

LIFE IN EXILE

Jeremiah 29:1-14; 1 Peter 2:9-12

As we approach July 4 and the Celebration of the Independence of our country, let us remember that as believers in Jesus we are always exiles and our ultimate citizenship is in Heaven. How do we live as exiles in a dark world?

1.KNOW WHO YOU BELONG TO – Jeremiah 29:4,5; 1 Peter 2:9,10

- The LORD sent the exiles to Babylon – verse 4; 1 Peter 5:12,13. It was not an accident, but God's sovereign plan. We are God's people today and belong to Him for His glory and praise – 1 Peter 2:9,10. We are part of God's sovereign plan. We are sent into the world to represent Christ – John 20:21.
- We are not to surrender or be assimilated by our world or culture. But we are not to be totally insulated or isolated from our culture (illus. - Daniel and Nehemiah). We are to settle down and dwell here, but always realizing we are only temporary residents, exiles, and aliens – verse 5. We belong to God. Our first allegiance to Him. We are to impact our world for Jesus by being His light in the darkness – Matthew 5:14-16. We are to live different from the world around us. We are to be in the world but not of it.

2.BE FAITHFUL IN EVERYDAY LIFE – Jeremiah 29:6,7; 1 Peter 2:11,12a

- Live out godly marriages and family life – verse 6. We as believers in Jesus are to be living holy ourselves especially in our own passions and desires – 1 Peter 2:11, 12a. We live in a day of moral insanity and confusion. The world is "off the rails." Not only is it "if it feels good, do it", but "*if it feels good, believe it.*" – Erwin Lutzer, *The Church in Babylon*. We face ongoing intimidation and indoctrination of our kids. Let us not submit, but stand for truth, teaching it and living it ourselves. Don't be like the world in its rebellion against God. Recommit to be holy especially in sexuality – 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8. Let us honor God's good plan for life-long marriage between a man and a woman – Hebrews 13:4. Let us also honor singleness and celibacy for the glory of God – Matthew 19:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:7.
- Let us seek the welfare of our adopted homeland – verse 7. We should be contributing members of our society, including good workers – 1 Thessalonians 4:11,12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.
- Pray! – verse 7. Pray for our culture and country to repent and turn onto the Lord. Pray for impact for the gospel. Pray believers will be salt and light.

3.BE HOPEFUL NOT IN DESPAIR AS YOU WAIT – Jeremiah 29:8-14; 1 Peter 2:12b.

- Don't listen to false prophets telling you there is not going to be problems – verses 8-9. Prosperity preachers are false prophets. It is normal in the Christian life to have trials and tribulations. But yet there is HOPE!

- Trust God's timing and His promises – verse 10-14. For God's people there is a future – verse 11. We have a sure hope in Christ. We don't need to live in despair. We are not home yet. But God is going to "visit" us – 1 Peter 2:12b. There is an end to our exile coming! God has given us His Word on it. But there is going to be judgment for unbelievers – Jeremiah 29:15-19; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.
- Be God's light in the darkness! Don't just condemn sinners, but reach out in the name of Christ. Let us dialogue about our hope, but be respectful – 1 Peter 3:15,16. We must seek to help the broken and hurting of our world. If the church doesn't welcome sinners, who will?

Concluding Applications:

- Are you living like this world is your true home?
- Are you daily finding fresh hope in God and His promises?
- Will you stand unashamedly for Christ even when it is hard?
- Let us live in absolute dependence on God.