**Jeremiah 31:7-26**

***“Making Sense Out Of Suffering”***

Introduction:

1. *Ramah…I heard a voice in Ramah. Ramah* was a transit camp for refugees. The Babylonians dragged their prisoners 5 miles from Jerusalem to a staging area in Ramash where they were chained together for the long march to Babylon.

2. ***If your grief is great, your comfort must be greater.***

3. Jeremiah 31:7-26 gives us Nine Comforts:

The door comes slamming shut on your fingers. Are you suffering?

**I. THE COMFORT OF PRAISE 31:7a, 12a, 13a**

 ***A.*** The joyful note of worship is sounded at the beginning, middle and end of Jeremiah’s

 prophecy (7a, 12a, 13a) *Their faces will be aglow (12a) Dancing, shouting, singing*

 *(13a)*

***B.*** Jeremiah’s prophecy was about public worship. He had already sent out the invitation

 (v. 6) God’s people will come back to worship.

 ***C.*** The joy of worship is one of life’s greatest comforts! Worship in God’s house is a

 place to find comfort in suffering! We stop focusing on us. We give God His worth!

 We realize we are created for Him and were designed to glorify Him. Life isn’t

 about us. Read the Psalms. Pray the Psalms.

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**II. THE COMFORT OF PRAYER 31:7b, 8a**

*Make your praises heard. Say: “O Lord save your people” “See I will bring them…*

 God answers prayer!!

1. The prayer answered was a prayer of salvation, of deliverance. God’s people were scattered in

 exile. All that remained was a remnant. Yet, one day God would gather His displaced people

 from the four corners of the earth. This is a gathering before the Millennial Kingdom.

1. The Christian life begins the say way…with prayer. *“God I confess, I am a sinner…”*

 *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

1. The Christian life continues in prayer. There are few great prayers in a computerized age.

 Everything is instant, quick and convenient. Prayer says, *“I can’t. God you must!”*

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**III. THE COMFORT OF PRESERVATION 31:8b**

*Blind, lame, expectant mothers…a great company shall return.*

1. The weakest and the wounded would survive the trip.
2. Jeremiah made a point to mention the people who would never expect to survive. How could

 the blind find their way out of Babylon? How could the lame walk home? How could the

 expectant mother survive the wilderness?

1. How? God says, *“I will!”* God’s grace is sufficient for every weakness. Paul, *When I am*

 *weak then is He made strong.* In my strength the world sees me. In weakness they don’t see you

or me, they see Him!

1. God says, *“I’ll see you through. I’ll see you home!”*

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**IV. THE COMFORT OF PENITENCE** **31:9a, 18-19**

The promise of return always involves repentance.

1. When the exiles return: *They will come with weeping…they will pray as I bring them back.*
2. Are they tears of joy or sorrow? Most likely they are tears of repentance. Ephraim represents the northern tribes. (31:18, 19)
3. Suffering is a great time to repent. It is a great time to turn around. At this time one is most sensitive. Check priorities! Sin stains us all! Recognize just how sinful we are.
4. In the Prodigal Son (Lk:15), the lost boy *came to his senses.* The father waits. *Restore me and I will return.* He knew the initiative for a change of heart had to come from God. If there is a work being done…God is doing it!

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**V. THE COMFORT OF PARDON** **31:9c, 21a**

*I am Israel’s father and Ephraim is my first born son.*

1. How could God fail to forgive His own son?
2. How could He not answer Ephraim’s prayer (31:20)? Notice the expressions of endearment: *son dear in whom I delight.*
3. A. J. Thompson: *The more I speak of Him the more I remember Him.* Lk. 15:20: *While he was still a long ways off…*
4. God never forgets His children. *He ran to His son, threw His arms around him.*
5. Jeremiah mentions *daughters and wayward…(22a) became virgins (21)* Prodigal Sons and Unfaithful Daughters. *Rachel’s tears…her children are not more.* **But it’s not true!** When Matthew quoted Jeremiah, he wanted to show the coming Messiah meant salvation for God’s people, even the babes of Bethlehem (Mt. 2:16-18).

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**VI. THE COMFORT OF PARTICIPATION 31:9b, 21**

*I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble.*

1. Pain and suffering will not be forever. God will bring you to water. He will put you on a level road. He will give you rest.
2. *“Set up road signs” Put up guide posts…take note of the highway and road you take.* God has a round trip ticket to Babylon and back.
3. Mark your trail carefully. God has a plan that is unique to your life. How do we detect that plan? God’s will for the moment is discovered: The Word…Prayer…Godly People…Open Doors/Shut Doors…that still small voice. **The slammed door is part of your life’s story!**

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**VII. THE COMFORT OF PROTECTION 31:10**

*As a shepherd does His flock…*

1. Remember He’s the Shepherd you are the sheep!
2. The shepherd gathers His flock from among the nations. Then He watches over them as a shepherd. *The Lord is my Shepherd…I shall not want.*
3. He is the door to the sheepfold. Nothing touches me without His permission.

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**VIII. THE COMFORT OF PURCHASE 31:11,22b**

Two words describe salvation:

1. *Ransom* means to pay in money or kind to secure release.
2. *Redeem* in the Old Testament the word is *goel*. The nearest kinsman bought back the lost inheritance. The kinsman met the demands and raised up a name for the family.

The blood of Christ is our ransom and redemption (I Tim 2:5-6) *Redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13a).*

1. It is possible that Jeremiah promised the Virgin Birth (31:22b) *The Lord will create (bara…Gen. 1) a new thing on earth…a woman will surround a man.* God’s creation will be completely unprecedented…something that no one has ever seen *(unto us a child is born) Man* is literally, *mighty One (Is. 9:6: mighty God, everlasting Father)*
2. This *new thing created*  is the Incarnation…God became man. Jesus came to ransom and redeem.

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**IX. THE COMFORT OF PROVISION 31:12, 14, 24**

1. God always gives us more than we deserve.
2. Whatever you need…He will provide!! It’s not in you. You can’t! He will!

***The comforts of God are based on the Promises of God!***

**“Why?” It’s enough to know that He cares and will see you through!!!**