



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

January 11, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

LOVE BEYOND COUNTING

I have loved you with an everlasting love.

Jeremiah 31:3

READ Jeremiah 31:1-6

“How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.” Those words from Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Sonnets from the Portuguese are among the best-known poetry in the English language. She wrote them to Robert Browning before they were married, and he was so moved that he encouraged her to publish her entire collection of poems. But because the language of the sonnets was very tender, out of a desire for personal privacy Barrett published them as if they were translations from a Portuguese writer.

Sometimes we can feel awkward when we openly express affection for others. But the Bible, by contrast, doesn’t hold back on its presentation of God’s love. Jeremiah recounted God’s affection for His people with these tender words: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3). Even though His people had turned from Him, God promised to restore them and personally draw them near. “I will come to give rest to Israel,” He told them (v. 2).

Jesus is the ultimate expression of God’s restorative love, giving peace and rest to any who turn to Him. From the manger to the cross to the empty tomb, He’s the personification of God’s desire to call a wayward world to Himself. Read the Bible cover to cover and you’ll “count the ways” of God’s love over and over; but eternal as they are, you’ll never come to their end.

By James Banks

PRAY & REFLECT

Thank You for loving me so fully and personally, Jesus! Help me to love You with my life today. Amen

What are some of the ways God has loved you? How can you return His love today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

For the first twenty-nine chapters of the book of Jeremiah, the prophet warned the people of Judah of God’s punishment - the destruction of Jerusalem and their seventy-year exile to Babylon - due to their chronic unfaithfulness (see 1:14-16; 5:15-19; 6:22-23; 25:9-11). But then Jeremiah speaks words of comfort, encouragement, hope, and restoration. He prophesied of God’s people coming back to the promised land and to God (chs. 30-31). God promised: “The days are coming . . . when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their ancestors to possess” (30:3). He would bring them back from exile (vv. 8-17), restore their land (vv. 18-24), and restore the people to Himself (31:1-6). “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be my people” (v. 1). – By **K. T. Sim**

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