

Text: Jeremiah 30:1-24

Title: “Restored”

ILLUSTRATION – My good friend Dennis Swanberg told the story recently of a heartbreaking experience he and his wife Lauree went through. Their young adult son Dustin had been in and out of trouble and they were at their wits end. One night they got the call that Dustin had been arrested and was in jail in Georgetown, Texas. So at 1:00am Dennis drove down to bail his son out of jail ... again. He went in the jail and paid the bail but as he walked out the Lord spoke to him: “If you love him, leave him.” They had bailed Dustin out so many times, but this time Dennis realized that Dustin needed to live with the consequences of his actions and to learn from it. And because Dennis and Lauree love their son they wanted what was best for him, not necessarily what was easiest for him. If they loved him they would have to leave him in jail for the time being. So Dennis went back and told the deputy to keep Dustin in jail for the nine days he was supposed to serve. It was a long drive back home. Dennis said, “It was the worst day of my life, but I loved Dustin more than I have ever loved him before.” When Dustin had served his time Dennis went to get him and when Dustin walked out of the jail he was carrying in his hand the little Gideon’s New Testament he found in the jail cell. God had moved in his life. Many parents can identify with the Swanbergs in this heartbreaking episode in their family.

Experiences like that also help us understand the heart of God when for the strengthening of our faith He leaves us in hardship longer than we would like or to discipline us in our rebellion He has to take us through trials. And the Bible teaches us that truth through His dealings with the nation of Israel. We’ve seen that here in book of Jeremiah where we have camped this summer. Jeremiah is God’s spokesmen in a season when He is compelled to discipline His children. Jeremiah 32:33 tells us why:

Jeremiah 32:33 - They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline.

But God never gives up on us. Let’s open our Bibles to Jeremiah 30. Jeremiah 30-33 is a book within a book. In Jeremiah 29 he wrote a letter to the exiles in Babylon explaining to them that the discipline of the Lord was going to last longer than they expected. Because God loves them He must leave them in captivity for longer than they think they need to stay. But He still had gracious plans for them ... plans to give them a future and a hope. And starting here in Jeremiah 30 the Lord shows them and us what a future and a hope look like. **Read Jeremiah 30:1-2.**

So the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah that he was to write this message from the Lord in a book (scroll). Why? The message needed to be preserved for the later generations to know the plans God had for them. That's why we have our Bible today ... so we can know the future and the hope we have in the Lord.

Read Jeremiah 30:3. Scholars believe that Jeremiah probably wrote this book while he was in prison during the last days of the total destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army who had invaded them and carried many off into captivity. Jeremiah looking out of his prison cell window sees a pretty bleak picture. But God has a bigger and better vision in mind. The darker things got in Jerusalem, the brighter were God's promises for His people.

It says here in v.3, "The days are coming..." That signals to us that God is up to something huge. Up to this point in Jeremiah it's pretty much been doom and gloom. No wonder Jeremiah was depressed. But there's a change in the tone in Jeremiah 30-33. Scholars call it "The Book of Comfort (or Consolation)." These chapters contain the promise of God that He will display His power and love to restore the people He has had to punish. There are four grand promises the Lord makes related to this restoration. First, this restoration will mean...

1. DELIVERANCE FROM UNBEARABLE TROUBLE

Read Jeremiah 30:4-7a. Get the picture here. The people of Judah and Jerusalem were in trouble because they had turned their backs to God, not their faces. The word "trouble" means distress, affliction and adversity like they had never seen before. Jeremiah watched as the Babylonians were about to lower the boom on Jerusalem. And people felt the full impact of this trouble. Men doubled over in pain from anguish, like a woman in child birth. They are so afraid of what was before them that they turn pale ... the blood drains right out of their face. And there seems to be no hope of anyone to rescue them.

