

# Blessings in the Midst of Discipline I Jeremiah 24

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Date: 08 March 2020

[ 0 : 0 0 ] I want to take your Bibles, if you would, and go with me to the book of Jeremiah, chapter 24. Jeremiah, chapter 24. I think you get to Jeremiah 24, and Jeremiah is a tad discouraged.

His message is such a negative message. I mean, every time he preaches, it is, you're going down. And that's just mean. And he's tired of it, and people don't like him.

And God, in chapter 24, basically says, look, Jeremiah, everything's going to, there's good and bad here. It's all not going to go down. I got people I'm going to save.

And I think by the end of chapter 24, Jeremiah can breathe just a tad better, knowing that God's going to do things for his honor and glory. Read with me, Jeremiah 24, verse 5.

We'll read several verses. Now, Jeremiah, or God, might have been a children's church worker. Because, I mean, he has taken us down to the potter's wheel and the potter's shop.

[ 1 : 0 2 ] And he's done other little things where he showed us stuff. And now he came to church with some rotten figs and some really good figs. And he lays them out there so they get a visual and they can learn from it.

Look at chapter 24, verse 5. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah.

And I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set my eyes upon them for good. I will bring them again to this land.

I will build them and not pull them down. I will plant them and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord. And they shall be my people.

And I will be their God. For they shall return unto me with their whole heart. Let's have a word of prayer. Father, I pray that you would bless us now as we go through this chapter and see your sweet heart.

[ 2 : 0 0 ] And even in the middle of all this chaos and all this horrible stuff going on, that you're still working things out for good to those that love you and are called according to your purpose.

That you have not abandoned your people, that you are still working. And I'll give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do. Amen. If you got your Bible open, work your way through the chapter with me.

First to kind of get us a footing. Jeremiah's hurting. He's hurting from the message. He needs some comfort from the Lord. And you know that the nation of Israel is being conquered.

The walls are being broken down. The temple is going to be torn down. The people are going to be taken out. People are going to be put to death. There's going to be people dying everywhere. He's watching his country fall apart.

And if you are, I mean, think about us as Americans. And imagine, you know, we got nationalistic pride. And imagine us being destroyed. Imagine us becoming desolate.

[ 2 : 56 ] Imagine our country becoming just beat down. And all of us taken out of here as slaves to some other place. And basically, the people are left to fend for themselves. And it's horrible.

And so God says, I'm going to comfort you. Look at verse 1. The Lord showed me, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord. So before the temple, God shows him.

He says, I've got two baskets of figs. After that, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, had carried away captive. Now, notice, underline Nebuchadrezzar here.

Underline his, underline his name. Now we know who they are. We know that he's the king of Babylon. We know this is a Babylonian captivity. And he carried them away captive. Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah.

We know we're talking to Judah. And the princes of Judah with the carpenters and blacksmiths from Jerusalem and had brought them to Babylon. So God says, hey, I'm going to give you a picture here.

[ 3 : 55 ] I'm going to bring this before you so you can understand what I'm doing. And he says in verse 2, one of these baskets has very good figs in it. I mean, they're fresh.

They're ripe. They're ready to eat. They look delicious. It's like you're looking in on a basket of strawberries if you're not a fig eater. It's like you're looking in on a good lush watermelon if you're a Tennessee hillbilly.

It's already cooled and the salt's sitting there ready for you to eat your watermelon. And there's this other batch that is very naughty figs in your verse there. You can underline it. Very naughty figs. These are bad figs.

So bad you can't eat them. They're rotted figs. So basically, Jeremiah, not everybody in Israel, not everybody in Judah, not everybody in Jerusalem is going down.

Not everybody's bad even here. There are some good ones left. There's some very good and some very bad figs, pictures of the people of Judah. And God explains the example to Jeremiah so he'll know.

[ 4 : 54 ] Look at verse 3. Then the Lord said unto me, what do you see, Jeremiah? Jeremiah, what do you see? And he said, I see good figs, very good, and bad figs, evil figs, very evil that you can't eat.

