

GOD'S PLANS FOR YOU

Jeremiah 29:11

TEXT: *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.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Can you make out the picture on the front of the bulletin? It's a house that has collapsed. The caption I chose for this picture is from today's Gospel Lesson, a parable of Jesus in which He said: *Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.* Mt 7 The thing that our Lord was trying to impress upon His disciples is this: DON'T LET THIS BE YOU!

This is NOT what our Lord has in mind for you life. That has always been the plan of God for His Church. In the Old Testament days He sent Jeremiah to say to those who would listen: *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.* The 2014 graduating class of St. John's Lutheran Elementary School has chosen this to be their class Bible Passage. While it was first directed to those ancient Jews, it was and still is directed to all who members of His Holy Christian Church, both Old Testament and New.

GOD'S PLANS FOR YOU still remain the same: His plans are to save you from sin and death; His plans offer hope and a future.

To better understand this passage that you have selected, we must consider the context. What had happened to Jerusalem was far worse than the collapsed house on the front of today's bulletin. Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon had already deported several thousand of Judah's nobility, it's elite citizens, and it's gifted and talented to Babylon. After a couple of more deportations of Jews, he would lay siege to the city and finally and thoroughly destroy it. The magnificent Temple of King Solomon would be ransacked and razed. Still the Lord told Jeremiah to say to them: *I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you...* If this is what the Lord considers to be prosperity and safety, we don't any more!

Did the Jews deserve this? Yes they did. As a nation they had fallen away from God's Word. They deserved the destruction of their beautiful temple and their deportation to a foreign land. In fact, they deserved even worse! They deserved eternal damnation.

Does our nation deserve any better? Moral corruption that surrounds us and is broadcast on TV and the internet. Marriage is despised and not honored. Our own nation reflects the very image of Sodom and Gomorrah just before the Lord destroyed them! Do we Americans deserve any better? Should we not expect the collapse of this great house we call the USA as surely as did fall the great city of Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah?

Still the Lord said to those who were his in Jeremiah's day: *I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you...* You have picked this passage for your class to remember, and I am here to tell you that God's plans for His people haven't changed. Those plans for His people back then were carried out 586 years later in the birth, suffering, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus. Back then He knew what they were! Today we know what they are because He has revealed them to us in the name of Jesus. His plans were not to harm His people, but to harm His Son instead of His people. In Jeremiah's day the name for Jesus would be OUR Righteousness. He said: *In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.* Je 23 Paul would explain God's plan with these words: *God made him who had*

no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Co 5 Do you know what this means to you? It means that God will never harm you!

What more could anyone want in this world? The worldly-minded will shout: Hope and prosperity! And your class passage says that you have that too!

There are lots of graduation speeches being made these several weeks. Lots of successful men and women trying to encourage and motivate young people to have hope and to seek a prosperous future. But as they blather on and on with the same old same old, our world, our society and our nation keeps swirling down drain. What kind of hope and future is there when we consider the fact that the Bible passage you selected was spoken to a nation about to be destroyed by God because of the sin and unbelief?

Here is the answer: God knows. God knows where you are. He knows where His people are and it is to you that this promise is made: ***For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to give you hope and a future.*** You already know the future you have in Jesus. But what is your future in this life?

Let me tell you about what God said to the Jews who believed in Him even as they were taken from their homes and into exile in Babylon. He said: ***This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 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. 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."*** Je 29 God saw to it that they lived a life of simple prosperity and peace. In fact God told Jeremiah to command them not to worry, but instead to use their talents and gifts and their education trusting in His care.

The same Lord cares for you even today. The apostle Paul in that famous Resurrection Chapter 15 in his letter to the Corinthians wrote warned the Christians about those who followed the ancient code of the Epicureans: ***"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*** He urged them: ***Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God...*** 1 Co 15 He elevated the name of Jesus and His resurrection to the highest place above all levels of the highest levels of education when he wrote: ***I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."*** Then he concluded that chapter with this promise based upon the passage you chose for your class passage: Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

The house that awaits you in heaven is a mansion being prepared for you by Jesus Himself. Build your future on God's promises and your hope and your future on the foundation of God's love for you in Jesus and live your lives boldly, prayerfully and joyfully for whatever time our Lord has given you on this earth.

Your foundation is Jesus. Your life and future stand secure. Amen.