But in the last phrase of v.7 notice that little word "but"? It's the biggest little word in the Bible. Their sin has plunged them into great trouble, but God has the power to deliver them. Trouble comes in different shapes and sizes. Judah is in trouble because they have rebelled against the Lord. Our sin is our greatest trouble. Sometimes afflictions are not punishment for our sin, but we still can look to the Lord for His deliverance. This trouble would be overwhelming, but it would not be fatal or final. They will be saved, delivered, out of it. Listen, there's no mess that

God can't straighten out. God sees beyond the trouble to the victory He can bring when we trust Him to deliver us.

This restoration also means ...

2. FREEDOM FROM INESCAPABLE BONDAGE

The powerful Babylonians will take most of the last inhabitants of Jerusalem hundreds of miles away into exile. And for seventy years it will be like a harness and chains are placed on them. But God sees beyond their immediate afflictions:

Read Jeremiah 30:8-9.

“Instead” in v.9 means “but.” There it is again ... the biggest little word in the Bible. God will do such a work of restoration that they will be set free to no longer serve pagan lords. Their devotion and allegiance will turn once again to the Lord their God. That was the basis for God's covenant with Israel from the beginning. They were to worship and serve Him only. They had strayed from that and now they are in bondage. But God will set them free to serve Him.

Now, just take note of the fact that God will raise up a new leader to lead them to this new day. You'll see who that is in just a moment.

So after the seventy years are completed in bondage the Jews will be released to return to and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. But the Lord seems to have something even bigger in mind that. You need to know that God has His eye on His covenant people, the Jews. I don't have time today to sketch this out for you historically, but Judah did return to their homeland and they did begin to rebuild, but God has even greater things in store for the nation of Israel. Keep your eye on Israel, because God has His eye on His covenant people. They are a big part of what God will do at the end of history when He restores everything.

Read Jeremiah 30:10-11a. So the Lord displayed His power and love in releasing the Jews from their bondage and their fear. And He will do the same for us when we trust Him.

ILLUSTRATION – Glen Campbell died this past week. I really loved his music. You may know that at one point in this life he struggled with an addiction to drugs and alcohol. Years ago in an interview Glen spoke openly about his battle with addiction: “I had promised Kim (his wife) that cocaine would not be part of our

marriage. I tried and prayed, but I didn't keep that promise. One night shortly after our first child, Cal, was born, some musician friends were in town, and I stayed up till dawn doing cocaine with them. When I got home Kim was heartbroken and furious, and I was afraid she was going to take Cal and leave. I can't say I would have blamed her but I think it would have torn my heart out. As I had done so many times before, I begged the Lord to deliver me. I don't understand why, but that day it was as if Jesus reached down and pulled my hand back from the cocaine. I never touched the drug again.”

Maybe you're dealing with an addiction of some kind, or you're enslaved to unforgiving spirit, or some other besetting sin. You've tried to kick it, to let go of the hurt or break free from that sin, but you haven't been successful. God's dealings with Israel show us that God has the power to set free the captives who trust in Him.

In this restoration God also promises His people ...

3. HEALING FROM AN INCURABLE WOUND

Read Jeremiah 30:12-13. Not only were they in trouble and in bondage, they were so sin-sick that their situation was terminal. And there was no human help for them. It's like an attorney saying to his client, “Sorry, I can't defend you.” It's like the doctor leaning over the bed of his patient saying, “Sorry, there's nothing I can do for you.”

Read Jeremiah 30:14. The word for “allies” literally means “lovers.” The people had turned to other nations like lovers to help them, but they were no good to them. No human ally can cure their sin-sickness because their guilt is great and their sins many. They had tried to medicate themselves with their idols. They had turned to everyone but to the Lord. Sin takes us farther than we want to go and keeps us longer than we want to stay.

Read Jeremiah 30:17. “But...” Ah, there's that biggest little word again. There's a cure for the incurable sickness of our sin. The Lord said through another prophet, Hosea:

Hosea 6:1-2 - “Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.

The restoration of the Lord means healing from our incurable wound. But it also means...

