

LORD OF EVERYTHING

God's power extends to every area of life.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ When we look at Israel's story of exile, it can inspire us to a broader view of the church's role in the world as we live our lives today.
- ❖ Despite prophetic warnings, such as Jeremiah's (see Jeremiah 29:4-14), generations of disobedience against God resulted in Him carrying Israel into exile—something that was prophesied from as far back as Moses (Deuteronomy 4:25-30).
- ❖ The people of God were taken from Jerusalem, the place of God's Presence. But the truth is that they had already lost His Presence even while they were still in Jerusalem. Ezekiel chapters 10 and 11, which was a vision of God leaving the temple and Jerusalem, describes this state (Ezekiel 10:4-5, 18-9, 11:22-24).
- ❖ So, the Jews were taken to Babylon—the place of God's scattering. The origin of Babylon is the tower of Babel spoken of in Genesis 11. This is where humanity disobeyed God's command to spread across the earth and tried to unite around a tower they were building. God confused their language and caused them to scatter. Centuries later, God sent His chosen people to that very location to be disciplined.
- ❖ Many commentators are calling Canada a post-Christian society; it has gradually assumed values, culture, and worldviews that are not necessarily Christian. We're living in a society that is increasingly opposed to our message and values. In a sense, we are in exile from Jerusalem in Babylon. We are in this world, but we are not of this world. This increases the opportunity for us to bring light to the darkness.
- ❖ In Jeremiah 29, God told Israel to build Babylon (v. 5). It's evident from scripture and logical when we think about the situation of a slave, that the Jews wanted to go home to Jerusalem. Yet, God tells them to put down permanent structures, to set up systems that can sustain societal life; He tells them to marry and have children (v. 6). In *Babylon* of all places!
- ❖ Recall that they are in the same place where humanity resisted God's command to increase, multiply and replenish the earth. Their future also looked dark. Yet God tells them to grow. He tells them to pray for the "posterity of the city... because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (v. 7).
- ❖ If our Christian worldview is preeminent, and if our methods are patterned after the Creator's blueprint, we need to build lives in this society that serve us well and that contribute beyond our lifetimes.
- ❖ We shouldn't withdraw; we should engage. But we cannot engage the world before we have the faith God wants us to have to build our "Babylon."

KEY SCRIPTURES (NIV): Jeremiah 29:4-14; Proverbs 14:34; Matthew 5:13-16; Psalm 24:1

- ❖ In verse 10, Jeremiah wrote to the exiles and told them of God's promise to bring Israel back to the place of His Presence. This may have sounded like pie in the sky to many defeated exiles, but down the road the prophet Daniel would reread the letter and believe God.
- ❖ Why? Because Jeremiah wrote in verse 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."
- ❖ And verse 12 reveals the endgame: "Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord.
- ❖ The future is bright for our nation, because there's a church that's committed to shining within it.
- ❖ We must take righteousness into the nation and we do so by demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit spoken of in Galatians 5:22-23—"love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."
- ❖ People might resist, despise or attack you, but there is no law against the peace, kindness and goodness that flow from the Presence of God.
- ❖ God's power extends to every area of life, so let's engage every area of life in His creation with passion and power.
- ❖ As the Church, let's use the gift of God's Spirit to display the fruit of Galatians 5 if we want to return to our Jerusalem: the Presence of God.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Read Galatians 5:22-23. In your life, would you say that you have an abundance of one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit over another aspect? Which is/are in surplus and which is/are in deficit?
2. Give an example or two of how you have been able to personally display the fruit of the Spirit, or consider instances where you may yet have the opportunity to do so. What will/did you do?

PRAYER TIME

Lord, help me to mature and grow in You—wherever I may be planted. In Jesus' name.




Start-up: How do you handle instances where you're the "fish out of water" or the "stranger in a strange land"?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2022

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

 (Reminds me/Confirms)  (New idea)  (Think about)

 (Do this)  (Speaks to my heart)  (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE
WORD