

## Tuesday of Easter – Jeremiah 31:1-6

<sup>1</sup>“At that time, declares the LORD, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.”

<sup>2</sup>Thus says the LORD:

“The people who survived the sword  
found grace in the wilderness;  
when Israel sought for rest,

<sup>3</sup> the LORD appeared to him from far away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love;  
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

<sup>4</sup>Again I will build you, and you shall be built,  
O virgin Israel!

Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines  
and shall go forth in the dance of the merry-makers.

<sup>5</sup>Again you shall plant vineyards  
on the mountains of Samaria;  
the planters shall plant  
and shall enjoy the fruit.

<sup>6</sup>For there shall be a day when watchmen will call  
in the hill country of Ephraim:

‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion,  
to the LORD our God.’”

*These last weeks have seemed endless in so many ways as we await the day when we can return to our regular lives of going to work, gathering with friends, worshiping in the same room, and shopping without fear. But even as we look forward to that day, we wonder what the economy will look like when we emerge from our isolation. The problems we faced before we were put on lock-down won't have magically evaporated.*

*Jeremiah's ministry took place in the days leading up to and including the brutal exile of God's people. That was an isolating event which makes ours look like a vacation. Look again at the first verse of this passage. When Jeremiah wrote the northern ten tribes of Israel had been in exile for at least six generations. They were gone and had been absorbed into the peoples of the Assyrian empire. Even to this day they exist only as tiny remnants. God declares that he will be the God of all the clans of Israel. A little further on it says that they shall plant vineyards and enjoy their fruit on the hills of Samaria, the abandoned capital of those northern cousins.*

*Easter calls upon us to look for God's deliverance. Jeremiah urges us not to set our expectations too low. God has much more in mind than simply letting you go to work or church again, as good as that sounds right now. He says that God will rebuild virgin Israel and that virgin shall adorn herself with tambourines and dance with the merry-makers. Read the first chapters of Hosea and see how remarkable it is that God would call Israel a virgin again and restore to those abandoned homes the joy of being God's people once more.*

*The day comes when Israel's watchmen shall call, "Arise, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God." In this day we are called to hope and expect great things from our God, even the resurrection and restoration of all that has been lost since Eden's tragic day. If that seems hard to envision, take a few minutes and make a list of what you are eagerly anticipating from God's hand. Pin it up and look at it occasionally.*

*God be with you until we meet again. In Jesus' love and mercy, Pastor Wulf*