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Jeremiah 29:11. ESV.  I am borrowing my focus today from Pastor Louie Giglio's teaching on the book of Joshua. Our Life Group finished this study and his last point really affected me. The above scripture is God's promise to work His good for us. The final thoughts in the Joshua teaching focused on the burying of Joseph's bones. From his request, to his final burial spot, took many,many years. Joseph was embalmed in Egypt before the Exodus. The Israelite's spent 40 years in the wilderness. Then they fought to take the land before they found a place to bury Joseph. Joseph trusted God's promise and the Israelites to fulfill their promise to him. It took time. Pastor Giglio's encouragement that affected me so much was a simple statement: Give God Time.  Give God time to answer your prayers. Do not judge too quickly that His seeming quiet means He is not moving. Give God Time to work the change you've asked Him to do in yourself and others.  This is a simple message and reminder. God sees you and your situation. He is working behind the scenes, out of your sight; but He is working. How do we know? Because He is a promise keeper.  The story of the importunate judge is not my favorite. But there are some wonderful insights we can learn from it, if we keep reading. *And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.* Luke 18:1-5. During this period in time, women were prohibited from going to court. Their husband or other male family member would usually bribe the judge to hear their case. This widow was alone. She had no male relative. She had no money to bribe the court. But she used what she had: her voice. She would show up and shout into the tent (which was the courtroom of the day) making herself a nuisance. The heartless judge finally heard her case, simply to get rid of her. I'm always relieved to read that part. Whew, justice was finally done.  When we keep reading:*6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”* We discover we have an elder brother who loves and makes intercession for us. We are not alone when we face our mountains. It is up to us to stir our faith. We must stand strong. We must give God the time to work on our behalf, without fear, without doubt. No matter how long it takes.  When we face adversity, it is often tempting to run and hide. Our God wants us to stand tall with courage, declare His Word in the matter. Not our feelings, not our fears, but His faith. When my husband was in the hospital after his massive stroke, the doctors wanted me to just let him die. We kept praying for healing and declaring God's victory. They kept telling me how severe his situation was. They even refused to give him a feeding tube because they claimed it wasn't "ethical". My response was, I wouldn't let my dog die of starvation, much less my husband. It was very difficult to defy their "expertise". We prevailed and brought him home, where he lived two and half more years. Was it difficult? Yes. Was it worth it? Oh, yes.  I think I am still giving God time. I want to see the fullness of His plan and purpose through that season and my widowhood. So many good things have happened. I get to watch God change lives through our Life Group and the Senior Life Ministry I get to direct. Though my heart still aches for my husband and our marriage, I am giving God more time to work all things together for His good. I am learning the truth of 2 Corinthians 12:15, *And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls.* We are not our own, my friends. We have been bought with a price for a purpose. Some of the spending our God uses us for may not be comfortable. It may also not be logical to our earthly minds. Just as our cash is ours to spend as we choose, we are His to spend as He chooses. We may not discover the fullness of His purchase till heaven, and we have to be ok with that.  I believe God uses everything we go through in this life, if we let Him. It's our choice to trust Him or not. A miscarriage, disabling injury, or financial catastrophe are emotionally devastating. The good news, after giving God time they can actually be the beginning of some amazing opportunities. Keep on trusting Him, my friends. I have some friends facing some difficult challenges and it is hard to watch. United together in prayer and faith, we will see God's purpose, and that is always good!  *Father, I pray with my friends who are struggling with your time table. I ask you encourage them today, with your presence and comfort. I thank you for teaching us how to give you time to work for us, in us and through us. You are more than able to do abundantly above all we can think or ask, so we choose to trust you today. In Jesus' Name, amen.* | |