

Dwelling in the Word/Word-Share-Prayer Jer. 29:1-9 Presbytery Feb. 11, 2022

Jeremiah wrote a letter from Jerusalem to the elders, priests, prophets, and all the people who had been exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. ² This was after King Jehoiachin,^[a] the queen mother, the court officials, the other officials of Judah, and all the craftsmen and artisans had been deported from Jerusalem. ³ He sent the letter with Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah when they went to Babylon as King Zedekiah's ambassadors to Nebuchadnezzar.

This is what Jeremiah's letter said:

⁴ This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: ⁵ "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. ⁶ Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! ⁷ And work for the peace and prosperity [shalom] of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare [*shalom*] will determine your welfare [*shalom*]."

¹⁸ This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let your prophets and fortune-tellers who are with you in the land of Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams, ⁹ because they are telling you lies in my name. I have not sent them," says the Lord.]

Read and reflect silently on the verses focusing on 4-7. 1. What is the Holy Spirit impressing on you?

2. What here would be surprising, be hard for them & why?

2a. What in your life, in the life of being a congregation now, might feel like you are "in exile", and there is no *going back*, this is the life, the circumstance where God has sent you?

3. Why is it so important to work for seek the peace & prosperity/*shalom* of the community, region where God has us? [Gen. 12:1-3, God's people are blessed in order to BE a BLESSING to all nations, not hoard!]

4. How might you, your community of disciples, truly listen to, SEEK, SEE with Jesus' "people eyes" your community and it's people? Discern where the Spirit is at work? Where are YOU being invited to join in with others working for God's *shalom*?

5. Are you willing to change/reframe your "why"/mission, focus, priorities both to WORK for God's *shalom* & to PRAY for those who are neighbors although different, difficult, enemies, even oppressors?

Close with each sharing a personal prayer request & pray for one another.