They're so messed up and so bad. And so God will bless those that are represented by the good figs. Before the chapter's over, after all these bad messages that Jeremiah's been preaching, we're going to find out that in the middle of all the cursing, there's some blessing going on.

That's not cursing like cuss words. That's cursing like God's not blessing. God is withholding blessings, and people are suffering. Look at Jeremiah chapter 24, verse 5.

Would you underline that? Isn't that amazing?

God says in the middle of it, hey, I've taken some people out of here, but I'm still at work. I'm still at work. I will acknowledge them. You ought to underline that in the verse. God said, I'm not going to ignore them.

[ 5 : 56 ] I'm not going to disown them. I'm not going to push them aside. I will acknowledge them. I have sent them out of this place, but I'm working for their good. Verse 6. I will set my eyes upon them for good.

That's a brand new message for Jeremiah. I mean, for like 23 chapters, this whole message has been, y'all are going down. Y'all are going down. Y'all are going down. All of you are going to be dead. Blood's running everywhere.

City's going to be destroyed. Everything's over. But he said, I set my eyes on them for good. Would you look, if you would, in verse 6 with me, and underline this. I will bring them again to this land.

Would you underline that? If you ever question if Jerusalem will be inhabited again by the true nation of Israel, if you question whether or not God has a plan, he told those people in the Babylonian captivity, I'm bringing y'all back.

And then he said this. He said, I will build you up. I will not pull you down. I will plant them, and I will not pluck them up. God said that he loves them, and they're going to love him.

[ 6 : 59 ] Look at verse 7. I give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. Now, remember why they're getting kicked out, if you would. Go back and remember the reason all this chastisement from this morning, all this discipline is coming down from God, is that they got their eyes off of God, and they started building these idols, and they started worshiping what wasn't God.

And all of a sudden, God's bringing punishment on them. But even as he punishes the ones that were doing wicked, even the other guys are suffering. He said, they will know I'm God.

Their heart will know me. They will be my people. I will be their God. They will return unto me with their whole heart. They're coming back to me. But he said, I'm going to destroy the bad figs.

I'm going to destroy the bad figs. So now Jeremiah's back to his regular message. Look at verse 8. Evil figs. So evil that will I give it to Zedekiah, those that remain in the land. Some of them got left in the land, and they were still bad people.

And some went off to Egypt. And he says in verse 9, they will be removed. And for their hurt, a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, wherever I put them, I am going to take them out.

[ 8 : 14 ] I will embarrass them. I will hurt them. And they will end up totally destroyed. Look at verse 10, if you would. And I will send the sword, the famine, and pestilence among them until they be consumed from off the land that I gave them.

God said, I am getting rid of the bad figs. I'm getting rid of the rebellious people. I'm getting rid of the people that don't serve God, love God, and live for God. I'm getting rid of them. So now Jeremiah can be comforted.

Because before, it was almost like Jeremiah's like, I'm the only one left. I'm the only one doing right. But now God says there's some good figs and there's some bad figs.

I'm going to take you back through the chapter now. Because I want to show you some truths that you can consider. And I think they apply to our church. I think they apply to our country. And I think they apply to our lives.

And I just want you to meditate with me on some truths out of this. Number one truth. Good people get hurt when their country does wrong. Good people get hurt because of the sin of their country.

[ 9 : 19 ] Here's what basically Jeremiah's message turns out to be. There is a remnant. There is a handful. There is a group of people that are good figs. Very good figs.

But your houses will still be destroyed. Your walls will still be broken down. The temple will still be destroyed. Your leadership will be put out. And you'll be put into a time of suffering.

There's always. God always has a remnant. No matter how bad things get here in America. No matter how bad people turn away from God. No matter how bad they push God and the church and everything off to the side.

There will always be a group of people that love God. And we want to be a part of that group. Amen. And they suffer. We will suffer because of the society we live in. I think as you read Jeremiah 24 we ought to be preparing for that.

I think you and I ought to make up our minds. No matter what our government says. No matter if they come out and say that Bible preaching is hate talk. No matter if they come out and say we take away your IRS donations number.

