



**'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'** (Jer.29:11 NIV)

This verse is often used as an encouragement, a 'pick-me-up' among Christians to remind us of the Lord's favour. For some it becomes an expectation that the Lord will bless whatever we do. But is that really what the Lord is saying here?

This Word from the Lord is given to Jeremiah and the Israelites at a time when they are in great distress, exiled from their homes. It is not a message about becoming prosperous, acquiring wealth and health simply because they followed the Lord but a promise that the Lord has not forgotten them during their time of hardship, and they will yet experience his blessings.

Neither is it a new promise, but a reminder of a promise already made that He would with them in the land. The turnaround would not happen as quickly as they wanted (another prophet had told the people their exile would only last 2-years. See Jer.28:2-3) and for them the longer time that Jeremiah told them it would take ('when seventy years are completed' Jer.29:10 NIV) was disheartening.

So, if not a promise of material wealth or health or of little trouble in our lives, what is this promise?

**The Lord still promises to be with his people in the land.** There are lots of things that go wrong, cause disharmony in our relationships and sometimes hardship but we are not to measure our worth, to Him or others, by what we have and how well things are going for us. Our worth is shown in the Lord promising he is with us through all circumstances and has our best at heart.

His promise is that he is in all the places and circumstances that we are in. It is his presence that is the blessing. As King David had said, there was nowhere he could go where the Lord could not reach him (Psalm 139:7-14) and as Peter declared to Jesus, 'you have the words of eternal life' (John 6:68 NIV).

Thank Jesus today for being present with you and around you. Ask him to help you see his presence in your life and give him permission to form his plans in you.