

GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

God Where Are You?

Reaching for Resurrection Life – Mike Durrant –12.4.2026

Scripture

Jeremiah 29:11-14; Philippians 3:8-12; John 20:19-31

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

Jeremiah 29:11-14

God was speaking through Jeremiah to His people who were in exile in Babylon. Whilst they did not know or remember His thought regarding them, He did. He was thinking about them all the time, even whilst they were in exile. They had experienced God's judgment upon their nation and it was difficult to live in exile; perhaps they even thought He had evil plans towards them; but now He reassured them that His thoughts were of peace and He had plans that would give them a future and hope. Even though they were not in Jerusalem and could not perform the appointed temple rituals, God would listen to them when they prayed and He would not hide from them when they sought Him – both of these actions would result in this future and hope coming into being.

Philippians 3:8-12

Paul may have lost many things (some of which would have been important to him) when he began to follow Christ, but he was convinced, some thirty years later in a Roman prison, that none of that mattered in comparison to the value of his personal relationship with Jesus which was the central focus of his life. Nothing he had ever done or achieved compared to what Jesus had done and achieved in and for him. He disowned any righteousness of his own and he lived and trusted in the righteousness of God through his faith in Christ. Paul's simple prayer was that he may know Jesus rather than just know about Him. He wanted a personal relationship with Him. He wanted to know the power of Christ's resurrection as it flowed through his life, overcoming his sin and developing his life as a Christ-follower. Paul was willing to suffer for Christ and face martyrdom for him if it meant he would also experience resurrection. This goal was worth more to Paul than anything else. He did not doubt his salvation but he longed to achieve all that God wanted from him. He was suffering in a Roman prison at the time of

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writing and he knew there was still more for him to do. As a result, he had to carry on for Jesus who had taken hold of him as His own. All his strength would be used to do God's will and do whatever God had planned for him, so he would share in the resurrection and attain the heavenly hope God had given him.

John 20:19-31

On the evening of the third day, when the women had discovered Jesus was alive, the disciples were gathered together in a locked room. Suddenly Jesus was there, standing amongst them. One moment there was just a group of confused disciples; the next moment Jesus was there with them. His first words to them were to offer them peace. They had deserted Him and had reason to expect a dressing-down. But He offered them peace. They had no reason to be afraid. He showed them His hands and His side, reassuring them that He was actually Jesus and that He had been raised from the dead. He calmed their fears by blessing them with the offer of peace again. And then He commissioned them – to go out and share the truth with the world. John records that Jesus breathed new life through the Holy Spirit into His disciples – perhaps reminding his readers that God breathed life into the first man in the Garden of Eden. Jesus gave his disciples the authority to forgive sins and give warnings as the Holy Spirit led them.

But Thomas was not there. He was skeptical when the disciples told him they had seen Jesus. He would not believe unless he saw Jesus for himself. He wanted physical proof that this was Jesus as he declared he wanted to touch his scars. Jesus did not immediately respond to Thomas' request. It was a whole week later on the following Sunday, that He came again to the disciples, in the same way as He had before, and offered His peace to them. (They were still in their locked room). Jesus graciously gave Thomas the evidence he had demanded, repeating back to him the words Thomas had said to the disciples the week before. He told Thomas to put an end to his unbelief and believe. Thomas immediately responded to Jesus, calling Him 'my Lord and my God'. For a Jew, to use such names would have been unthinkable. But Thomas did so spontaneously, and Jesus accepted the titles, whereas previously He had told people not to call Him by those names. The Gospel gives no indication whether Thomas actually touched Jesus' hands and side or whether seeing Him was enough. Jesus adds a blessing to His acceptance of Thomas' belief. He blesses all those who believe in spite of not having visible proof of His resurrection.

Icebreaker:

What is your fondest memory of seeing a friend you haven't seen for a long time? Was the reunion planned or by chance? How did you feel? What did it mean to you?

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Application

- Have you ever felt Christ was absent from what was happening in your life? Can you describe the feeling? What happened to resolve it?
- Three types of questions were mentioned in the sermon:
- *Asking question requiring no answers. Receiving Christ's peace when life falls apart.* These were described as grief reactions. When have you found yourself asking God 'Why ...?' Did you receive any answers? Looking back, do you think these questions helped you to come to terms with your 'why'? And if so, how?
- *Struggling with how and why helps us overcome self-blame; and realise we can only trust God.* How does it help to discover you are not to blame about circumstances that are out of your control? How do you cope with situations over which you have no control? What does it mean to you that the only thing you could do was trust God? How does that affect your faith and your relationship with Him?
- Are you able to hang on to God and the shred of faith you have in life-shattering circumstances? How has that helped you to get through them? Can you accept the risen Christ is with you and is taking you forward? Why/why not?
- *Seeking God. Discarding our need to be in control. Opening ourselves to Christ's lead towards new life.* Are you willing to trust God whatever you are facing? Are you willing to encounter the living Christ as you journey through life? How do you think this will help you to cope?
- Are you prepared to spend time listening for God's reply when you cry out 'God where are You?' What in your life is happening at the moment where you need to be aware of God's presence?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

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Service

Ask your questions of God.

Listen.

Not to others or to yourself, but to Christ. Follow His lead, as you hear and respond to His answers.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/jeremiah-29/>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/philippians-3/>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-20/>



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