

Our Path to Peace: Faith over Fear
Part 2 – Circumstances
Jeremiah 29.1-13

Exile: dislodged, displaced, disrupted – under orders they don't want but must embrace, someone else defining normal for them

Flourish

- We are bringing order to chaos (not control to chaos) by creating little *mini-Edens*
 - We make the most of our situation by doing what we know God wants us to do – in this case, fulfill the cultural mandate (Genesis 1.28)
 - “I’m going to make the most of where I am right now and trust God for the rest”
- Our obedience to God does not depend on our circumstances
 - True when persecuted, true when persevering
 - What we can control (and what we are responsible for) is not the where, when, or what but the HOW – how we respond, how we relate, etc.
 - I’m going to humble myself
 - I’m going to choose holiness
 - I’m going to show empathy
 - I’m going to forgive
 - I’m going to love my neighbor
 - I’m going to outdo my spouse / kids in showing honor
 - Seek the welfare of the city and pray – your home, your spaces, your area

Future

- Timing is in God’s hands, not ours
 - In their case (and ours): we’re going to be here a while (mid-June???)
- Temptation is to look back – when is this going to return to normal?
 - Prophets were saying it (v.8-9, 28.3) – modern day parallels
 - They weren’t going back to normal (temple, walls, etc.) and neither are we – God wouldn’t have shaken it like this if normal was working in the first place (Heb 12)
- His plans are for our future – so look ahead at what God will do, that’s the source of hope
 - We reap (future) what we sow (present) – most often we get back what we give, especially in relationships (calm, encouragement, sarcasm, etc)

Even better than knowing His plans is knowing Him (v.13)

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you finding most frustrating right now? Why? What are you finding most valuable right now? Why?
2. What is one step you can take (or your family can take) to create a “mini-Eden” in your heart, home, or neighborhood (or some other space)? What would flourishing look like if you did take that step? How does that help you “seek the welfare” of the places you find yourselves in?
3. If it’s a temptation for you to look back and long for the “normal” that was, what can you do to plan for the future God has in store? What is one truth you need to hold on to? What is one step of obedience you need to take? What is something you need to “sow” so that you can “reap” later?
4. COVID Check-in: how are you, your family, and those around you?