4. RECOVERY FROM IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS

When the Jews were carried away into exile in Babylon they lost their land and their homes and their jobs, perhaps even their families. And the walls of their beloved city of Jerusalem were destroyed, the Temple was demolished and the empty streets were filled with debris. It all seems to be an irretrievable loss from a human perspective; but God sees it differently.

Read Jeremiah 30:18. The blessings of God will once again be over the homes of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. The city would be rebuilt on its ruins. The word for “ruins” is the Hebrew word *tel*. When you travel in Israel and the Middle East you see tels everywhere. They are mounds that have usually grown over with grass. Underneath the mound might be the ruins of 10, 15 or 20 ancient towns that have been destroyed and rebuilt. Jerusalem had become a heap of ruins but it would be rebuilt. Does that sound like your life? A heap of ruins?

Read Jeremiah 30:19. They had lost their song, but in the place of weeping there would be rejoicing. Instead of decreasing, their population would increase. They would go from being disrespected by the nations to being honored.

Now remember I said earlier that God would raise up a new king to lead them in this new day ... a new king like the greatest king Israel ever had ... King David. Here we see more about this leader.

Read Jeremiah 30:21. Not only is this leader a king like David, but he also has the ministry of a priest who will come into the very presence of God to restore God’s covenant relationship with His people. And here’s the end product of this restoration:

Jeremiah 30:22 - “So you will be my people, and I will be your God.”

You see, this has been the heart of God from the very beginning when Adam and Eve sinned. They were plunged into trouble. The Garden of Eden became a graveyard. They were in bondage to their sin. They were sick with the deadly disease of sin. And they lost Paradise and were separated from God. And this sin disease was passed from Adam to every human being born since then. But God took it upon

Himself to restore this broken relationship with His creatures. He started with one man named Abraham whom He called to Himself and promised him that his descendants would bless the entire world. Abraham had a son named Isaac who had a son named Jacob. And Jacob's sons became the tribes of Israel (Jacob's other name). God made a covenant with Israel that they would be His people and He would be their God and that relationship would be a display case of His glory to all the nations of the earth. It was God's intention to bring out of Israel a Messiah King and Priest who would not only restore Israel but all those who called upon the name of the Lord. But Israel jeopardized all of that when they turned their backs to the Lord. But the eternal purposes of God will not be thwarted. God took it upon Himself to rescue His people from Babylon and restore them to their homeland. And five hundred years later God would bring that promised Messiah King and Priest ... the Son of David, the Son of Man and the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He will bring about a new covenant that's not just for Israel but for all of us. We'll see that next week.

So we have here another Jesus sighting in the book of Jeremiah. You see...

JESUS BRINGS US DELIVERANCE FROM THE UNBEARABLE

TROUBLE OF OUR SIN – Our sins brought upon us the heavy weight of God's judgment and wrath. Through Christ we are saved. Without Jesus we are still in our sins. And if we're in our sins we're in trouble.

Romans 5:18 (The Message) - Just as one person (Adam) did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person (Jesus) did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life!

JESUS BRINGS FREEDOM FROM THE INESCAPABLE BONDAGE TO

SIN – We are slaves to sin, but through Christ we are set free. Jesus came to proclaim release for the captives.

John 8:36 - So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

JESUS BRINGS HEALING FROM THE INCURABLE WOUNDS OF OUR

SIN. – We are sick with sin, but Jesus became the cure for us through His death and resurrection.

1 Peter 2:24 - He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

JESUS BRINGS RECOVERY FROM THE IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS OF OUR SIN. - What Adam and Eve lost in the Fall God fully restored through Christ. We have can have a relationship with God through Christ. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing through Christ. And God isn't finished yet. The Gospel tells us that after Jesus died and rose again He ascended back to heaven.

Acts 3:21 - He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

So we haven't seen the fullness of this restoration yet. God still hasn't fully restored Israel, but He will. God hasn't fully restored the universe that has been wrecked by sin, but He will.

2 Peter 3:13 - But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

So how does this help us today as we go through the trials of life? It's gives us hope knowing as Paul would say...

Romans 8:18 - I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.