[ 10 : 23 ] You can't get relief on your taxes from your giving. No matter what happens. We will not have an excuse to conform to the world. We don't conform to the world.

But we take a stand. Though in chapter 24. I think if you read this chapter. I challenge you to read it again and again. You're going to find that there are very good figs. Very good figs.

That's you. That's you. That's people that love Jesus. That's people that are at home reading their Bibles and having family devotions. That's people that come out to a church on Sunday night. That's people that are giving their money and serving God.

And that's people that are saying we're going to honor marriage. That's people that are saying we're going to live holy lives. That's people that say we're not going to conform to this world. As a husband I'm going to love my wife.

I'm not going to act like regular people act. But they are suffering. We need to stand for truth. That means number one. We love God. We love God.

[ 11 : 22 ] We're going to live our lives saying this. What's God want me to do? How does God want me to live? And we need to love God's word. Now you ought to say amen right there. This is the only way you know.

You do realize that society is going to give you a thousand opinions about marriage, about gender, about living, about everything we ought to think. They're going to say everything they want to say.

And you and I have got to be grounded in this book or we will be swayed too. Brother John Pearson just spent like eight hours and 45 minutes reading the whole Pentateuch yesterday.

All I got to say is I am impressed. I believe if I got halfway through Genesis, I said I'll get some more of it tomorrow. I said amen. But anyway, you know that's what we're going to do.

We're God's people. We're Bible people. Are you reading your Bible? Are you reading your Bible? Are you leading other people to serve Jesus?

[ 12 : 19 ] We're going to live a holy life. We're going to live a holy life. That's what truth does. We live holy lives. No matter what goes on around us, we're going to keep honoring God. Amen. We're going to take care of our marriage.

You see, Bible truth would make us take care of our marriage. You can't go. Look, lost people can get divorces every time they have a fight. We don't. One of you is with me.

But we're going to take a stand. We're going to say I work on my marriage. I work on my relationship with my wife. I want to take care of my marriage. I'm going to be faithful to the Lord. We're going to share our faith in spite of repercussions.

You know, if you talk about Jesus, you're going to end up, it's going to get in this country where you mentioned Jesus. I'm not talking about on the work day. I'm not talking about when you're supposed to be working. But if you talk about him on break, if you talk about it beforehand, if you give out a gospel track, it's going to get illegal.

When we get hurt, it should be because we stood for truth. When the country goes bad, not all people are bad. When the country goes bad, not all the people are bad.

[ 13 : 24 ] Look at verse 2. One basket had very good figs. And one basket, the other basket, had very naughty figs. Very naughty figs.

It's an illustration. It's children's church. He's got a bag of figs there. And all the church people are like, Lord of God, are we eating figs? You got another thing of figs that's like, what'd you bring rotten stuff in here for?

That stuff is so filthy, so nasty, so naughty. That's the Bible word for it. So naughty, so evil. We don't want that. God's like, well, that's exactly how I see y'all, your people.

The nation, not individually. When the country was bad, there were some that God called very good. We shine as light in darkness and salt in a world that needs flavor.

When we walk out of here, we're to be very good figs. I mean, that's the story we're in tonight. We're to be very good figs. People ought to say, I don't know what's going on in that marriage, but those people got something.

[ 14 : 25 ] People ought to watch the way we pay our bills, raise our kids, and live our lives and say, there's some very good figs there. God never has a majority. I want to remind you of that.

He never has had a majority in our country. Maybe he had a majority in Israel there for a while. But here's what we know from the New Testament. There's a narrow gate and a narrow way.

That means most people aren't on the way. There's a wide road and a wide gate. And Jesus said, few there be that find it. So you don't try to follow the crowd because we're never the crowd.

You get that? We're never the crowd. We're the minority. But we stand because we're focusing on the word of God and on God. Third truth I look at when I read this chapter.

God will bless some while punishing others. God will bless some while punishing others. Now we're looking at the nation of Judah. We're looking at Jerusalem.

