

How God Can Use You to Fulfill Jeremiah 29:11 in Someone's Life

I love looking into the eyes of my little foster baby as he drinks his bottle. He is really growing up, cute as a button. He loves French fries, long walks in his stroller and pulling out pots and pans from the cupboards.

But it's hard to be excited, because I worry about his future.

Last week, he was super-fussy. It was one of those weeks where he just wanted to be held. He cried and held onto us extra tight each time we dropped him off to daycare. Maybe it was teething. But it occurred to me: We are truly his family now. He doesn't want to leave us.

But his birth mom wants him back. The only problem is, she is in a state of constant chaos. There are abusive boyfriends, addictions, lost jobs, homelessness, missed calls and appointment—yet she always has an excuse. I really want to believe her. Every story seems so plausible. But here I am with her baby, months and months later, as he grows up into a little boy—and her life gets worse.

For now, we are this baby's only hope. But he needs more.

I was reading in Jeremiah, and that old familiar verse popped up about a “future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11b). That is what my little guy needs: a future and a hope. As I read further, I discovered a familiar backdrop of chaos. People (Israelites) who made some really bad choices, ignored the godly advice of their ancestors, and followed the paths of other nations' destructive religions. The consequence was being carried off as slaves to Babylon.

Then God made a promise through His prophet, Jeremiah. After 70 years, He would bring everyone back. But things would get worse before they got better. 70 years is a long time. Even Jeremiah died.

Yet in that timeframe, we have the story of Daniel. He is a young victim of his parents' poor decisions. But he continues to pray, three times a day, with his heart anchored to that promise. And we see the favor of God elevating him to unprecedented political position. Not only that, but we see God sending angels to shut the mouths of lions and God Himself going into the fire to protect his friends from the punishing heat.

We know from the book of Nehemiah that his prayers were heard, that his hope was founded. God kept his promise. The children of Israel came home. They had a hope and a future.

This is a story of a promise of a better future. And like so many Old Testament stories, it alludes to a greater story with a greater promise, the promise we now refer to as the Plan of Salvation.

Here we are thousands of years later.

The bad news is still bad. Godless parents make horrible choices, consequently subjecting their innocent children to lives of slavery by way of abuse and addiction.

But the good news is still good. God loves to bring repentant parents home. No 70-year punishment. No thousand-year delay.

But He is still concerned about the children suffering in the wake of their parents' chaos.

Our foster baby didn't come to the Kauffman home by the will of our family or the will of the state. God foresaw the trouble before he would be born into thousands of years ago. I firmly believe angels were involved when he was pulled out of

chaos that day when someone called the police. It was during my fifth son's graduation. Ironically, we were celebrating the start of our son's exciting future. Amid taking proud momma pictures, my cell phone went off. And so a celebratory day ended, our family gathered around a baby with fear in his eyes.

And though I also feared for what this child had endured, we celebrated him as a testament.

God shut the lion's mouth. God stood with him in the fire of someone else's bad decision.

The God who protected him brought him to us. And we were going to love him.

Like Daniel, I don't look to the circumstances of his parents. I am holding onto a promise that is more than a hope, it's a plan. Fear and worries have no place here.

This baby is right on schedule.

He has a future and a hope. {eoa}

Susan Kauffman, MBA, PMP, *Project Coordinator, Mom and "Nonna."* Representing a more contemporary version of Orlando's "Snow White," Susan has raised a family of seven children that is always growing with new spouses and grandchildren. Just when she was about to fall asleep for 100 years, her Prince Charming felt the call to foster, and so the adventure continues.