

Date: 20 July 2025

Sermon Series: N/A

Sermon Title: Pray for Sarawak - Love the Land

Scripture Reference: Jeremiah 29:1-14

Preacher: Ps Laurence Lee

Introduction

When the Babylonian Empire conquered Judah, about ten thousand Jews of royal, noble and artisan backgrounds were brought to Babylon as exiles. The Jewish diaspora turned their back on the foreign land as they were misled by false prophecies about their imminent return. God admonished them and spoke the following through Jeremiah:

1. The wrong way to live

- i. Assimilate
 - a. The modus operandi of the Babylonian master to command loyalty from Judah was to assimilate a select group of Jews into their culture before returning them to their land.
 - b. Similarly, we might have assimilated into the worldly system of our land
- ii. Withdraw
 - a. The exiles lived in isolation from the Babylonian society around them
 - b. Today, we might have led an insular life due to our disdain for the land we live in.

2. The right way to live

- i. Settle down (v5)
 - a. God encouraged the exiles to invest in the land by building houses
 - b. We should also invest our resources to serve the land we live in
- ii. Do productive work (v5)
 - a. God exhorted the exiles to be productive and contribute to the local economy
 - b. We should also contribute to nation-building through our vocations
- iii. Increase in numbers (v6)
 - a. God encouraged the exiles to have children
 - b. Similarly, we should recognise that the family unit is the foundation of our society
- iv. Seek God's shalom (v7)
 - a. God instructed the exiles to seek the peace & prosperity of the city that they adopted

- b. Likewise, we should also aspire for our land to prosper so that we could reap the benefits

3. The power to serve (v10-14)

As God eventually brought them back to their homeland after 70 years, Jesus came 700 years later to die on our behalf outside the city of Jerusalem (Heb. 13:11-14) so that we could enter the enduring city whose architect and builder is God.

Conclusion

We are also citizens of the Kingdom of God who have been called to be salt and light in the earthly city or state we live in.

Discussion Questions (Discussion leaders may feel free to adapt to suit their small groups)

- a. Have you at any point in your life felt alienated in your community or adapted to the corrupt ways of the society you are in? Share your experiences
- b. Has the knowledge of God transformed you in the way you engage with the city or state you live in? Share your experiences
- c. Why does God desire that we make a decision to contribute to and/or invest our resources in our city or state?

DBS/BOBILA Questions

- 1. What does this passage say about God?
- 2. What does this passage say about the Jewish exiles?
- 3. What have you learnt about yourself?
- 4. What values do you need to change?
- 5. With Whom/ When /Where/ How can you share this message?

General references

Free online Bible Study Guide by Ps. David Guzik.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/guzik_david/