

DECEMBER 4, 2016
Title: Living As Exiles Part 1
Jeremiah 29:1-7 (MSG)

John Piper speaks to the topic of Christian exiles in this way:

In a profound sense, this world is not our home. When we are away from our bodies we will be “at home with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). We are not to be “conformed to this age” (Rom. 12:2). Our lives “are hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). We have been “transferred out of the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13). We have “passed out of death and into life” (1 John 3:14). We are exiles and strangers here.

The fact that we are exiles on the earth (1 Peter 2:11) does not mean that we don't care what becomes of culture. However, it does mean that we exert our influence as very happy, brokenhearted outsiders. We are exiles. “Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20). “Here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come” (Heb. 13:14).

Background

- Jeremiah's book contains many sermons and prophetic messages given during the last three decades of Judah's existence. These messages are recorded out of chronological order. The chapters studied in this unit are from the final decades before the Babylonians totally destroyed Jerusalem.
- In 605 b.c. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian army defeated the Assyrians at Carchemish. Judah, like other Palestinian states, was forced to send hostages to Babylon.
- In 601 b.c., Nebuchadnezzar attempted to invade Egypt, but was defeated. Jehoiakim of Judah now allied his nation with Egypt. But in 598 b.c. Nebuchadnezzar returned, determined to discipline the fickle Palestinian states. Jerusalem surrendered in 597 b.c., and another larger group of 10,000 captives was deported to Babylon, along with the wealth of the city. Now, if the figures as given in Jeremiah for the years 597, 586, and 582 be accepted as correct, the total number of exiles, taking into consideration II Kings xxiv. 16, will be 12,000 men, or in all 36,000 to 48,000 souls.
- By 597 b.c. it was stunningly clear that all Jeremiah had prophesied for the past 30 years was true. The most distinguished families in Judah were taken to Babylon in the first of three deportations. ZEDEKIAH, JUDAH'S LAST KING, WAS DESTINED TO RULE ONLY 11 MORE YEARS.

During these 11 years, Jeremiah continued to warn God's people. He advised submission to Babylon, since God had chosen this pagan power to discipline His people. But in spite of the evidence of fulfilled prophecy, the Jews and their leaders refused to listen. Zedekiah rebelled, and in 586 the city fell. Zedekiah's

children were executed while he watched, and then he was blinded so that the last thing he saw was their deaths. Temple treasures were transported to Babylon; both city and temple were razed. All but the poorest of the land were taken into Captivity, and Gedaliah was appointed as governor over the remnant. [1Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). The teacher's commentary (409). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.]

Read Jeremiah 26:1-13
Read Jeremiah 27:1-11
Read Jeremiah 28.

ACCEPT REALITY

BAD NEWS:

BAD NEWS: 1 Peter 2:11-12 ; 2 Timothy 3:1-5

GOD NEWS:

Make the Best of It for God's Glory: How?

1. Live in the City
"Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. 6 Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away!"
2. Seek Shalom of the City
Seek-to seek with care, inquire, require: to tread or beat a path

SHALOM

WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE FOR US TO SEEK THE SHALOM OF THE CITY?

Philip Ryken says, "Seeking the peace of the community means being a good neighbor. It means shoveling the sidewalk. It means cleaning the street. It means planting a tree. It means feeding the poor. It means volunteering at the local school. It means greeting people at the store. It means driving safely and helping people with car trouble. It means shutting down immoral businesses. It means embracing people from every ethnic background with the love of Christ."

3. Pray for the City

Ways we Can pray:

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to teach you to pray as He helps you to pray.

2. Pray for your senior pastor – his spiritual health, his marriage, his family, his vision, wisdom, and spiritual power. Ask God to enhance his ability to lead your church to reach your city or town.
3. Pray for our church family to enthusiastically engage in serving your community.
4. Pray the same for the pastors in our city.
5. Pray for the newest church you know of and the oldest church.
6. Pray that our church family will impact our city in 2017 as never before.
7. Pray for unity in the body of Christ.
8. Pray for our mayor — a sense of accountability to God, humble acknowledgement of need for wisdom, relationship to God, and desire for righteousness and integrity.
9. Pray the same for our police chief.
10. Pray the same for our fire chief.
11. Pray the same for our city councilmen or our local elected officials.
12. Pray the same for our superintendent of schools.
13. Pray the same for every CEO in our community.
14. Pray for the schools closest to you, the high school and its principal, the grade school and its principal.
15. Pray for those who work in the healthcare system in our community — administrators, doctors, nurses, technicians.
16. Pray for your closest neighbor or friends to be saved and be fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.
17. Pray for a merchant or clerk you interact with on a regular basis.

Life Application:

What would it look like for you and your family to open your lives to the community around you? How does God want you to pray for and seek the welfare of the community around you?

[1] Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). The teacher's commentary (409). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.