

## MOTHERS DAY 2021

### Thinking of You

#### Jeremiah 29:11

This morning I'm going to take time away from our series in the first three chapters in the book of Revelation to spend our time looking at one verse in the book of Jeremiah. This one verse gives to us one of the most amazing and invaluable insights into the heart of God towards you and me — and I pray it will be especially encouraging to every mom and future mom. It is my prayer that this verse will also help you see and communicate to your children and grandchildren what you have come to know and trust about the heart of God for you and what is in the heart of God for them.

*2 Timothy 1:5 (CSB) <sup>5</sup>I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also.*

**Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) <sup>11</sup>For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

#### TWO LIFE CHANGING OBSERVATIONS:

1. The FACT that God is THINKING OF YOU
2. WHAT it is that God is THINKING OF YOU.

#### **1. The FACT that God is THINKING OF YOU**

David recognized the fact that God was thinking of him.

*Psalm 40:17 (ESV) As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me.*

*Psalm 139:17-18 (ESV) How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! <sup>18</sup>If I would count them, they are more than the sand.*

**MOMS** — I know that there are days when you are thinking about everyone else — and it seems like no one is thinking about you unless they're thinking of what you can do for them, or what you haven't gotten around to doing for them. God wants you to know that HE is CONSTANTLY thinking of you!

He's taking note of when you sit down and when you stand. He knows *your* thoughts from afar. God inspired David to record the facts that God is not only thinking about you — His thoughts towards you are so many that they cannot be numbered — they outnumber the grains of sand! (Psalm 139).

THAT is all a matter of fact! But here's the problem: There have been times in our lives — there will be times in our lives in this new when we're prone to think that God has forgotten us.

The **CONTEXT** of [Jeremiah 29:11](#) is of tremendous value to those of us who are — or will be — feeling as if God has forgotten us. God inspired Jeremiah to write to the descendants of Abraham who had been taken away into captivity in Babylon. By way of Jeremiah God reminded them that they were in captivity for their own sin and rebellion against God and that they were going to be there for 70 years! No doubt, over the course of 70 years there would be countless times that they would feel that God had forgotten them! YET — by way of Jeremiah God tells them that even though they were in captivity for their own sin and rebellion against God, He was still thinking of them in their captivity.

On the human level, it's always comforting to know that someone you love is thinking of you. Whether it's in electronic media or print media people send notes that simply say, "Thinking of you." In a room with this many people in it there are lots who could share how that simple sentiment has made a world of difference in their day.

When we first moved to northern California I was in my office up on Alta Street in Grass Valley — thinking that I was pastoring a church — and I thought of how influential my friend Malcolm Wild was in equipping me for the moment. I was thinking how thankful I was for him and for his friendship, so I picked up the phone and called him. When he answered he asked what was up and told him I just wanted him to know I was thinking about him — He told me I had no idea how much that meant to him at that very moment in his life!

God has given to us a collection of 66 books that tells us from every turn that He is thinking about us! I cannot stress enough the importance of developing the discipline of reading through the Bible — or reading through books of the Bible. It is like having an open ended conversation with God every morning. In any moment of this season in your life you can take GREAT COMFORT in knowing **for a fact** that God is THINKING OF YOU!

And — we ought to take great comfort in the FACT that God doesn't think of us just part of the time. He doesn't just think of you when you're obedient. He is ALWAYS thinking about you.

So, the Scriptures declare the FACT that God is thinking of you. They also tell us WHAT He is thinking about you and me.

**Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

What are God's thoughts concerning you and me?

AGAIN — Remember the context of these words. The descendants of Abraham were in Babylon because they had been disobedient children. They were now being disciplined.

We often don't know our own thoughts, our own mind. As a child, and as a teenager, when I was punished for my wrong doing, I used to get that "nobody loves me" syndrome.

Even though we can be so ambiguous and conflicted as to how we feel about ourselves and others, God is NEVER uncertain about His thoughts towards us.

God ASSURES His people — who had miserably failed Him and were now in captivity, that He not only thinks about them — but that His thoughts for them are

**ESV ....plans for welfare and not for evil**

**CSB ....plans for your well-being, not for disaster**

**NLT** .... plans for **good** and **not** for **disaster**

**Message** .... plans to **take care of you, not abandon** you

**NIV** .... plans to **prosper you** and **not to harm** you

So many times we FEEL that God's plans concerning us are all against us. We MUST always measure our FEELINGS against what God has declared to be true about Himself.

***Romans 3:4 (NIV)** Let God be true, and every human being a liar.*

***Psalms 145:13 (CSB)** ....The Lord is faithful in all his words and gracious in all his actions.*

Though you and I might FEEL that God's thoughts and plans are AGAINST us; are EVIL; God knows and declares the opposite to be true. They are thoughts of good and not of evil. Even that which seems evil in our own limited perception of things is DESIGNED FOR GOOD.

***Romans 8:28 (CSB)** <sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*

It is so very important for us to remember that this is not a stand-alone declaration that allows us to load that promise with our custom tailored meaning of good. Look at the very next verse in Romans 8.

