing and of seasoning and of discipline God will bring us back so in verse 17 so there is hope for your descendants declares the Lord your children will return to their own land

I've surely heard Ephraim's moaning you discipline me like an unruly calf is what people are saying you discipline me Lord like an unruly calf I have been disciplined I really have God alright you did it I get it I get the message God disciplines us for us to grow have you had enough have you had enough to turn to God to repent he disciplines us so we change restore me and I will return I will repent because you are the Lord my God that's all he wants you to do is say you are my God my Lord not not the money not the stock market not even our jobs not even our businesses not not even all the prosperity not all the fun not all the sports not any of those things God that's what really matters verse 19 after I strayed I repented see that repentant to turn around that's what repentance means to turn around

I repented after I came to understand I beat my breast I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth oh my gosh I realized I messed up that's what God wants us to do realize wake up hello even those of you who have been faithful to God even we need to examine our lives and say where do we need to change I find that every so often God points out to me something that's not right about my life something I have to fix I thought I was fine and then all of a sudden God will say no did you see this oh my gosh I'm just as broken as I was before we all need to continuously repent to God confess our sin and be restored and God says is Ephraim my dear son the child in whom I delight how about that you are the children of God join ears with

Jesus it says in Romans you're part of the family of God though I often speak against him I still remember him God's funny even though I have some problems with him and I got stuff I got complaints about I still remember him and my heart yearns for him did you know God's heart yearns for you wow God God just wants to restore his relationship with you I have great compassion for him declares the Lord I have this tendency to think that God wants to hurt us he doesn't he wants to love us so in verse 21 it says set up road signs put up guideposts take note of the highway and the road that you take return virgin Israel return to your towns you know look at the path here's a road map look at the guideposts go back to church consider what are the pathways to

God remember last week we talked about every valley will be lifted up every mountain made low the crooked will be made straight and we will make a way for God verse 22 how long will you wander unfaithful daughter Israel you see the virgin Israel compared to the unfaithful daughter and God takes the unfaithful daughter when she turns around and makes her pure again that's for men and women too by the way not a gender exclusive thing the Lord will create a new thing on earth the women will return to the man the woman will return to the man who was unfaithful and the man will take her home I've dealt with couples who have brokenness in their marriage who have had unfaithfulness in their marriage and it's so hard to restore it because learning how to trust again is so hard I'll tell whoever was unfaithful you know your spouse has the right to call you wherever you are stop in unexpectedly because you broke the trust but it can be restored and God has said he wants to restore it with us and make us perfect like it never happened again verse 23 this is what the Lord

[43 : 24] Almighty the God of Israel says when I bring them back from captivity the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words the Lord bless you you prosperous you sacred mountain God bless America it's the same idea right the people will say that God has blessed America people will live together in Judah and all its towns farmers and those who move about with their flocks I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint God will lift us back up and strengthen us at this I woke and looked around my sleep had been pleasant to me that's that's Jeremiah talking Jeremiah you know we receive wisdom from God sometimes when we go to sleep in fact I've said to people that when I'm writing a sermon sometimes when I fall asleep I wake up with the words

I need it and the thoughts I need it I even have one of our other pastors that sometimes we're talking about a sermon series and preparing for things and I hate to say this I don't do it so much anymore but I would sometimes actually get so tired I fall asleep and I'd wake up with words that we needed so a woman made me a pillow and on it is embroidered sermon ideas you know why because when we're asleep all the distractions all the confusion all the things that keep us from our God are taken away and God can pour his revelation into our mind remember what I said the real wisdom comes from the revelation of God not the creativity of people the best stuff I ever get comes from God the stuff I make up is mediocre the stuff from God is amazing Jeremiah was sleeping and he got all this and this is more he goes on it's like there's a pause there in verse 26 and he says in verse 27 the days are coming declares the Lord when I will plant the kingdoms of Israel and Judah with the offspring of people and of animals just as

I have watched over them to uproot and tear down and to overthrow and destroy and bring disaster so I will watch over them to build and to plant declares the Lord in those days people will no longer say the parents have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge instead everyone will die for their own sin whoever eats sour grapes their own teeth will be seven it's just a wrap up a wrap up of the whole book of Jeremiah actually saying God will punish and in some ways it may even be unfair because sometimes when the brokenness of a whole nation develops the good people that are in it suffer with the punishment the discipline on the whole nation and I'm not saying because I don't want to be misunderstood tonight I'm not saying the coronavirus is in any way a discipline from God it's probably a natural occurrence of this creation we live in someone said somewhere

I think it was in that article that the rabbi writes in the paper that viruses are nature's way of weeding out the weak I don't like that but it may be true that what happens is when we face these things as a people we become stronger and as a people we will come out of this stronger it's not because necessarily God's punishing us but in the midst of our brokenness God can make us stronger and what we need to do is to take this time to look at where we're broken look at where we're unfaithful look at where we've gotten away from God and where we do deserve discipline not the coronavirus but maybe some of the fear we have and the worry we have because God is trying to turn us and he says he will so now this is why

I really chose this section and I know we've got a long time to get to this but this is chapter 31 verse 31 so you can remember it easy Jeremiah 31 31 it's a wonderful passage the days are coming declares the Lord when I will make a new covenant or a new agreement or a new testament with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah it won't be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt that was a covenant that they made with Moses on the mountaintop if you keep my commandments I will be your God and you will be my people that's what God said to him it was a good idea but he explains about it he continues in the middle of verse 32 he says because they broke my covenant though I was a husband to them even though I loved them I cared for them they broke the covenant no matter how much God tries we still all fall short of the glory of God and sin so this is a covenant

