

Deeper

Jeremiah 29:4-14

¹ This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ² (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) ³ He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

⁴ **This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says** to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷ Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” ⁸ **Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says:** “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹ They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the LORD.

¹⁰ **This is what the LORD says:** “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 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. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

Set up

- 597 BC the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem.
- Destroyed the Temple and took many of the leaders back to his country.
- Babylon located in Iraq about 50 miles south of Bagdad was approx.
- Babylon is approx. 500 miles from Jerusalem.
- Birmingham to Orlando OR Birmingham to Indianapolis.

Jeremiah 29:1-14

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Transition

- Theme for 2024 is DEEPER.
- God is calling us deeper.
- Out to the depths.
- Away from the comfort and safety of the shoreline out to the depths. with him.
- Just like Peter when he saw Jesus

Matthew 14:27-30

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Three ways to go DEEPER!

- I. **Grow where God plants me.**

Jeremiah 29:4

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

- A. The Babylonians had done terrible things to the Jews.
 1. They had destroyed their city, ransacked their temple, ruined their economy, removed their leaders, and enslaved their populace.
 2. Babylon had done its worst to Jerusalem.

Illustration

- It is not surprising, then, that Saint Augustine (354–430) viewed Babylon as a symbol of evil.
- In his classic work *The City of God*, the great North African theologian described human history as a conflict between two great cities—the city of God and the city of Man.
- This race we have distributed into two parts, the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God.
- And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil.
- Augustine later identified Babylon as the Biblical symbol of the city of Man.
- James Montgomery Boice’s book *Two Cities, Two Loves* applies Augustine’s insights to the post-Christian world:
 - According to St. Augustine, who gave us the distinction between “the two cities” ... Scripture unfolds the history of two distinct groups of people, each having a distinct origin, development, characteristics and destiny.
 - These are two cities or societies.
 - The earthly society has as its highest expression the city cultures of Babylon and ... Rome.
 - The other is the church, composed of God’s elect.
 - The former is destined to pass away.
 - The latter is blessed by God and is to last forever.
 - To read Jeremiah 29 with the two cities in mind is to recognize that God’s people were prisoners in the city of Satan.
 - They were refugees in Babylon, which represents everything hateful and odious to God.

B. Unpack Text

1. God gives the Israelites specific directions.
2. They are not in Jerusalem.
3. They are away from the Temple.
4. They are away from the sacrificial systems.
5. They are away from what is comfortable and familiar.
6. They are away from their usual way of worshipping.
7. They were moved away from all of this.

C. Here are the specific instructions.

1. Build houses and settle down.
2. Plant gardens and eat what they produce.
3. Marry and have children.
4. Help your kids find a mate so they can marry.

5. Increase in number.
6. Do NOT decrease

Application

- Weave yourself into the culture where you live.
- Be part of the economy.
- Build lasting relationships.
- Grow and advance your family.
- Whatever you do – DO NOT decrease.

- D. See the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.
 1. Pray over your city.
 2. If it prospers you will prosper.

- E. Everybody has a territory and everybody has a role.
 1. Discern the know how to **pray for my territory**.

1 Chronicles 4:10

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request.

Illustration

- **Where is your territory?**
- What area does God want you to operate in and influence?

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24

¹⁷ Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them.

²⁰ Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

²⁴ Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

Application

- Don't be so spiritually minded that you aren't any earthly good.
- God wants you to have influence.

- God wants you to make a difference.
- God wants you to advance your territory.
- Grow where you are planted.

Three questions to ask yourself to help you grow where you are planted.

- What opportunity do you have right now in your family?
- What opportunity do you have right now in your career or school?
- What are you doing right now to make a difference in your church?

II. Listen and understand God's words to me.

I can hear and understand God's words to me.

Not get distracted with wrong messages

I need discernment to distinguish.

⁸Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says:

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Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have.

⁹They are prophesying lies to you in my name.

I have not sent them," declares the LORD.

A. Unpack text

1. Asdf
2. Asdf
3. *"Hebrew your dreams, which you cause to dream"*
4. The prophets and diviners were saying don't worry were getting out of here like soon.
5. No need to engage, don't worry about unpacking your bags because your gonna have to repack them.
6. They were being told what they wanted to hear.
7. Tell us a story to help us... here is the story we want you to tell us.
8. No regard for what God had to say.
9. Their main objective was for the "Prophets" to say what they wanted them to say and "Dream" what they wanted them to dream.

B. All of this lead to distractions, delusions, misguided focus.

C. We live in an insane culture.

1. in a state of mind which prevents normal perception

If you want to hear God speak then read the Bible.
 If you want to hear him speak audibly then read the Bible out loud.

D. If you don't know the Word of God you will not make it.

Matthew 22:29

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

Matthew 7:15-23

¹⁵ "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

True and False Disciples

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

E.

Hosea 4:6

my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

Illustration

Application

Unbiblical ways to live your life.

- You cannot go by your feelings.
- You cannot go by your gut.
- You cannot figure it out as you go.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice

homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

III. Passionately pursue God.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

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Jeremiah 29:13-14a

¹³ **You will seek me and find me**
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