***Romans 8:29 (CSB)** <sup>29</sup>For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,*

THAT is the good that God is working all things together towards. It is the work of a life time.

Especially for moms this morning — <sup>1</sup>. that is the lens through which you process the trials, joys, heartache and hurt of all things involving your children. <sup>2</sup>. THAT is the the way you want to train your children to process life.

But let me take this beyond the realm of motherhood.

THAT is the good He is working out in the life of every believer. We need to have a heart for and an eye on our brothers and sisters around us. Follow me here. Salvation is, in one way, a totally individual matter. You and you alone must place faith in Jesus. You and you alone must live by faith in Jesus who gave Himself to save you. But God's plan of redemption reaches way beyond your salvation — my salvation! From the very beginning it has been God's plan to create a new humanity in the image of His Son!

I think Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of **Romans 8:29** helps us get to the heart of this

***Romans 8:29 (The Message)** <sup>29</sup>God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.*

I want to encourage you moms to look at your spouse, your children, your brothers and sisters in Christ through that lens. The Holy Spirit is at work to conform them to the image of Jesus so that the world will see that Jesus is the original and intended shape of their lives.

Alongside of that — do you long for and desire your “not yet Christian” friends and family to be a part of that restored humanity that will dwell in the presence of God in a new heaven and a new earth! THE GOSPEL IS SO BIG!!

**Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)** <sup>11</sup>For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, **to give you a future and a hope.**

**KJV** .... to give you an expected end.

God has the foresight to see down the path to the end. Our problem is that we assume that our take on how we expect things to work out is the way God wants them to work out.

Sometimes, from our perspective, we might think that God is not only getting it wrong — He's actually blocking the way to our plan being worked out.

AGAIN — We need to check our understanding against God's word.

FIRST — God is FOR us, not against us.

*Romans 8:31–32 (CSB) <sup>31</sup>What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything?*

AGAIN — *Everything* is every thing that works to the good of God's ultimate purpose in our lives.

God will graciously BLOCK a path — CLOSE a door — that SEEMS RIGHT to me because it actually isn't the best.

**Hudson Taylor** — *He gives the very best to those who leave the choice with him.*<sup>1</sup>

Back to the context of these words of Jeremiah. The very fact that the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon was because God had a FUTURE for them. Their captivity was God's way of PRESERVING and PREPARING them as a nation to bring forth the Messiah.

We actually demonstrate or lack of wisdom by our failure to consider the end results. We see it around us everywhere. Men and women choose the immediate euphoria of drugs; the immediate relaxation and numbness of alcohol; the immediate excitement of an affair.

God — in His perfect wisdom, His steadfast love and compassion — always thinks of the end. The path may seem straight and narrow, but at the end is eternal glory.

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<sup>1</sup> Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret

**Hudson Taylor** — *“O Lord, how happy should we be if we would cast our care on Thee, if we from self would rest; And feel at heart that One above, In perfect wisdom, perfect love, Is working for the best!”*<sup>2</sup>

*2 Corinthians 4:17–18 (CSB)* <sup>17</sup>For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. <sup>18</sup>So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**Timothy Keller** — *“If we knew what God knows, we would ask exactly for what he gives.”*

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

**GOD IS THINKING OF YOU!**

You might not FEEL like He is. The fact of the matter is, He IS thinking of you!

You might FEEL that God is MAD at you. You might FEEL that He is AGAINST you. The FACT of the matter is that His thoughts towards you are THOUGHTS OF PEACE, and NOT of evil.

He ALWAYS and ONLY has your BEST interests at heart. A great example of this is the Children of Israel at the Red Sea. “You brought us out here to die!” Any moms ever felt like that in your marriage or with your children?

The truth is that God hadn’t brought them out of Egypt so they could die at the edge of the Red Sea. He brought them to the very place where they would see His glory and His power.

**GOD IS THINKING ABOUT THE END OF YOUR LIFE.**

Any PRESENT discomfort or detours are only because God is thinking about your eternal glory.

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<sup>2</sup> The Autobiography of Hudson Taylor: Missionary to China

The cross NEVER FEELS like the right thing. Marriage and parenting involves a lot of dying! When Jesus asks you to DENY YOURSELF it is NOT to make your life miserable. He wants to keep you from LOSING His best for your life.

You may look at the present circumstances of your life and feel as though your future is circling the toilet bowl. To the contrary, His thoughts towards you concern your HOPE and your FUTURE.

You might FEEL as though your life is a mess because you deserve it.

I NEED YOU TO HEAR ME (I need to hear me) — And I especially want those who are not yet Christian to hear me.

We DON'T DESERVE one thought of peace from God towards us. We DON'T DESERVE to have a hope and a future. But God has been thinking of you from before the foundation of the world. He has a plan to save you, make you a His child, and give to you an eternal hope!

How COMFORTING it is to know that His plans are to prosper us and never hurt us. How ENCOURAGING it is to have a real hope and a real future.

Do YOU know Jesus? He alone is the ONLY HOPE for your life! Hope is only real if it can fix what is broken. Without Jesus you have NO hope and NO future!

Our prayer is that we might rejoice with you as you follow Jesus Christ and experience His plan for your life.