[48 : 59] I will make with the people of Israel at that time declares the Lord I will put their law their law excuse me I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts I will put my law in their minds and I will write it on their hearts I will be their God and they will be my people no longer will they teach their neighbor or say to one another know the Lord because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest declares the Lord now I want you to hear this in the Old Testament it would talk about the Holy Spirit occasionally coming on people as it was needed in the latter days in the days after Jesus it says in the book of Acts that God pours his Holy Spirit out on all flesh everybody even sinners he pours it out on they don't always receive it but he pours it out and we can receive the power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and in our minds and we can know what God wants for our lives can you imagine that remember the revelation we can know what God wants for our lives we can know what God wants us to do you people who are young and trying to figure out what to do talk to God turn to God he'll tell you you don't have to figure it out he'll tell you you might not even want to do it

I'll be honest with you I never planned or wanted to be a pastor that was not my mind that wasn't my plan I actually talked about being a psychiatrist how about that probably didn't figure that one but God had a different plan for me and it was a great plan and it's worked out wonderful I've got to say God will reveal to us what we need to do how we need to live what we should understand we don't have to teach each other because we can write it on our own minds now that doesn't mean we don't need to come to a Bible study we don't need to learn from others that would that would not make any sense because sometimes we need to make sure that what we think we're hearing and understanding from God in our heart and in our mind and our soul is actually the word of God and not a word from somewhere else like Satan or something and so we turn to the scripture because God won't contradict his own word but God will show you which part of his word is for you so we won't need to have other people say you know it's good to know Jesus or you need to have

God in your life because we will know God ourselves he will be our God and we will be his people and it says from the least to the greatest it doesn't matter who you are old or young rich or poor God will be your God for I will forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more God will forgive us in such a way that he not only forgives he forgets not that God couldn't be coaxed into remembering but in the New Testament 1 Corinthians it says love keeps no record of the wrongs because when we're in love we don't remember anything wrong that anybody did against us when I'm feeling great love and passion and joy for my wife and I'm just feeling really good about her I'm not having any thoughts about any brokenness in my mind I don't even remember anything but when we start arguing and fighting

I remember when you see how that works so the goal is to work on keeping the love and the connection so that God will forgive our sins and forgive our sins and we can do that with each other I've been married to my wife since 1976 back in the 1900s can you believe it and I love her just as much now as I did then and it's not because we never have any issues or problems but we learn to forgive it and forget it this is what the Lord says he who appoints the sun to shine by day who decrees the moon and the stars to shine by night who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar the Lord Almighty is his name remember the God we're talking about he controls the universe he can make anything he can make Corona go away he can do anything put your hands in the hands of the man who still you remember that song put your hands in the hands of the man still the waters waters right sorry going back to my hippie days

God Almighty is his name verse 36 only if these decrees vanish from my sight declares the Lord will Israel ever cease being a nation before me and they won't cease this is what the Lord says only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth can be searched out while they reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done declares the Lord can't measure the universe it goes on forever and so does God's love for us the days are coming declares the Lord when the city will be rebuilt for me from the tower of Hanel to the corner gate the measuring line will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Koa the whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown actually had a body that's a valley that's where they put dead people they put them in there and they had constant fire it's really kind of weird but that's what they did it's a smelly place in the valley of Kahana

[54 : 47] I think it is it's very very kind of weird way but that's what they did and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the horse gate will be holy to the Lord the city will never again be uprooted or demolished you know that's the end of these chapters by the way right now I have a great concern for the city of New York City we have some coronavirus in our area but man they have thousands thousands upon thousands upon thousands how how how horrible a city that never sleeps Times Square empty we've seen the pictures it's unimaginable and in some ways I would think for the people of New York City it might feel like it'll never get back to what it was but so long as God is the God of the universe he's the God of the future and he can take us through the brokenness and back to life so we'll come back and so will we the day will come when we'll worship again in the sanctuary the day will come when we'll worship again at Pendleton the day will come when we'll worship together with one another and celebrate and feast and sing and shout for joy right now we struggle so we have needs in our congregation we have people

I've been talking to who are in the hospital we have some people who are isolated because they're concerned about this virus we have some people who the doctors have isolated because they don't know for sure whether they're safe we have people that are broken and hurting I don't want you to be afraid these aren't people you've probably been anywhere near but I've been talking to people we have a gentleman in intensive care down in Buffalo named Pat and we need to keep him in prayers he's gone through surgery and now he's having struggles afterwards we have people recovering from surgeries and people who are wrestling with cancer we have many concerns and we have people many people who are getting frustrated and fearful and we have children who are confused and young people who wonder what their future will be so this is a time for prayer and I invite you where you are to take a moment lift up your own concerns as we pray together dear God in heaven you are my God

I know that I'm broken and I know I don't deserve your love and certainly not your forgiveness but fortunately it depends on you and not me and you are the faithful one be faithful to your people and bless us Lord take away our fears and help us to remember that you still are there and that you've sent angels to watch over us bless the people who are sick in New York City in our areas our friends our relatives bless those who are recovering from surgery or those who have cancer or those who are just wrestling with the flu and worried it's warm bless those who are lonely bless us in our time of need be our strength and lead us to a time when we can celebrate again the joy of the Lord and we offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ who said to pray our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever amen on our

Wednesday night Bible study we usually celebrate communion we won't be doing that tonight we do that when we gather back together and that will be a glorious day and a glorious opportunity to meet together again God be with you God bless you stay connected call people if you are willing to call others contact Pastor Sherry she is really looking for people to make those connections with simple phone calls maybe drop a note or a letter to someone the old fashioned way you know reach out and touch people because people are well I don't mean really because we got socially physically distant but reach out with what you can do and connect and be loved God peace amen