

“Wanted: God Seekers”

Jeremiah 29:10-14

INTRO:

There are many things we know God wants us to do. For example, we know He wants us to love Him with all of our hearts, souls, and strength. We also know He wants us to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord. We know He wants us to seek to win the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, did you know that God wants us to seek Him?

We are to be a God seeker. It may surprise you to learn the Bible says a lot about our need to seek God. Let me show you in **Jeremiah 29:10-14**. This chapter was written as a letter by Jeremiah the Prophet to the first group who were taken captive to Babylon. Yahweh desired to communicate His plan for the future of Judah and a promise about when they would return to the land.

- I. God's Plan (v. 10-11)**
- II. God's Promise (v. 12-14)**

I. God's Plan (v. 10-11)

Jeremiah 29:10-11 “*For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”*

- A. Among the first wave of captives carried off to Babylon, there were a few false prophets. No sooner had these false prophets hit Babylon, than they began to prophesy the captivity would be short and God would very soon restore them to the land. This was not to be.
- B. In **verses 5-9** the LORD told these captives through Jeremiah to settle down in the land, build homes, and to pray for the welfare of Babylonia, because the welfare of Babylonia and their own welfare were connected.
 - 1. We can learn a lesson from this exhortation which we can apply to how we live in the increasingly heathen nation around us. For example we should pray for the welfare of our nation. We are not to condone her sin, but we are to pray for our leaders in order that we might serve God now.
 - 2. **1 Timothy 2:1-3**

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

C. The second thing they needed to do was to recognize God had a plan for them. God's plan is sketched for these captives in our text.

"For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

1. How were they supposed to act knowing that God had a plan? Some folks understand God's sovereignty over the affairs of humankind as an incentive to laziness. They say, 'We don't need to work and pray because God already has determined what He will do.'

2. Yet, this has never been the response of God's choicest servants. Remember how Daniel the prophet responded after he discovered the record of God's plan? In Daniel 9:2-3 we read,

"In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes."

Daniel thought the fact that God had a plan and already knew what He would do meant he should pray even more.

D. Not only did God have a plan, He also made them a great promise.

II. God's Promise (v. 12-14)

Jeremiah 29:12-14 *"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity."*

A. *"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you."*

The blessing of this promise is not readily apparent to us because in this New Testament age in which we live, we are very aware of God's many promises to always hear our prayers.

1. One of the most disturbing passages in Jeremiah is found in

Jeremiah 14:11-12. “*Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not pray for this people, for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.’*

Can you imagine praying for someone and the Lord telling you, “Don’t pray for them anymore? I am going to destroy them.” What would you do if God said to you, “I will not hear your prayers anymore?”

2. Why would He not hear their prayers? He told them through **Isaiah 59:1-2** “*Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.*”

Beloved, sin still keeps us from God today. We can pray and not be heard, if we are unwilling to part-company with our sin. Let us recommit ourselves to keeping short accounts with God.

B. If you had heard about God’s command to Jeremiah in **chapter 14** to stop praying, this promise was indeed good news. When they got back to the land, they would once again know the joy of having their prayers answered. The LORD filled in even more details to His promise.

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Isn’t praying the same as seeking the Lord’s face? Yes and no. God here promised even more than just the answer to prayer. He promised a relationship with His people.

APPLICATION:

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT WE ARE GOD SEEKERS?

1. Seeking the LORD is important because, if we do not seek Him, we will tend toward evil. We see this in a comment made in **2 Chronicles 12:14** about Solomon’s son, Rehoboam.

“And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.”

2. Seeking the LORD is important because it demonstrates our relationship with Him. Those who belong to the Lord and love Him, seek Him. Those, who do not know Him, do not seek Him.

Romans 3:11 “*There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.*”

3. Seeking the LORD is important because it is the key to greatness in God’s sight. There are two kings in the divided kingdom period whom God called great:

Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. What did these two kings have in common? They both prepared their hearts to seek God.

HOW DO WE BECOME GOD SEEKERS?

1. Seeking God first requires we humble ourselves. One reason why we find it difficult to seek the Lord is because we trust in ourselves or others to do what needs to be done, rather than humbling ourselves before God. Listen to our LORD warning the people through Isaiah.

Isaiah 31:1 *“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD.”*

2. Seeking God means prepare our hearts. We read about Jehoshaphat in **2 Chronicles 19:3** *“Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God.”*

How do we prepare our hearts to seek God? First, we must humble ourselves and recognize our need of the Lord. Second, we deal with our sins. Then we must determine that we will be obedient to all that He shows us to do.

3. When we think of seeking God we usually think of seeking Him in prayer, we also seek the Lord in His Word.

Ezra 7:10 *“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.”*

Are we God seekers? Do we spend time each day preparing our hearts, humbling ourselves, and seeking the face of our Lord in prayer and in the Word of God? If we do this, the Bible promises He will be found by us. In the New Testament we are told in the divine commentary on the life of Enoch who pleased God,

Hebrews 11:6 *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*

Hymn# 428 I Need Thee Every Hour