

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Sept 8, 2019

## Abounding in Hope: A Future With Hope

Pastor Temple (8, 10:30 Sanctuary), Pastor Johnson (9:15, 10:30 Selah)

### Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week's message on Christ In You, The Hope of Glory?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opener Question: Do you have any stories to share about when your parents or teachers put you in "time out" to give you time to think about wrongs you may have done? Did some good come out of it?

### Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Jeremiah 29:4-14. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

**<sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:**

**<sup>5</sup> "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.**

**<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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."<sup>8</sup> 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.**

**<sup>9</sup> They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> 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."**

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- The background information behind verse 4 involves God’s people, Israel, struggling with not trusting in God, worshipping other gods, and the leadership having troubled relationships with neighboring nations such that in 598BC Babylon conquered Jerusalem, then in the years that followed deported the people into exile. Even though it was an unthinkable disaster the Jews would not have predicted, Jeremiah writes that “I [the Lord Almighty] ‘carried’ [you] into exile.” Pastor Johnson shared about a time when his family was disrupted and displaced, with cause for disorientation and discouragement and yet knew God’s presence and peace in it. How have you felt the tender care of God in a troubled time as if he were “carrying” you?
- Verses 5-10 describe two conflicting prophecies, one from Jeremiah’s letter here which said the exile would last at least 70 years and to settle in Babylon, and the other from the “prophets and diviners among you” which told the people what they wanted to hear, that it would be no more than two years and just to camp out and wait. How would the exiled people in Babylon know which one to listen to?
- Verse 7 has been the theme verse for Christ Church for the last few years as we strive to bless the community He has planted us in. How does knowing the community they were in was filled with their oppressors change the meaning of this verse for you?
- In verse 11, the prophet shares that God has good plans (machashabah) or designs or intentions for His people. How was this a timely message for God’s people?
- How is this promise taken further in verses 12-14?

### **Other Related Readings (10 min)**

- Would a volunteer please read out loud Isaiah 55:6-13. How is this message of the prophet Isaiah similar to the passage from Jeremiah above?
- How is a humble view of the human perspective offered in this passage (vs 8-11)? How does this information serve to temper our earthly judgements?
- How is His word lifted up here as a means of help to a people in process?
- What might we infer to be the normal way that God brings about positive change?
- What metaphors of hope are offered here to people who “seek the Lord” (vs. 6, 12-13)?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- Have you ever thought of a particular season of your life as a time of being in exile or time-out where God was giving you space to learn something?
- How do you tell the difference between the true messages from God today from the false ones?
- What promises or hopes in the Lord keep you going during times of discouragement?
- What do you think it would mean for you to “seek [the Lord] with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13) this week?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- How might we glorify God this week in pursuing the peace and prosperity of the city in which He has planted us as individuals this week?
- How about as a congregation?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer