

Hope in Exile: God's Call for Renewal

Receiving and Renewing God's Harvest Jer 1:1–10, 2:7, 5:24

Welcome

What was your first job? Had you any experience to prepare you for it?

Worship

You may wish to listen to Search me and know me – Michael Card

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvNu3zgvFW8>

or read together Psalm 139 on which the song is based.

Use either to lead into a time of praise and thanksgiving.

Word

Background: Jeremiah begins prophesying during the reign on Josiah, king of Judah, who had sought to bring about religious reform, restoring the worship of God to the temple at Jerusalem. The northern kingdom of Israel has already been taken into exile. Jeremiah prophesied for forty years. During this time Judah too would be taken in to exile whilst Jeremiah would end up in Egypt.

Read v1-3

Q What do we learn about Jeremiah from his background? Do you think that this would have had any impact on his subsequent ministry? Why/why not?

Read v4-10

Q When God calls Jeremiah he declares four things to him in v5. What are they?

Q. What do these things teach us about God and his relationship with us?

Q. How does such knowledge help us in the roles we are called to?

Q. What was Jeremiah's initial response to his calling? Why?

Q. Are we prone to use our weaknesses as an excuse not to serve in particular ways?

Q. How does God deal with Jeremiah's concerns? Can we also be reassured by God's response?

Q. Verse 10 summarises Jeremiah's ministry. Do we favour doing the latter part (to build and to plant) and avoid the former? Why? Should we?

Witness

Use this time to pray for your mission partner giving thanks for their calling and obedience.

Pray for those who have taken or considering taking up new ministries following the church day away.

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Return with all your heart

Jer 3:6-14

Welcome

Have you ever tried to imitate someone else? Why? What was the outcome?

Worship

Amazing Grace (My chains are gone) Chris Tomlin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MZgXXUW08Q>

Word

Remind the group of the background outlined in the previous study.

Q. In what ways had Israel committed adultery?

Q. How did God demonstrate his patience?

Q. Why do you think it didn't bring about a change of heart?

Q. What was the consequence for Israel?

Q. What effect did Israel's adultery have on Judah?

Q. Why do you think this was the case?

Q. What are the things that take priority over God in your life?

Q. What does v10 teach us about true worship? Can you think of ways where our worship might be pretentious? What needs to change?

Q. Why was Judah considered less righteous than Israel?

Q. How does any of this apply to us today – as a nation, church, personally?

Q. What does God declare about himself in v12 and 13?

Q. What must Israel do if she does return?

Q. There is no evidence that Israel did this – why do you think that was?

Q. What stops people from turning back to God?

Q. What encouragement does this passage provide?

Witness

These verses are a call to repentance by a gracious God who calls his people and his church in mercy, not out of anger. Take a few minutes to allow each other to reflect on God's call to repentance.

You may wish to play this in the background (minimising so the video isn't a distraction)

Steve Parsons – Prodigal

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA6mN8lv_Ro

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Welfare and Plans

Jer 29:4-14

Welcome

Are you a take things as they come person or are you a planner?

Worship

Grace that will lead us home – Elim Sound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMJj5-TekHE>

Word

Read v 4-9

Q. v4 Who took them into exile? Why does God want them to know this? What does it teach us about God?

Q. v5,6 What does God tell them to do? Why?

Q. v7 How do you imagine they would have responded initially to this instruction?

Q. Why does God tell them to do this? Cf Matt 5:43,44

Q. What can we do to promote the peace and prosperity of:

- Our town?

- Our nation?

- The world?

Q. Are v8,9 evident/relevant today?

Read v10-14

Q. How long were they to be in exile? How does this knowledge help them to follow the instructions given to them in the earlier verses?

Q. How could knowing this have been seen in a negative sense?

Q. How could the knowledge of God's plan for the nation in v11 be an encouragement for the people living in exile?

Q. Are there areas in our lives or in the church where we want quick fixes instead of waiting for God's timing?

Q. What are we to do in the meantime to maintain hope and faithfulness when we feel like exiles? (Could be individual, church, nation?)

Read the verses again – what will God do. What will the people do?

Witness

Pray for your families, church, community and nation. Ask God to show us the steps we need to take to promote the peace and prosperity of them.

Hope in Exile: God's Call for Renewal

A New Covenant for a New Heart

Jer 31:31-34

Welcome

What contracts have you signed? Which one pleased you most?

Worship

This is our God – Hillsong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fS-RLamCOt0>

Word

We will be thinking about the new covenant. To help us understand this better we will first look at the old covenant.

Read Ex 19:3-6, 24:3-8 (note also the content of the chapters in between)

Q. Who was the covenant between and who was the mediator?

Q. What was the agreement made by each of the parties?

Q. How was the agreement sealed?

Read Jer 31:31-34

Q. Why was there a need for a new covenant?

Q. Why do you think the old covenant was ineffective?

Q. What provision did God make for the sins of the people under the old covenant? Why was it ineffective? (Recall the sacrificial system, day of atonement (Leviticus studies))

Q. Think about the new covenant (read Hebrews 9:13-15)

- who is it between and who was the mediator?

- How was the agreement sealed?

Read through the Jeremiah verses again. Pick out God's

'I wills' (his promises)

Q. What do these statements teach us about God's role in establishing the new covenant?

Q. How will he achieve them? (Ez 36:26,27)

Q What is required from us?

The old covenant tried to control conduct through regulation (external), but the new covenant changes character through relationship, so that people can love the Lord and one another, and want to obey God's will.

Witness

Read through the promises contained in these verses again. Give thanks for them. Which one do you need to hold onto right now?

Hope in Exile: God's Call for Renewal

Restore us, O Lord

Jer 33 : 6-16

Welcome

Have you ever tried to restore anything? What was the outcome?

Worship

I can only imagine – Mercy Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DU0MwNpRq6M>

Read Jer 3:2,3 as you open in prayer

Word

The prophecies in this section of Jeremiah speak of the time when Jerusalem was under siege by the Babylonians prior to their exile.

Read v 4-9

Q. What were the people fearful of initially? What would they become fearful of? Hosea 3:4,5 may help.

Q. Despite the warning Judah fails to repent- what were the initial consequences?

Q. What does God promise to **do** after that?

Q. What will be the result of his actions?

Q. Why do you think God is telling them this?

Q. Does this provide any hope or encouragement for us?

Read verses 10-16

Q. What does restoration look like and who/what is restored (Compare Jer 2:7 with 33:11 to see that the land too is restored). Does God 'gain' anything from this?

Q. In v12 and 13 a picture of flocks and shepherds is given as a picture of restoration. Why do you think this is? (You may want to look at the parallel passage in Ch 23 or see it as Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10)).

The people returned from exile and had governors but not another king.

Q. What will this future king do?

Q. In Ch23 the king will be called The Lord Our Righteousness. In v16 Jerusalem is given the same name. Why and what does it suggest?

Witness

Sing 'Restore O Lord (Graham Kendrick)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qBYITC5ROs

as a prayer. You may also want to ask the Lord to point out those areas of our lives, our church, our community that

need restoration whilst recalling some of his 'I will' promises
we have met in these studies.