

Advent Week One



Hope

Jeremiah 29:1-13

Why Talk About Advent?

I'm a grinch



Advent

Christmas without
commercials

First Week of Advent: Hope

What is Christian Hope?

- Not a wish
- A certainty, fueled by faith
 - “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Heb. 11:1
- **Expectation that God will do what he says**
- As believers, our hope is keyed to Christ

Christ Is Our Hope

- “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope”
1 Tim. 1:1
- “To [the saints] God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”
Col. 1:27
- “...We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”
Titus 2:13

It's A Good Thing There's Hope!

- Part of Advent is "Joy" (it's week three)
- Christ's coming is meant for *all* of life
 - The good and the bad
 - The easy and the hard
- Today's passage talks about the full width of "hope"

A Bible Promise We Love

For I know the plans I have for you,”
declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you
and not to harm you, plans to give you
hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV’84)

But Context Counts

- Every “Bible promise” has a context
 - Verses before and after
 - Setting
 - History
 - Writer and audience
- Promises out of context are dangerous
 - Misleading at best
 - Can even be a lie!
- Promises *in* context are enriched

Jeremiah 29:1-13 (NIV '84)

¹ This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ² (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.)

³ He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said: ⁴ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.

⁶ Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷ Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

⁸ Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹ They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the LORD. ¹⁰ This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you **hope** and a future. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Context of This Promise

■ Time of terrible sadness

- Judah struggled with idolatry for a century...and lost
- Walls of Jerusalem breeched by Babylon
- Temple plundered
- King and his mother captured; taken to Babylon 29:2
- City officials and artisans, too
- None will live to see home again
- Tempted to depression and bitterness

■ Jeremiah sends a letter of hope

29:1

Jeremiah's Astonishing Letter

- Work hard in their Babylonian exile
 - Build houses and plant gardens 29:5
 - Enjoy the fruit of their labor
 - Work to prosper their kids and grandkids 29:6
- Seek the peace and prosperity of Babylon! 29:7
 - Pray for it
 - As Babylon prospers, they will, too
- Don't listen to the lies of false prophets 29:8
- God will bring them home...*after 70 years!* 29:10

Jeremiah's Letter (continued)

■ God has a plan

29:11

- Not just the rebuilding of Jerusalem
- The restoration of God's people to himself

■ "You will call on me...and I will listen"

29:12

■ "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

29:13

Life Lessons

- Times of exile come to everyone
- God is still at work
 - Make the most of your life wherever you are
 - Strengthen your family
 - Pray for your nation (even when it's evil)
- God knows just where you are
 - Don't listen to "prophets" with quick, easy answers
 - Our lives happen on God's timetable
 - God will come through

Life Lessons (continued)

- Preacher, what have you done to my Bible promise? 😊
 - Remember what Christian hope is?
 - Expectation that God will do what he says
 - God will come through
 - But in his time, not ours
- Seek him with all of your heart
- You will find him

The Big Idea

The hope found in Christ will get you
through anything

Where Is Your Life This Morning?

- Are you in exile?
- Are you listening to lies?
 - “If I had more _____, I’d be happy”
 - “My problems are all _____’s fault”
 - “I’m worthless and unloveable”
 - “No one really cares about me”
- Christ is your hope
- Seek him with all your heart