

NAZARENE BIBLE COLLEGE CHAPEL SERMON  
ROAD SIGNS & GUIDEPOSTS  
JANUARY 4, 2011

A. Text: Jeremiah 31:15-21

B. Title: Road Signs & Guideposts

C. Outline

1. Introduction: Restoration is intricately tied to the Christmas event
  - a. All have enjoyed their celebration of Christmas: a time for encounters with God
  - b. Christmas is about the response of the human heart to an encounter with God
  - c. This is the same as the focus of our chapel services for the year
  - d. Tonight's chapel represents a transition: Fall – Purify Me!, Winter – Restore Me!
2. Scripture Exposition: Jeremiah 31:15-21
  - a. As we read this passage, many of us will recognize it as a familiar Christmas text, a prophecy of the coming Messiah.
  - b. 15: The Need for Restoration – A Cry of Great Sorrow  
This is what the Lord says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more."
    - i. OT Context: the impending destruction of Judah and the exile of its people
    - ii. NT Context: the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem by Herod
    - iii. Spiritual Context: all that Satan and sin has slaughtered in the lives of each of us
  - c. 16: The Promise of Restoration – The Return  
This is what the Lord says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the Lord. "They will return from the land of the enemy."
    - i. OT Context: the remnant who returned after seventy years of enslavement
    - ii. NT Context: the new remnant from all nations who become children of God through the blood and the Spirit
    - iii. Spiritual Context: each who through Christ and the Spirit experience abundant life
  - d. 17: The Power of Restoration – Hope for the Future  
So there is hope for your future," declares the Lord. "Your children will return to their own land."
    - i. OT Context: the reestablishment of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of David
    - ii. NT Context: the New Jerusalem and the Eternal Kingdom of Jesus
    - iii. Spiritual Context: the personal promise – In my Father's house (John 14)
  - e. 18-19: The Personal Impact of Restoration – Prayer of the Heart  
"I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God. After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.'
    - i. Same for All: gateway to restoration – cry of the heart that has been transformed from rebellion to repentance, from self-centered pride to humble submission
  - f. 20: The Foundation of Restoration – The Nature of God  
Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the Lord.
    - i. Same for All: true foundation of hope for restoration – Affection & Compassion
3. Restoration – A Multifaceted Gem of Grace: brief student testimonies
  - a. Crystal Snowflake: each facet maximizes the crystal's radiant glory and beauty

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- b. Facets of Restoration: handout – different aspects of God’s grace working in our lives
  - c. Three or Four Student Testimonies: which facet of restoration is reflected most in your life
4. Conclusion - Jeremiah 31:21  
"Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take. Return, O Virgin Israel, return to your towns.
- a. Remnant Returning: path was treacherous and unfamiliar – needed directions
  - b. We are the road signs and guideposts lighting the way for pilgrims seeking God’s restoration
  - c. Response: one aspect of restoration still needed in your life, or one person on your heart who needs to find his or her way to God

D. Handout

RESTORATION  
A MULTIFACETED GEM OF GOD’S GRACE

1. Fortunes: to return one from captivity in a foreign land of punishment and discipline to the land of promise, to change one’s status from the shame of slavery to that of honor due a child of God  
Deu. 30:3, Psa. 85:1-4, Psa. 126:4, Jer. 16: 15, Jer. 27:22, Jer. 30:3, Jer. 30:18, Jer. 32:44, Jer. 42:12, Jer. 48:47, Jer. 49:6, Jer. 49:39, Ezk. 16:53, Hos. 6:11, Joe. 3:1, Zep. 2:7, Zep. 3:20, Zec. 9:12
2. Life and Health: to reverse the destructive spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social consequences of sin and guilt, as well as the ultimate consequence of earthly and eternal death  
Job 33:25-26, Psa. 41:3, Psa. 71:20, Isa. 38:16, Isa. 57:18, Jer. 30:17, Hos. 6:11
3. Joy: to remove a spirit of guilt, shame, and despair that accompanies sin and its destructive results, and to replace it with a spirit of hope, peace, and thankfulness  
Psa. 51:12, Psa. 126:4, Jer. 31: 15-18, Jer. 33:11, Zec. 10:6,
4. Relationship: to have God’s wrath and anger against one’s self removed along with the alienation from Him that it causes, and to bring back into His compassion and love  
Deu. 30:3, Job 33:25-26, Psa. 60:1, Psa. 80:3, Psa. 85:1-4, Psa. 126:4, Jer. 30:18, Jer. 33:11, Jer. 33:26, Lam. 5:21, Hos. 6:2, Zec. 10:6,
5. Reconstruction: to rebuild the external conditions and circumstances of one’s life that have been destroyed by sin, and to restore them to beauty and functionality  
Isa. 44:26, Isa. 49:6-8, Isa. 61:4, Dan. 9:25, Amo. 9:11, Nah. 2:2
6. Regeneration: to bring those who have strayed from God’s will back into the path of righteousness, and to remove the moral depravity that led to their disobedience, renewing a godly character within them  
Job 22:23, Job 33:25-26, Psa. 51:12, Psa. 85:1-4, Jer. 31:15-18,