

Sermon followed by Service - 5/18/25 – Graduation – Jeremiah 29:11

Five days. Five more days of school. Not even five days, because on Friday we have our school picnic. Then what? Three months of fun in the sun. No school, no homework. Instead, for days and weeks, you get to ride your bikes, go swimming, and play with your friends. Some of you will get to go camping and fishing; maybe you'll stay in a cabin or a house on a lake and go boating; some of you will go on a road trip across America. Three months of brats and burgers, watermelon and ice cream, baked beans and, if you know what's good for you, German potato salad. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

Our eighth graders chose a class verse that sounds even better - **“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to give you peace, not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future.”**

To get a feel for just how wonderful this promise is, we have to go someplace we don't want to go - a place of sad, scary feelings. Are you ready? Have you seen someone sad and scared and they can't stop? Have you ever felt sad or scared and couldn't stop feeling sad or scared? Have you ever felt lost? - you didn't know where you were, or how to get home. Ever been lied to by someone you trusted? Ever had your favorite something taken away from you, stolen, broken? Ever had someone you love die? One more, have you ever felt like your whole world, even God, is against you?

Any one of those is an awful feeling. Put them all together - what an awful, miserable place to be, isn't it? That's what life was like for the people God is writing to in our lesson. Young and old, they were ripped from their homes and taken hundreds of miles away. They didn't know where they were going; they didn't know the way back. At the same time, their favorite things were taken away - stolen, lost, and broken. People they loved were killed. All around it looked and felt like everybody was against them, that God was against them. Oh, some people promised: "Don't worry. It won't be long. Everything will be alright." But they were lying. Oh, what an awful, miserable feeling.

That's when God told Jeremiah to write them a letter, to share with them his promise: **"I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to give you peace, not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future."**

It looked, it felt like everybody was against them. It looked, it felt like even God was against them. Ever felt that way? Some day, if you do, remember what the LORD says: **"I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to give you peace, not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future."** No matter what it looked like; no matter what it felt like - God wasn't against them. He hadn't forgotten them. He still thought of them; he still had plans for them. Not plans to hurt them, but plans to give them peace, plans to give them hope, plans to give them a future. What kind of future? A life of Shalom - Shalom, the Hebrew word for peace - life the way it's supposed to be. In a world gone wrong, the LORD was

promising his people peace, hope, a future - life the way it's supposed to be.

Today, or maybe I should say those times you're in that dark place, that scary place, when it seems that everything is going wrong, that everybody is against you, know this - God gives you much the same promise - in Jesus.

- When your world is filled with voices commanding you and demanding you, judging you, and it feels like you can never do enough and never do good enough, listen to the voice of Jesus invite you: **“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest”** - no commands, no demands, no judging.
- When it seems your whole world is against you, listen to Jesus: **“I have overcome the world”** - no matter what this world is doing, Jesus has won, and with Jesus, you win!
- When you're on edge because you just know bad things are coming, trouble is coming, death is coming ... when it seems that nothing good is coming, listen to Jesus: **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. I'm coming for you ... and goodness and mercy are chasing you ... and you get to dwell in the house of the LORD forever!”**
- When your conscience reminds you of all those things you did wrong; when your conscience tortures you with all those you should have done, but didn't; when your conscience reminds you what a bleep you have been, and the voices lie to you: “Jesus doesn't want you; Jesus can't help you; Jesus isn't coming for you; the only way Jesus is coming for you is to curse and crush you;” remember Jesus

on the cross - “Father, forgive them.” Remember Jesus giving his body and blood for the forgiveness of your sin. Remember, and listen to Jesus forgiving you - “Your sins are forgiven; go in peace.”

Jesus says: **“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to give you peace, not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future.”**

How? When? Where? Some people won't like this. They want Jesus to promise them peace in their sin; they want Jesus to promise peace and prosperity in living the life of the world without him. But Jeremiah doesn't promise peace in sin; he doesn't promise prosperity in living the life of the world without God. And neither does Jesus. God's promise of peace and prosperity through Jeremiah was for people who would seek him and follow him. God's promise of peace and prosperity through Jesus comes with a call to repent, to leave the sin of the world, to leave our sin. Listen to Jesus' promise of life - **“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”** Jesus' promise of life is for his sheep, for those who listen and follow. And Jesus' promise of prosperity, Jesus' promise to take care of us, isn't for those looking to live the life of the world, but for those seeking to live his life - **“Seek first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things [everything you need] will be given to you as well.”** Did you notice? There is a place where Jesus promises peace and prosperity. It's not out there living the life of the world without him. The place where Jesus promises peace and

prosperity is with him, in tight with him, as sheep following their shepherd.

As you graduate, whether you're graduating from here to another school, or you're graduating from today to another day, as you graduate in this world ... not every day will be fun in the sun ... not every day will have ice cream and watermelon. You will have days when it seems that everything is going wrong ... days when it seems that the whole world is scowling at you ... days when it seems you have nothing to look forward to. For those days, and for every day, remember this promise - **“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to give you peace, not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future”** - in Jesus. Amen.

May 17 & 18, 2025

NEW MORNING PRAISE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we are surrounded by fading hopes, crushed hopes, and hopelessness. What is our world's solution? False hopes, empty hopes, petty hopes.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we hear our Lord's promises that give us true hope for this life and for eternity!