[ 15 : 29 ] We're looking at the people that were supposed to hold on to the things of God. They did hold on to the things of God longer than anybody else. But they slowly lost it. That could be us. In a world that has slowly turned their back on God.

And slowly pushed the Bible aside. You come to vision and you walk into a bunch of Bible-loving, God-loving, God-fearing people. But if we're not careful, we too will slide away. Jeremiah chapter 24 and verse 6.

I will set mine eyes upon them for good and bring them again to this land. I will build them and not pull them down. I will plant them and not pluck them up.

That's a good verse. But then in verse 9, he said, I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt. The one verse says for their good. This verse says for their hurt.

Unto all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt. To be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse. You need never worry about God taking care of us no matter where we are. No matter how wicked our country gets, God will take care of us.

[ 16 : 36 ] We are his. And no matter what happens in the future, no matter what happens in political elections, no matter what happens financially, those of us that love Jesus and honor him, he will take care of us.

Who can trust God? Who can trust God that he will take care of the sin and get rid of it? Look at chapter 24 and verse 5. Even in bad times, God plans on blessing his faithful servants.

I guess this is one of my, I mean, I got three verses we'll end with in just a few minutes. But verse 5 said, Like these figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah for their good.

In bad times, the walls are falling down. The Babylonian army is outside. People are dying by the sword. Blood is running in the streets. The kings and leaders of the country are being put off.

They've run to Egypt. They're hiding in the land and some have been taken away. But in the middle of all that, God said, You see these good figs? I took good care of them. And I will acknowledge them that are carried away.

[ 17 : 42 ] Even when they get over in the land of sadness. Even when they are basically prisoners of war. He'll take care of them. You ever hear of a guy named Daniel?

Daniel's in the worst place you could possibly be. He's basically a slave. He's got three buddies. And they're basically slaves. And you know what happened? God was there. And God blessed him.

And God took care of him. And God protected him even when he was thrown into a lion's den. God takes care of us. I love this. I wish you'd mark it in the Bible. He acknowledges his people. God didn't get embarrassed and say, You're not mine.

You know, when you know big shots. And like you've had a privilege of meeting a big shot. And they're in a place where they don't mind focusing on you. And then you find them in a big shot among the other big shots. And you're a little shot.

And you walk in. They just kind of act like they don't know you. God never does that. Amen. God's like, that one's mine. You ought to underline that. In the middle of all the junk.

[ 18 : 40 ] Because God says, Oh, I know you. I know your name. I love you. I want to take care of you. I will acknowledge them. I will acknowledge them. And I wish you'd underline in that verse, For their good.

Look at that. Even in the bad place. Look at it. When I send them to the land of the Chaldeans. When I send them into Babylonian captivity. I'll be there. And I'll be meeting the good.

Their needs for good. Look at verse 7. The more they serve God. The more he gives them a desire to serve him. I love verse 7. I will give them a heart to know me.

That I am the Lord. And they shall be my people. And I will be their God. And they shall return unto me with their whole heart. Look at this verse right here. God said, I will put more of a desire in them.

Now can I just remind you, It's the Holy Spirit of God that gave you a hunger to be serving God. Can I remind you, It's the Holy Spirit of God that touched you. And called you out of sin. And gave you life. And is working in you.

[ 19 : 38 ] Can I remind you, Boy, God's the one that's been doing all this work in our lives. And here they are in captivity. Here they are living in the land of Babylon. Here they are a long ways from home. The fact is, At one time they're going to ask them to sing.

And they basically say, How can we sing here? This is not where we can sing. But they say, You know what it says here? I'll give them a heart. I love this.

That I am the Lord. You know, When I read that, Here's what I think. About everybody who was living in Judah Has started going to worship at Baal's temple. About everybody who lives in Judah Has started going over to worship at some other false god's temple.

But there was a handful of very good figs. They didn't do that. That very good figs. They were like, We don't do that. We don't go there. We don't get involved in that. That's not who we are. We serve the one God.

We honor the one God. And God said, Hey, I'll give them a heart so they'll really know. I am the Lord. I am. And by the way, First off, It's I am. I mean, That's amazing. I am the Lord.

