



God's Encouraging Word ... *when I am fearful about the future*

2018 is here. For some, it's scary how quickly 2017 disappeared. For others, they can't wait to turn the page because this is the year they plan to graduate or perhaps get married. In either case, however, who of us knows what 2018 will bring? In all seriousness, who of us knows what tomorrow will bring?

If you've ever worried or fretted about the future, our gracious God has given us a very powerful verse, nestled right in the middle of the Old Testament book of Jeremiah. The prophet Jeremiah was one who had very good cause to be worried about the future. Day after day he took a beating because he stood up for God's truth and proclaimed God's Word. But God lifted Jeremiah's eyes up to see the future and to know the truth about what was in store for him. God said to Jeremiah and he says to you: **"I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."**

Talk about comforting and encouraging words! This is God's ultimate plan for all believers—a plan that meets its fulfillment in heaven, and yet

believers find fulfillment of these promises even now. Let's be clear, God is not promising you an extraordinary amount of money in a sweepstakes. He's not saying that you won't ever get cancer or some other disease. He's telling you and me that HE KNOWS. He knows the plan—the ultimate plan—which centers upon Jesus.

Because of Jesus we have the sure hope of heaven. Because of Jesus we have a future that is free from all sin, shame, sorrow and sadness. Because of Jesus our Savior who lived and died and rose in our place, we don't have to worry or fret about what 2018 will bring. No matter what happens, through faith in Jesus our future is set. God knows it and he wants you to know it too.

As we journey into 2018, we can make plans, we can set goals. Above all, we can have confidence because our LORD God knows the ultimate plans he has for us—and he's already shared them with us! Live in this confidence and share these promises, for there are many around us who are deeply concerned what the future holds. Tell them about Jesus who knows!