

26-Jan-10

Title: The Name of Joy (Jer. 33:9)

Scripture: Jeremiah 33:6-9 Pages _____
Romans 12:16-21
Matthew 8:1-3

Main Idea: **Jesus restores the joy of true life.**

Lori and I are looking for a small used Airstream trailer – 18 feet or so, that we might use for some of our ministry travel, and for camping. It turns out that the value of these small trailers varies quiet a bit depending upon how well restored they are. The most expensive are those found in as near original condition as possible. Next most valuable are those that can be reasonably be restored. Those that have been damaged, or modified beyond restoration are much less valuable.

It is interesting how many people like to restore things from the past; things of value. Last month I met a woman from Baudette who is on the committee restoring the old train depot. We have at least two men in our congregation who enjoy restoring old cars. One man just purchased a 1930's vintage model A. I got a look at the car. It's in great condition, and only the upholstery, leather top, and a few window knobs need to be replaced. There are many in our community who enjoy restoring old tractors.

To restore something, means to return it to the beginning. You don't restore anything to it's worn out or broken condition. If you restore something, you put in the work necessary to make it like it was when it was new. People get a lot of joy seeing restored cars, airplanes, tractors, buildings, clocks.

Some things cannot be restored; not to their original condition. Broken china, can be glued but the crack remains visible. Torn flesh can be healed but the scars remain. Broken relationships can be forgiven, but the memories often linger. Can broken relationships be restored? Yes they can – with the help of God. **Jesus restores joy of true life.**

Read Scripture Text (Jeremiah 33:6-9)

We see in our text this morning, God’s promise to His chosen people that He will restore joy to their lives. How will He do this? God says that He will restore joy to His people...

- I. God restores His people from slavery.**
- II. God restores His people from sin.**
- III. God restores His people through Christ.**

Some 600 years before Christ, God is speaking to His prophet Jeremiah, even as the walls of Jerusalem are about to be breached by the Babylonian Empire. And God commanded Jeremiah to write these things down for His people Israel hear. God caused Jeremiah to write these promises down for you.

I. God restores His people from slavery.

Look back in your Bibles for a moment, just two verses: **Jeremiah 33:4,5.**

**Jeremiah
33:4,5**

“For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and houses of the kings of Judah, which have been pulled down to fortify against the siege mounds and the sword: They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but only to fill their places with the dead bodies of the men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city.”

God is speaking to Jeremiah, who is in prison within Jerusalem, while Jerusalem is in the final battle against the Babylonian Empire. It is 589 B.C. and houses are being torn down to patch gaping holes in the city wall. Men go up to fight on the walls, only to take their place among the dead. Why? Because of their broken relationship with God.

You know the facts. Judah had begun to worship the pagan gods of the Philistines; wooden idols called Ashtoreth poles, and the pagan god Molech. In fact, It is worth remembering on this national Right to Life Sunday – that the Jews were sacrificing their firstborn children to this pagan god Molech, in return for the false promise of prosperity. They tossed their living children into the fires of Molech in hopes for a better life.

God had called them for over six hundred years to turn away from idolatry; but they turned their back on God. So now God poured out His wrath and judgment on Judah and Jerusalem like a blast furnace destroying nation, city and Temple.

But **verses 6-9** are a promise of restoration. God says:

v:7 ***“And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild the places as at the first.”***

So the first way that God will restore His people is to free them from captivity. A small remnant, about 5,000 souls will go into captivity for 70 years. This remnant will be captive to the most powerful Empire in the known world. Their salvation will seem impossible. But God will do it. In 539 the Persian King Cyrus conquered the Babylonian Empire and freed the Jewish remnant with permission to rebuild their Temple.

But there is a deeper fulfillment of God’s restoration from captivity. Indeed the people had been held captive by sin. They were always returning to the sin of idolatry. And this is the worst sin. This is the unforgivable sin, because idolatry is turning away from God. And how can those who turn away from God, ever be forgiven?

