

The Gospel Project® for Adults

Daily Discipleship Guide, Unit 16, Session 1

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GOD’S PROMISE TO HIS PEOPLE

SESSION IN A SENTENCE:

A day will come when God will bring ultimate freedom, healing, and restoration to His people.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29–30

SETTING:

The history of Israel, in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, contains many ups and downs. God would do wonders in the sight of His people. They would love God and worship Him. But soon they would forget. God sent godly leaders, judges, kings, and prophets to woo them back. But as the people continue to stray from Him, God eventually allowed their enemies to take His people into exile and captivity because He is a holy and just God. But in His love and faithfulness, He continued to speak through prophets, like Jeremiah, to encourage His people because He was still with them and freedom was coming.

DAY 1

READ:

Jeremiah 29:1-7

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:4-7

The word “discipline” typically has a negative connotation with people. We often don’t see the benefit of discipline in our lives. We especially have a hard time understanding spiritual discipline, or discipline from God. The purpose of discipline in general—and from God specifically—is not for our harm at all. It is actually for our good. God disciplines His people when they turn away from Him in order to get them to turn back.

The book of Jeremiah speaks to a time when God had sent His people into exile because they rebelled against Him. Though God wanted them to enjoy the blessing of the land that He had given them, He punished them because their habitual idolatry stopped them from living in the land the way they were made to live in the land. So God removed them from the land in order to get them turned back toward Him. But God’s desire was not to decimate His people; His desire was for them to thrive and grow.

In the midst of God’s discipline, we often miss the good things that God is doing in us through His divine parental care. We find ourselves forgetting His goodness and believing the lie that He

has completely abandoned us. We cry out to God to remove His discipline, not understanding that His discipline is meant to grow us. God is a good Father, and He wants us to enjoy Him more than the things that He provides. When we see His discipline in light of His goodness, we are freed to thrive even when we're facing hardships brought on by our disobedience.

What can you do to help you see the goodness of God in the midst of discipline?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“Punishment can never happen to a child of God in the judicial sense, he can never be brought before God as his Judge, as charged with guilt, because that guilt was long ago transferred to the shoulders of Christ, and the punishment was exacted at the hands of his surety. But yet . . . while he shall never be arraigned before God’s bar as a criminal, and punished for his guilt, yet he now stands in a new relationship—that of a child to his parent: and as a son he may be chastised on account of sin. Folly is bound up in the heart of all God’s children, and the rod of the Father must bring that folly out of them.”¹ —Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

DAY 2

READ:

Jeremiah 29:8-32

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:10-14

A. W. Tozer, a giant of the Christian faith in the twentieth century, said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”² This conclusion came after years of discipleship and intimacy with the Lord. This question is important, and there is another that is close to it: “What does God think about us?” For many, we’re not sure what God thinks about us. We don’t know if He has goodwill toward us or is out to get us. Most people feel as if God were distant from humanity.

In the book of Jeremiah, however, over and over again we see that God’s people forget what God thinks about them. They were tempted to go to false prophets for teaching and were swayed by their circumstances. At this point, a number of God’s people are in exile because of their generations-long rebellion against God and His commandments. The message that God delivered to His people through Jeremiah went something like this: “When you look for Me with all your heart, then you will certainly find Me” (see 29:13). God’s people, though, had stopped searching for God because they lost sight of who God was. But through all of their years of rebellion and idolatry, God remained the same—ready to receive His people who humbled themselves before Him.

If we’re being honest, many of us feel this same distance from God at times. We wonder if God is still ready to receive us. We’re filled with doubt about who God is and think that He’s left us because of our rebellion. But God doesn’t leave us when we turn away from Him. In fact, God’s pattern throughout all of human history has been one of faithfulness even when His people are faithless. May we remember God’s faithfulness and that all of His promises rest on the

completed work of Jesus.

In what ways are you tempted to believe that God has forsaken you? How can the gospel change that belief?

DAY 3

READ:

Jeremiah 30

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 30:1-3

In 1962, in the middle of the Vietnam War, President John F. Kennedy responded to a question about his troop build-up in Vietnam. Without using the phrase “light at the end of the tunnel,” he alluded to it.³ Given how controversial the war was and all of the political backlash the country faced because of the war, he spoke of the pathway ahead being “lighter” to give the American people hope that the war could end. But to many, the idea that there was any hope at all was a long shot. And indeed, the war dragged on for over a decade after Kennedy’s words.

God’s people were probably tempted to feel hopeless in the midst of their exile in Babylon. Yet the purpose of the Babylonian exile was to give the people of God a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). God never abandoned His people even though they were prone to wander from the God who loved them.

Jeremiah 30 was God’s way of saying that there was “light at the end of the tunnel,” not the wishful sort that Kennedy offered but the sure hope that only God can offer. But many of the Israelites wouldn’t get to see that light because it was for the next generation. Ultimately, the purpose of what God was saying through Jeremiah in these verses was that His promise of restoration was ultimately eschatological and messianic in nature, meaning that His promise of restoration for His people was an eternal promise that rested on the coming Savior, Jesus Christ.

As followers of Jesus on this side of the cross, we have Jesus’s finished work to help us remember and trust the faithfulness of God. Jesus is the source of our hope. He came, lived, died, and was resurrected in order to save us from our sin. He is not just the “light at the end of the tunnel,” He is also the light in the tunnel guiding us to our home in Him.

In this season of your life, what are some ways that you find it hard to trust God? How does the gospel change that?

