



from
COVID
to
COURAGE

day four

Nathan Weselake

Day 4 -Marry Off Your Daughter.

Meditation.

Some of you saw the video I put on PAC's social platforms of Acacia and I in the kitchen. I was spider webbing all over the place talking about chandeliers, church services, and dishes. I was also teasing her, trying to get her to join me on the video. She would have none of it and pleaded "Can't I just do the dishes in peace." I took the opportunity to leverage her love for dishes to proclaim she would make someone "a fine wife."

Two things you need to know about that. First, Acacia gives it back to her old man pretty good. I have heard far too many "that poor thing" comments! I am left stammering by her quick-witted turnarounds more than you would ever guess and generally put in my place daily. I am not after sympathy. In fact, I expect you to be entirely unsympathetic. You would be delighted to see God gave me a daughter who is more than a match for her old dad.

Second thing you need to know is that young women as a general rule throughout human history do get married. This is not to pressure anyone (especially Acacia) to conform to traditional culture norms. Only to point out that when things are "normal" we look to future events like weddings, or even anniversaries and birthdays, as things which likely will happen and which we should anticipate. When things are normal.

But things aren't normal so how should we live?

Covid-19 has us disoriented and displaced. How do you live when things aren't normal? Well, consider the advice the prophet Jeremiah gives to the people in exile. Not that we are in exile, but for most of us who have grown up in the sheltered West it is as close an experience to exile as we have had.

Consider how exiles never know when life will return to normal, if ever. We are hopeful the pandemic is over in a few weeks or months - at least the worst of it. But we don't know. This is new. This is out of our hands. As well, we don't know what is really happening. When we were in our "homeland" comfortably in charge of our manageable lives, we could plan accordingly. We made most of our own decisions. Now, it seems like others are making decisions for us, forcing decisions for us. You can't go there. You can't meet. The shelves are wiped clean which means you might not be (see what I did there?)

More seriously, you have a grandma, or a chronically ill friend, or someone else you love who fits in that vague “vulnerable” demographic.

Exile is about vulnerability, so we can learn from the instructions Jeremiah gives to those in exile because right now, we are vulnerable.

Contrary to what we might expect and our own tendencies, he doesn't suggest they shrink their lives to fit their new reality. In fact, he insists they do those things they have always done. Now, he is not so naive to think they can do them *exactly* the way they have always done them - they are in Babylon, and not Jerusalem after all. And we are not so naive as to intentionally buck the wise advice of government and health officials. We can't continue *exactly* either.

But still, they are to plant gardens, build houses, and plan weddings. They are to work for the good of the city they are in. They are to not just make the best of it, they are to invest in it. What *especially* they are not permitted to do is to give up on mission and community. This advice is wise. Isolation and lack of purpose are invitations to fear.

The flip side is also true. Community and mission issue fear a restraining order. It can't come near you. You will find yourself leaving fear behind when you choose to live as if you have a future. When you choose to keep working for the Kingdom of God. When you find creative and safe ways to keep meeting together. When you keep trying to make your community better. When you keep financial support flowing for causes you care about. When you decide to take advantage of the longer nights at home and make a baby.

It is easy for fear to hit a stationary target, so Jeremiah tells us to keep life happening. Keep moving, keep laughing, keep planting, keep connecting, keep blessing.

Further Reading:

Jeremiah 29:1-14

Key Verse:

“Find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage.” (Jeremiah 29:6)

Calibration Prayer:

Lord, I will live as if I have a future. I will not stop giving, caring, loving, investing, and planning. I want nothing to do with contagious fear. Keep me moving so fear can't catch me. And, may my hope filled trust in you be what infects the people around me.