[ 20 : 41 ] And then he says, And they shall be my people. And I will be their God. That ought to thrill you. You know, I guess on a human level, The most beautiful place that happens is in a good marriage.

When you say, I love you and I want you and I give myself to you. And she says that back to you. God looks at these people and said, You're mine. You're mine.

And I will be their God. And then he says, They will return to me with their whole heart. And I don't know what that means. I just want you to think about it. When you live in a sin sick world, You let it affect you more than you should.

Be not conformed to this world, But be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And basically be not conformed means, Don't let them push you into their mold. See, When you're conformed, It's like when you put that jello in a mold.

And you can take that mold and you make jello any kind of shape you want. Or any kind of cake you want. And basically God said, Don't let the world form you. I don't know when it said, They shall return unto me with their whole heart.

[ 21 : 48 ] Had they grown a little bit cold? Had they gotten a little lackadaisical? Had they kind of said, I love Jesus, But I don't have time for my Bible? I love Jesus, But I'll skip out on some church services. I love Jesus, But I won't quite do everything with everything.

I don't know. But God knows they will come back to Him with their whole heart. So even in discipline, God is working at getting them back. I just want you to remember that.

In the middle of your discipline, In the nation of Babylon, God's already known. You know what God does when He disciplines us? He never disciplines us to hurt us.

God, Hey, we're His kids. He loves us. He cares about us. And you know what He's doing when He disciplines us? He's just getting us where we ought to be. And when they're all the way over in Babylon, When they're all the way over in the land of the Chaldeans, When they're there because of their sin, God's not mad at them.

He's not throwing them away. He's just saying, I'm bringing you all back. And I'm working on you to bring you back. And I'm going to do all this stuff in your life To bring you back. And you're going to fall in love with me.

[ 22 : 57 ] God judges the wicked. I think that probably what eats our lunch more than anything else is, We're like upset that God lets people get away with it.

And I need to remind you that this Babylonian captivity Is going to come at the end of nearly 500 years of rebellion. 500 years of not doing what God told them to do.

500 years of them just doing what they wanted to do. But God says, I will take care of it. Look if you would at verse 10. Now I will send the sword, The famine and the pestilence among them Till they be consumed from off the land That I gave unto them and their fathers.

There's a lot of stuff for us here. I will send. God said, It's not a coincidence. It's not a bunch of kings that get together And make a plan to conquer you. I will send them.

It is not that you get a coincidental hurt Or thrashing. I will send them. And God said, You rebelled against me long enough. I am taking you out.

[ 24 : 05 ] I'd just like to go over three verses. I believe it is with you. Four verses and I'll be done. Look at these with me. We're going back. Verse 5. Write this down beside it. God doesn't forget me.

God doesn't forget me. Look if you would at verse 5. Like these good figs, So will I acknowledge them. When you see the good figs and you like figs, You're excited about the good figs.

The good figs, He said ripe fruit, Ready to eat. You're excited about the good figs. You're thrilled about them being there. And He said, I just want you to know, I will acknowledge them.

You don't have to worry about Him forgetting you. You don't have to worry about Him forgetting you. And Pilgrim's Progress is one of the guys That's crossing the river to go into heaven And the water starts rising because He's dying.

He begins to doubt if He's really saved. And the water gets higher and higher and higher, But He gets on through And the Lord is taking care of Him. Because sometimes when you are in deep trouble And sometimes maybe when it's dying time And sometimes when bad stuff's going on, You can think, I wonder if He's really going to take care of me.

[ 25 : 19 ] And here's what He told them, In Babylon, In punishment, I will not forget you. Even in discipline, I am still your God.

I am still there for you. Would you just mark that verse? God told these people That for 23 chapters, You've watched them get ripped. I mean, these 23 chapters have been, I think, Maybe one good chapter we've gone through so far.

I mean, every chapter's been, You're going down. But in verse 24, He said, No, I won't forget you. I'm taking out them bad figs. Judgment's coming for them, But I won't forget you.

