

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION - 7/7-8/15  
HOW TO LIVE IN A HOSTILE CULTURE: JEREMIAH 29:4-11



## SCRIPTURE

### JEREMIAH 29:4-11

4 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, 9 for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord. 10 “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.*

## BIG IDEA

In Jeremiah 29, God reveals how his people are to live in a culture that is growing increasingly to godly beliefs and ethics. First, we are to think like exiles. If we forget we are exiles, we will inevitably start putting our trust and hope in this world. That means when things go bad we’re not just sad, we’re destroyed; we’re not just upset, we’re outraged. This is not our true home—our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior (Philippians 3:20-21). Second, we should love our culture by serving and developing it. We’re not merely to be *in* the culture (living here and worshiping here). We’re not to be against the culture (demonizing everything as evil). We’re not to be *of* the culture (taking on its beliefs and ethics). We are to be for the culture (being different from it but working for the good of it). But how can we actually live like this? God says the answer is this: through the promise of future redemption (see vv. 10-11). The promise of God’s future redemption that *is to come* gives us the strength to live as salt and light in the world *that is*.

The only reason our future can be bright is because Christ's past was dark. On the cross, Jesus paid for our sin through His death. We can be brought back into the presence of God because Jesus was cast out of it! Jesus can give us a future and a hope because He forfeited His future and became as one with no hope. God can make plans for our peace because he made plans for Jesus' destruction. We don't get the evil we deserve, because Jesus did. We get the robe of God's love because Jesus got the sword of God's wrath

## DISCUSSION

*We're not merely to be in the culture (living here and worshiping here). We're not to be against the culture (demonizing everything as evil). We're not to be of the culture (taking on it's beliefs and ethics).*

1. Which of these do you think you've lived most of your life aligned with and why? (*in, against, or of*)
2. Was there anything from the sermon, big idea, or Acts 29 that **stood out** to you, **challenged** you, or **confused** you?
3. What danger is there in forgetting you're an exile? How can we constantly be reminded that "our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior"? (Philippians 3:20-21)
4. What are some tangible ways to love your culture by serving and developing it? What can we as a Community Group do on a regular basis to love our culture and seek it's welfare?
5. What reason does God give the Israelites to seek the welfare of their culture? What motivation should Christians have in doing the same thing in their culture?