



This week we will be looking at God's words to the people of Israel in the midst of exile in Babylon, which Pastor John preached on this past Sunday. The hope is to help our people embrace and thrive right in the midst of where they are.

FAMILY TIME

Take some time to share prayer requests and praise reports with each other and encourage folks to keep praying for each other's prayer requests throughout the week and to believe that these will become future praise reports.

Let's also keep praying for the refugees and for our summer trips to Berlin. Let's pray specifically for fundraising, as teams only have a month left to raise support!

EMBRACING JOY

This week we are studying a passage (Jeremiah 29:4-14) in which God speaks to his people about a difficult situation. The historical context of this passage is these people had been conquered by the Babylonians and taken captive to Babylon. They longed to return to their home in Jerusalem. However, God tells them that they will be in Babylon for 70 years before they will be able to return. As we discuss this passage, let's focus in on what God tells the people with regards to living in the midst of not ideal/difficult circumstances.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- Given that the Israelites were captives in Babylon and longed to return to their home in Jerusalem, how might they have acted in Babylon?
- What commands does God give the people? Why do you think he gives them these commands or what do you think these commands might symbolize?
- What would it look like for the Israelites to seek the peace and prosperity of the city of Babylon?

Application Question: Are there situations we are currently facing that we wish we could escape from or that God would deliver us from? What might it look like to embrace these situations and find God and receive God's joy right in the midst of these difficult circumstances?

Break up into groups of 3-4 to share and pray with each other about the various situations we are faced with.

Jeremiah 29:4-14 – God’s Word to the Exiles

4 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

5 “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. **6** Marry and have sons and daughters;

find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters.

Increase in number there; do not decrease. **7** Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried

you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” **8** Yes, this is what the Lord

Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the

dreams you encourage them to have. **9** They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,”

declares the Lord. **10** This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you

and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. **11** For 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. **12** Then you will call on me

and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. **13** You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your

heart. **14** I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity.[b] I will gather you from

all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from

which I carried you into exile.”