

GOD HAS PLANS FOR US:

JEREMIAH had some words of real wisdom to the people of Israel, as they faced their removal to Babylon. From freedom to slavery.

They would become a beaten people in many respects, yet, God gives them every incentive to maintain their faith and belief in a God who is really concerned and supportive of them in their time of struggle.

Often, when we are backed into a corner, and times get tough, we want to close down and go into survival mode. (White knuckles from holding on to our present position.) However, we might well take the promises of God to heart for ourselves, in this time of change and challenge.

God desires that we work for the welfare of our country, doing all we can to provide a society and community of justice and equality. We are not the powerful leaders, but we do have a voice, eyes and ears to pick up on the people who are being put at risk for any number of reasons.

“Keep our minds on God's ways, and speak up whenever these are put aside so that the few will benefit at the expense of the many.” said Jeremiah

Throughout the Bible, we read that “God has plans for us, and his intentions are for our welfare, not for our harm”. If we take that seriously, then it is in our best interests to endeavor to live out our calling as Baptised Christians to the best of our ability.

There are times, I'm sure, when we all have a sense of being driven out into the wilderness, when we recall the days when our church was full for worship, dozens of young people eagerly attended youth activities, and people were lining up to be baptised, confirmed, married and become full members of the church. How different it is now for many churches, as we are being compared with the life and activities of sporting clubs, social clubs etc...

What we need to remember, is that Our God, is very much with us. His desire is that we remain faithful to our calling so that we might be strengthened and empowered to be the church of God, perhaps in ways that at this stage we can't even see or imagine.

Now Paul takes us further along this path of being the people of God.

He said.....

“Respect and esteem all who are called to ministry roles in the church.

Be at peace amongst yourselves. Admonish idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient.”

“Do not quench the Spirit. Listen to those who speak words of wisdom from God, testing everything. Hold

fast to what is good, abstain from anything evil, bad, unhelpful.”

Paul concludes by asking God to “sanctify” us all, keeping us blameless until it is our turn to meet God, face to face.

Sanctify, meaning to be made holy, → to be kept on line with the target. (an arrow)

SO what a good occasion to be confronted with the concept of our being the people of God, sent to be the catalyst in bringing change to our community.

Jesus, in John's Gospel, reminds us that we are not Christian by natural birth. We are Anglican, Catholic, Pentecostal, Uniting, Baptist etc, by birth, because we are usually born into a family with those connections. It is necessary for us to take another step, that is to encounter a living relationship with Jesus Christ, so that we are, as we are told in John's Gospel.

“No longer are we slaves. That is, caught up in the ways and allures of this present world, and being caught, we are trapped in the race to be liked, accepted, and approved by the standards of a very materialistic society”.

Those who seek God and His Son, are given a freedom that this world can never give us. We are, as Jesus says. “free indeed”.

Where are you today (tonight), slave or free?

How much are you driven by the things of this world and caught up in the hussle of attainment and respectability?

Pause and reflect on your own life journey and maybe, your need to reconnect with God and experience the freedom promised to all who call upon his name.

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