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Love Can Make the Best of A Bad Situation
Jeremiah 29:5-7
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For years, Jeremiah prophesied that God would punish his people if they did not change their ways and worship God only. As it were, in 597 BC, the Babylonians forcefully captured the Israelites and burned the Holy City.

Shortly after their captivity, Jeremiah began to prophesy that the Lord would bring His people back to the Holy City and would love them with an everlasting love. He would turn their morning and grief into gladness. He would redeem his people and cleanse them from all the sins they had committed. “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope (Jer 29:11). Everything the Lord does is done for Gods glory and God's people's benefit. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose” (Rom 8:28).

But now, the Israelites are in captivity by the Babylonians. They destroyed the city of Jerusalem, tortured the citizens, desecrated the temple, destroyed their businesses, removed the best and the brightest, and enslaved many of the people. They dealt a devastating defeat on the people of Babylon. This is the definition of a bad situation.

As time goes on, the Lord wanted his people to know that the bad situation they were in would not last always. Regardless of how bad the Israelites had been, good times were on the way. No matter how much pain and disappointment the people were experiencing, good times were on the way.

There are some bad situations in life that all of us must acknowledge. It's time out for naming and blaming, looking and turning our heads, complaining and doing nothing. It's time for the people of God to move from a bad situation to a situation that is pleasing unto God. God provides Jeremiah a plan to get his people out of a bad situation:

1. The first thing that must be done is to produce and reproduce

You are residents of Babylon; it may not be your chosen location but be positive and make progress until I decide to change your situation. “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon” (Jer 29:4). It was the Lord’s plan to bring the Israelites out of Babylon. The way they were to get out was by having them produce and reproduce.

- a. God says, be productive. Build houses, and dwell in them, invest in the city in which you are living, and be a legacy and sustain the city for years to come. In order to be productive, there must be an investment in the place you are currently living.

- b. God says, plant some seeds. Plant seeds of kindness, understanding, patience, forgiveness, love, compassion, joy, and goodness, these seeds can nurture a harvest that can transform lives for the glory of God.
- c. God says, multiply yourself. Be fruitful and multiply, take wives and beget sons and daughters, and encourage your sons and daughters to have sons and daughters. Reproduce yourself so you can influence the city of Babylon instead of having the city of Babylon influence you. We need more Christians and less non-Christians so we can influence this godless world instead of the godless world influencing us. It's the same challenge that Jesus left on record in Matthew 28 in "The Great Commission."

1. Seek peace and pray for the city

The best course of action for the Israelites is to seek the peace of the city and pray as they multiply. Do what you can so that the city in which you live is prosperous. We should pray for the peace of the city and we should pray for our country today like we have never done before. We need to make sure that every area of our city is made better for all people and not just a selected few. If one part of the boat is sinking, eventually the entire boat will sink.

We must desire to see the entire city made better, not just prized possessions west of 72nd street. God says you may not be able to change your geographic location, but you can change your surroundings.

1. Understand that a bad situation will not last always

The Lord continues to speak to the prophet Jeremiah. He knows the people long for their homeland, and their desire to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. In all this, Jeremiah reminds the Israelites that the struggle won't last always.

After 70 years are completed, God will visit the Israelites and restore them to their place of prominence in God's sight. They will seek the Lord and find him for they will thirst for the glory of God. God says I know it's bad now, but it will not be bad always, for real soon, I will restore you to your rightful place in my heart.