II. God restores His people from sin.

In addition to release from physical captivity, God also promised cleansing from sin. For hundreds of years the Israelites had fallen into iniquity of worshiping false gods. And God had punished them in many ways. But they always returned to their idolatry. Finally, after the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews were forever broken from this sin. But would God take them back? Would God restore His covenant relationship with His people? Yes, He promised that He would – even as they were still fighting the Babylonians.

v:8 ***“I will cleanse them from all iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me.”***

And so God sent His redeemer King Cyrus to release the captives, and he returned to them Holy articles of the Temple and the encouragement to rebuild the Temple. God brought Ezra and Nehemiah to lead the people in the rebuilding and in restoring the Law of God and worship in the Temple.

So God restored the Temple worship, the sacrifices of atonement for sin, and the proclaiming of God's Word. God restored the people onto the path of salvation. He provided spiritual healing. Despite all the transgressions that had gone on before, now God restored true worship of Him, and peace that comes knowing that God had forgiven their sins.

How far did God's grace go? How thoroughly were their sins forgiven? God speaks through His prophet Jeremiah and says: reads

Jer. 31:34 ***“For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”***

Not like a porcelain vase that is glued together, but the cracks remain forever. Not like a torn garment that is mended but the stitches constantly remember the tear. No. God's mercy is so great, God's promise of restoration is so complete, His children would be forgiven and their sins remembered no more; removed from them as far as the east is from the west (**Ps. 103:12**).

God's forgiveness is so complete that those saved are restored to original condition, just as Adam and Eve were before the fall into sin.

v:9 ***“And they shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them;....”***

God did restore His people to their land. God did restore the Temple. But is this the fulfillment of His promise? Or are these just foreshadows of an even greater work by God to restore His people?

Israel would be conquered again, and again. The Temple would be rebuilt and destroyed and rebuilt and destroyed again. Did Jerusalem ever become a name of joy to God, a praise and an honor? Do all the nations tremble before the prosperity and goodness God has bestowed on Jerusalem? No. But God has fulfilled His promise. He has done it for the Jews and for all people through the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ.

III. God restores His people through Christ.

As God spoke to His prophet Jeremiah, He revealed that God Himself would provide restoration from slavery, and restoration from sin, but not just in the life of the remaining Jews captured by Babylon. But through them the Word and promises of God would be restored, and through them would come the Savior.

And so Jesus was born into our world... God with us; who would take the punishment for the sins of the whole world upon Himself. Jesus did this for the Jews and for the Gentiles and for you and for me. He has rescued you from the power of Satan and slavery to sin. Jesus has restored you into a right relationship with God. Jesus has restored you to original condition... eternal life.

But some may say, "I don't see it. I don't see the perfection in myself nor in the world." It is an accomplished fact nevertheless. It is only because God is still working to save lost souls that the New Heaven and New Earth are not yet revealed. The darkness of this age is not cast off yet because dear precious souls are still being won to salvation through the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. The love of God is so great, and the power of God is so great, that there is no person too damaged; no person too corrupted; no person so lost that God cannot, and will not, restore them.

Rm. 10:13 ***"For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

And each saved soul is freed from Satan's power. Each saved soul is restored in God's sight to complete holiness. Each believer is already living their eternal life and God dwells in them through the power of His Holy Spirit. Through faith in Jesus Christ – you are restored into the kingdom of God, to have eternal peace with God.

But Dear friends remember this; God did not restore Israel to live as wealthy pagans. God restored them to live in the promises of His Word. If they had turned away from His Word back into idolatry, they would have suffered destruction and captivity again.

Now that Christ has come, the promises are fulfilled. Those who believe in Him are fully restored to God and His Kingdom. Shall those saved turn away from His Word again? Were you saved to live like pagans, inventing your own truth, and your own law, only to suffer slavery to sin and eternal damnation? No! Your sins have been forgiven to free you and to enable you to live in God's Word, and to know peace with God and the blessings of eternal life.

Each one who knows Jesus as Lord and Savior has been restored from a life of sin and corruption, into a life of joy; knowing you are a child of God; knowing peace with God; and knowing no matter what may come in this still fallen world... you have eternal life. This is the joy of restoration that Christ brings to you, through the power of His Word and His Holy Spirit.

May God's name be praised – amen.