Verse 5. They're good. I want you to mark it in verse 5. He said, I will acknowledge them. Who? Those that are carried away captive.

Those that I sent into that place. Those that are living in the land of the Chaldeans. Basically, they have been stolen from their land And taken like slaves to another place. And if anything, you'd say, If all this bad's happened to me, God will forget me.

[ 26 : 25 ] But He doesn't forget them. He said, I acknowledge you. And then He says, I acknowledge you for your good. Look at the verse right there behind me. For their good. Can you imagine being all the way, Those of you that have never lived overseas, And never been alone on Christmas Day, Or Thanksgiving Day.

And those of you that have never just wondered, Man, am I ever going to get to live in a good place again? Those of you, I mean, sometimes it's been pretty rough. And every place I ever lived was very nice compared to this.

They are slaves. They're owned. They're out of their country. They're in a different language. Fact is, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, That's not even their names. They were given names by their captors.

But God said, Oh, don't worry. In the middle of you being away, I will be disciplining you. I'll be preparing you to bring you back home.

But I'm always working out for your good. Verse 5. Their good was His intention. He never wants to hurt us. He wants to fulfill His promise. You know what God's doing, right?

[ 27 : 29 ] Taking us on to be conformed to the image of His Son. Now, I repeat what I said to you this morning. And you're not your own. Those of us that are born again, Listen, every year that we live, Every day that we live, Actually, we ought to be growing more and more Christ-like.

I mean, I've got a bunch of junk in my life still, But boy, He's knocked off a lot of junk. And I ought to be growing sweeter and sweeter And kinder and kinder. And more humble every day Because God's at work in our lives for our good.

Go with me, if you would, in verse 6. He's building up His people. Verse 6. I set my eyes upon them for good. Now, you don't want to catch the eyes of the guy that's mad at you.



I mean, you want to kind of divert your eyes and not pay attention. But in this, God says, I'm looking at you. And I'm looking at you to be good to you. The eyes of the Lord roam to and fro throughout the earth.

And God finds us and says, Hey, I want to do good. And look at it. He says, I will bring them again to this land. Hey, I've not thrown them away. They may be going through some rough times, but I still have plans.

[ 28 : 35 ] By the way, if you've fallen and you're under discipline by God, You can know this. God's wanting to bring you back. God doesn't want... The righteous man falls seven times and rises up yet again.

We have victory. But then I love this. I will build them. Would you want to learn that? I will build them.

What kind of words are those? God said, you've done wrong, but I'll build you. You messed up, but I'll build you. You're even being punished right now. Or your people are being punished.

Maybe you're just in the middle of it. But I'll build you. I will not pull them down. I will plant them. They will be built up. They will be edified. He will not hurt them.

And this is my... I don't know. They're all my favorites. I'm sorry. Look at verse seven. Intimacy. Intimacy. A special sweetness, one of a kind, all alone, in love with you.

[ 29 : 38 ] Verse. I will give them a heart to know me. I'm going to work in them. And they will know that I'm the Lord. And they will know that they shall be my people.

I will be their God. And they shall return unto me with their whole heart. If God had a private meeting with these Jewish people, here's what he would have said.

I love you. You're mine. I want to help your heart to even love me more. I'll give you a heart to want to know me. You're my people.

I'm your God. And you're getting stronger and stronger every day. I want to do a work in you. Chapter 24 is a very encouraging chapter. God works in their heart and life.

God boldly declares to them that he is their God. God has a special relationship. There's nothing sweeter than very close, intimate friends.

[ 30 : 44 ] There's nothing sweeter than a husband and a wife that are deeply in love. It's like the most wonderful human connection God gives us. There's nothing sweeter than, I can't walk down this hall without my granddaughters hugging me every time they see me in the hallway.

Nothing sweeter. I just want you to know this. This time it's God doing the hugging. It's God doing the hugging. Hey, come here. I know you. Give me a hug.

You're my people. I'm your God. I'll never hurt you. You belong to him. Praise him. Father in heaven, I love you. And I thank you for the chance to serve you.

I pray that you're...