A Vision of the Future

Read Jeremiah 30:1-3, 18-22

Key verse: “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will bring back my people Israel and Judah from captivity, says the Lord. I will bring them home to the land that I gave to their ancestors, and they will possess it” (Jeremiah 30:3).

Someone has said, “Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.”

For the people of Israel and Judah, some of their darkest times were the years when they were in exile. During the time that Babylonian armies destroyed Jerusalem and took many of the Jews into exile, God sent a word through the prophet Jeremiah. It was a word of promise and hope, a word that the Jewish people would need to hold onto during their dark days in exile:

“The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will bring back my people Israel and Judah from captivity, says the Lord. I will bring them home to the land that I gave to their ancestors, and they will possess it” (Jeremiah 30:3).

“The time is coming....” But that time of restoration did not come immediately. During the dark times, the Jewish people were called upon to hold on and keep trusting in God and in God’s promise. To encourage them as they waited for God’s promise to be fulfilled, God through Jeremiah also gave a specific vision of what their time of restoration would be like:

“I’ll turn things around for Jacob. I’ll compassionately come in and rebuild homes. The town will be rebuilt on its old foundations; the mansions will be splendid again. Thanksgivings will pour out of the windows; laughter will spill through the doors. Things will get better and better. Depression days are over. They’ll thrive, they’ll flourish. The days of contempt will be over” (Jeremiah 30:18-19, The Message paraphrase).

The application for our lives is so important. When dark times come—loss, illness, trials of various kinds—we must hold onto God’s promises. The Bible is full of them! And because we may need encouragement to trust God when things don’t get better right away, sometimes God will give us a specific, personal word. It may come to us in prayer, in the still
small voice of the Holy Spirit, or through the words of another Christian. However God’s word comes to us, we should “never doubt in the dark what God has shown us in the light.”

Things may not get better immediately, but God’s promises are sure. Hold on. Trust God. Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.

I have always liked the story of a young man whose wife died, leaving him with their young son. After the funeral, the father and son went to bed early because there was nothing else that father could bear to do.

As he lay in the dark—heartbroken and in despair—his little boy called out from his room across the hall. He asked, “Daddy, where is mommy?”

The father got up and brought his son to bed with him. The boy was still restless and anxious. He kept asking disturbing questions like, “Why isn’t mommy here? When is she coming back?”

Finally the boy asked, “Daddy, is your face toward me?”

In the darkness, the father answered, “Yes, son, my face is toward you.”

“Daddy, if your face is toward me,” said the boy, “I think I can go to sleep now.”

That father lay there in the dark and then, in childlike faith, he lifted his broken heart to the heavenly Father and prayed: “O God, the way is dark, and I confess that right now I do not see my way through. But if your face is toward me, somehow I think I can make it.”

The good news of our faith is that God’s face is toward us. God is with us, even in our darkest times. Though things may not get better immediately, God’s promises are sure! Hold on. Trust in God and in God’s promises. Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.

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