OPENING HYMN

"Speak, O Lord"

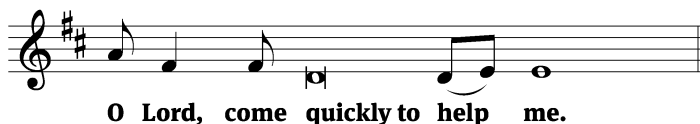
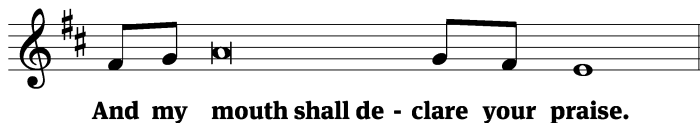
Hymn 633

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your promises,
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,
and the earth is filled with your glory.

OPENING SENTENCES



COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD



come, en - ter in with thanks - giv - ing.

1 You are a great and a won - drous God,
2 Come, let us wor - ship and, bow - ing low,

cup - ping in your hands all the depths of earth.
kneel be - fore the One who has made us all.

You made the hills and the moun - tains high,
You are the God whom we call our own,

Refrain
you made the seas and the dry land.
we are the flock that you shep - herd.

A MEDLEY OF SCHOOL THEME VERSES

M: Be kind and compassionate to one another,

C: **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

(Ephesians 4:32 ~ 2024-2025)

M: I have told you these things,

C: **so that in me you may have peace.**

M: In this world you will have trouble.

C: **But take heart! I have overcome the world.**

(John 16:33 ~ 2017-2018)

M: So do not fear, for I am with you;

C: **do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**

M: I will strengthen you and help you;

C: **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.** (Isaiah 41:10 ~ 2018-2019)

M: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,

C: **and I will give you rest."** (Matthew 11:28 ~ 2019-2020)

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING (Sunday)

"God Loves Us with Jesus Loves Me"

God loves us all night and day, Not just part but all the way.

So in love, He gave His Son, Our salvation to be won.

Refrain

Jesus loves me this I know, Jesus loves me, He tells me so.

Jesus loves me this I know; The Bible tells me so.

His salvation great and free, Bought by Christ on Calvary.

*Bought with blood and grief and pain, Washed away our sinful stain. **Refrain***

What great love saves us by faith? Love that comes from Love Himself.

*Love that reaches from the cross, giving us what we had lost. **Refrain***

Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to Him belong, they are weak, but He is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me, He who died. Heaven's gates to open wide;

He will wash away my sin, Let His little child come in.

Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so.

Refrain

M: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,

C: **"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future."** (Jeremiah 29:11~ 2020-2021)

M: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.

C: **They will soar on wings like eagles;**

M: they will run and not grow weary,

C: **they will walk and not be faint.** (Isaiah 40:31~ 2021-2022)

M: I can do all things

C: **through Christ who strengthens me.** (Philippians 4:13~ 2023-2024)

M: Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations

C: **by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19 ~ 2022-2023)

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING (Sunday)

"Ten Thousand Reasons"

Hymn 607

Refrain

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul; worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul; I'll worship your holy name.

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning; it's time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,

*let me be singing when the evening comes. **Refrain***

You're rich in love, and you're slow to anger.

Your name is great, and your heart is kind.

For all your goodness, I will keep on singing—

*ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. **Refrain***

And on that day when my strength is failing,

the end draws near, and my time has come;

still my soul will sing your praise unending—

*ten thousand years and then forevermore. **Refrain***

GOSPEL

Matthew 7:24–27

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN

“How Firm a Foundation”

Hymn 800

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed,
for I am your God and will still give you aid;
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters I call you to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
and sanctify to you your deepest distress.

“When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
my grace all-sufficient shall be your supply;
the flames will not hurt you; I only design
your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”

SERMON

Jeremiah 29:11 (EHV)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to give you peace, not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future.

HYMN

“In Christ Alone”

Hymn 510

In Christ alone my hope is found; he is my light, my strength, my song;
this cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all; here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe;
this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied;
for ev'ry sin on him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay, light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
for I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)

HYMN

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

Hymn 695 vs. 1, 4, 6

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

GRADUATION

Asher Mark Brown - Gerwyn Aden Catapat
Caleb David Cisneros - Grace Adelaide Haak
Hannah Rose Hoover - Grace Marie Hucker
Jiho Kim - Joseph Karl Parker - Colby Sean Rockwell
Natalie Santiago - Michael Jeffrey Thies

FACULTY GRADUATION

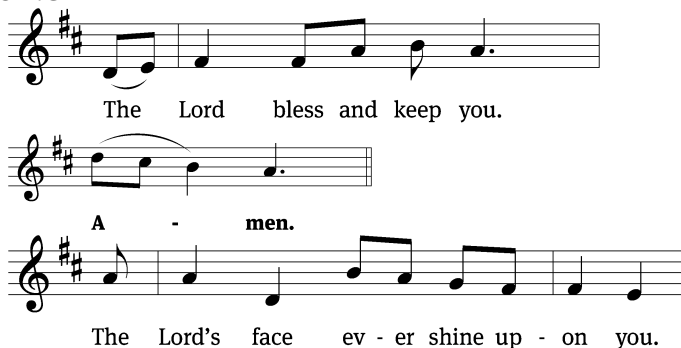
Mrs. Teri Johnson - Mr. Keith Kopczynski - Mr. Justin Wintrone

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING



The Lord bless and keep you.

A - men.

The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



CLOSING HYMN

"Go, My Children, with My Blessing" Hymn 930

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
 Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
 In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
 Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
 Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
 Here you heard my dear Son's story; here you touched him, saw his glory.
 Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
 grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
 Here my Spirit's power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.
 Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;
 I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;
 I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
 Go, my children; I will keep you and give you peace.

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