DAY 4

READ:

Psalm 126

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Psalm 126:1-3

In the 1992 film *The Mighty Ducks*, protagonist Gordon Bombay is a young lawyer driven by success. But when he has a run-in with the law for driving while under the influence, he is sentenced to community service in the form of coaching a youth league hockey team, and they are not very good at all. At the beginning of the film, Bombay hates the position that he's in and has no desire to coach the team, but we see his attitude change throughout the film. The team begins to have success, which is fueled by the changing character of their coach. Gordon Bombay leads the team to victory and finds himself becoming a new man through the process. The word "restoration" comes to mind with this plot.

In Psalm 126, we find the psalmist singing, crying out to the Lord with rejoicing, because of a return to Zion. Here, the psalmist is looking ahead to God's returning His people back to their home in the land of promise.

As sinners, we will all fail and fall in different ways because of our sin. But God is too good to let us stay there. And that's the good news of the gospel. Not only has God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sin, but He also promises that one day He will restore everything fully and completely. Then all of the sin, hurt, and pain we experience in this world will be like a dream. It all happened and it was all real, but God's restoration will be so great that it's going to make our sin, hurt, and pain feel like a distant memory.

How has God brought a sense and reality of restoration to a time in your life?

DAY 5

READ:

Revelation 21–22

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Revelation 21:1-5

Every year, Apple comes out with a new version of the iPhone, and every year, millions of people buy the latest model. Most models don't change that drastically. There might be a new feature here or there, but overall Apple is just releasing a newer model of what has already come before. It really doesn't matter how great the newer model is either; people will buy it and Apple will make a large profit every year.

In Revelation 21, we see that God is creating "a new heaven and a new earth" (21:1), as seen by John in his vision. When we think of something new, we often think of a newer version of something else that has already been created. Often, "new" things come from some other original idea, and they carry the same essence as whatever came before. But we can't think of the new heaven and new earth this way. Scripture reveals ideas and pictures, but the resulting images in our heads are a dim reflection of the sin-filled and broken world we live in now.

But contrary to our present heaven and earth, John tells us that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and death shall be no more. This new heaven and new earth will be for God's people and won't have the damage or stain of sin.

This is amazing news for the Christ-follower! Our God is preparing a place for us. He is creating

a place where we won't have to wrestle through the struggles of this world. In fact, He is creating an entirely different atmosphere that we can't even imagine. As believers, we can look forward to the fact that God is making all things new.

How will the hope of “a new heaven and a new earth” change the way you live now?

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #76: GLORIFICATION

Glorification is the final stage in the process of salvation. It refers to the future time when a Christian reaches moral and spiritual perfection at the time of death or at Christ's return (Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:22). Glorification also involves the physical perfection that we will have once our bodies have been resurrected. When we are glorified, we will have a fuller knowledge and understanding of God and His Word (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 13:12).

GROUP

Point 1: The day of the Lord will bring freedom (Jer. 30:8-11).

Essential Doctrine #76: Glorification

Glorification is the final stage in the process of _____. It refers to the future time when a Christian reaches moral and spiritual _____ at the time of death or at Christ's return (Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:22). Glorification also involves the physical perfection that we will have once our bodies have been _____. When we are glorified, we will have a fuller knowledge and understanding of God and His Word (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 13:12).

How should the doctrine of glorification affect the way we live now?

God removed our guilt and _____ and placed it on His Son, Jesus, in order that all creation would be _____ and _____ from the brokenness of sin.

Point 2: The day of the Lord will bring healing (Jer. 30:12-17).

The problem with Israel's _____ wasn't just what they did but also whom they did it against, a _____ and just God. Thus, without God, they were _____.

How does sin affect a person's relationship with God?

God's promised _____ and healing from Babylonian captivity points to the ultimate salvation and healing God provides through _____.

Why might we find it difficult to rest in God's promise of healing?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“[True spirituality] is not just that we are dead to certain things, but we are to love God, we are to be alive to him, we are to be in communion with him, in this present moment of history.”⁴ – Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984)

Point 3: The day of the Lord will bring restoration (Jer. 30:18-22).

God’s _____ of His people from captivity, bringing _____ and thriving, foreshadows Jesus’s restoration of all things to _____ .

How have you seen God’s restoration in your life and in the lives of those around you?

Jesus is the ultimate _____ and priest, restoring our _____ with God that we may be called His people and He our God for _____ .

My Response

Because a day is coming when Jesus will return to restore all of creation, we live each day telling others of His coming kingdom so that they too might experience healing.

- **HEAD:** How should God’s promise of restoration change the way you see His discipline?
- **HEART:** How does the completed work of Jesus on your behalf help you feel good about God’s discipline in your life?
- **HANDS:** With whom will you share the promise of healing and restoration in Jesus this week?

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

“God, after our many rebellions, treats us in salvation in the same way he treated Judah. Because of Christ, we are healed from the disease of sin. Because of Christ, we have him to stand in our defense. Because of Christ, we have hope that we are actually a part of the bride of Christ and forever wed to him. The desperation of my situation was not fake; it was real. Without Christ I was genuinely destitute. Yet the power of the gospel is stronger than my plight. My life with Christ is the light that overcomes the darkness that was my life without Christ.”⁵ –Steven Smith

References

1. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Chastisement,” The Spurgeon Center, October 28, 1855, <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/chastisement>.
2. A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (India: General Press, 2019) [eBook].
3. President John F. Kennedy, “News Conference 46, December 12, 1962,” <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-press-conferences/news->

conference-46.

4. Francis A. Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1971), 15.
5. Steven Smith, *Exalting Jesus in Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019) [Logos].