

June 2, 2019  
Jeremiah 29:11-14  
Pastor Rosanna McFadden  
Creekside COB

### **“God’s Plan”**

I’m so pleased that we had a chance to hear from both of our graduates today. Alysa, thanks for making time to share with us *and* prepare special music in the midst of prom and finals and all the graduation activities and recognition you have at Concord High School. Hassan, thanks for making the drive to Elkhart early this morning after completing your final class at Bethany Seminary on Friday. Congratulations on being completely done with your master’s studies.

I want to add just a few comments and share blessings on behalf of the Creekside congregation. Alysa, you were born into this church family, and we are so proud of the young woman you have become: athlete, student, musician and especially a follower of Christ. We can’t take credit for all of those things, but we have been cheering for you every step of the way, and your mentor Jan Weaver has been busy keeping up with Concord singer’s concerts and softball games. Tim and I and Roger and Anne Griffith have had the opportunity to travel with you, and I even got to stay up with you most of a night when you were pretty sick, but still—amazingly—considerate and polite. A bonding experience for sure. Your mom and dad and stepdad Scott and grandparents have been and will continue to be your biggest fans.

Hassan, we have not known you for as long as we have known Alysa, but from almost the first time you came to Creekside, we were impressed with your commitment to Christ and to the work of the church. Not just this church, but to the mission of Christ to bring reconciliation and peace to the conflict in Nigeria, and to serve God wherever you are called in the United States. We are so blessed that you found a church home at Creekside, and we hope to someday

welcome the rest of your family and meet them in person. We know that your commitment to theological education has been a sacrifice for them as well as for you.

The prophet Jeremiah knew a thing or two about keeping the faith when his surroundings were changing. He warned the people of Judah to repent or else be punished by God through the armies of Babylon. They didn't repent. But when the Jewish people were taken into captivity, he preached words of comfort and encouragement to them. Here are some of my favorite verses from Jeremiah 29: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce . . . seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. In other words, wherever God sends you, do what you can to make that a better place than before you arrived. Whether it's Anderson University or a congregation or a school in Pennsylvania, how can God use you to make it a better place. Of course it won't be home—but those of us who call this place our home should be working to make it a better place, too. Blooming where we are planted and working for the welfare of others, wherever we are, is the way Jeremiah says we will find our own mission and calling.

It's important, of course, to have goals and a plan for where you want your life to take you. You might feel like graduation opens more doors than you can step through: that there are now more options than you know what to do with. But here is a caution, which may actually be a blessing: there is a Jewish proverb which you have probably heard: Man plans and God laughs. In other words, no matter how carefully we plot and plan for the future, things don't always work out that way. God may have plans which we didn't know about. Jeremiah 29:11 assures us of this: God's plans are for good and not for harm. Even when our plans are in disarray, we can be sure that God is faithful, and is looking out for our welfare.

There is one way we can be sure that God never laughs at our plans, that we never have to change direction or make a U-turn. I'm sure you can figure it out, but it isn't as simple as it sounds: if we want to be sure that our human plans for the future will happen, we just have to do what God intended all along. Easy, right? Just go God's way and we'll always be on the right path. Of course, the Bible is full of stories

**of good people who took the wrong path, and some bad people who stumbled on to the right one. Jesus Christ is the only person who has every stayed on the right path for his entire life; and it was not an easy path. Here is Jeremiah's prescription of how to find God's way. God says, "When you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me you will find me, if you seek me with all your heart." Again, not as easy as it sounds, but good words for graduates and anyone else who is imagining their future. Search for God and seek God with all your heart.**

**And here is God's promise to us--to each one of us-- "For I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Hassan and Alysa, I can do more than wish you a blessing and a future with hope: I can tell you with conviction that is God's plan for your life. God has already begun, and God will continue to use you to minister to others: through reconciliation, hope, and healing. And if you search for God's will with all your heart, and seek the welfare of those around you, that is how you will find your own life and your own future.**

**We pray the God's goodness and mercy and strength will surround you and that you will always remember this church home and the people who love you. And all God's people said Amen.**