

ANXIOUS

(FOR NOTHING)



CUSTER ROAD
United Methodist Church

WEEK 3: THE FEAR OF FAILURE

1/24/2021

SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 29:11

BACKGROUND

Around 587 BCE, the Israelites lost the two most important things in their identity by the Babylonians: the temple, and David's kingship. They lost their country and their religion. They lost what held them together. Israelites were now taken to Babylon as exiles, and they questioned why they ended up where they were. They are grieving, and they are dealing with shame and feeling like failures. The Book of Jeremiah addresses Israelites who are disappointed and weary from all these experiences.

Prophet Jeremiah is now offering words of hope and future salvation in Jeremiah 29:11. What God plans, God intends. This divine plan that Jeremiah speaks of is rather God's benevolent intention than a special foreknowledge. God intends welfare and a future filled with hope. God urges the Israelites to not be defined by their past failures, mistakes, and misfortunes. God urges them to be defined by God's benevolent intentions with a hopeful future for them.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Experiences of failure often overwhelms us and defines who we are. Where do you see failure inappropriately defining our identities in our lives, in our community, and in our society? _____

2. What are some of the healthy ways to cope with anxiety when we fail, or when we are anxious about failing? _____
3. Sometimes, it may be challenging for us to accept the hopeful message of God's benevolent intention when we are walking in the middle of the trenches of life. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

4. Israelites might have suffered from some unwise decisions from the past generations. How do the "failures" of our previous generation or what could possibly fail in the next generation impact us?

How are we called to respond to these issues?

5. Where have you experienced God in your failures?

How about successes? _____

6. Have you experienced the benevolent intentions God reveals to us, that goes beyond our human understanding of what failure and success really is? _____
If so, how did you witness God working in such a way? _____

"My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever." Psalm 73:26