

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12 2025

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## "Bloom Where You Are Planted"

Based on Jereemiah 29:1, 4-7

God's people were on the move. Exile was a common theme in the Old Testament world. Armies from the north would sweep down, or invaders from the south would sweep up, and each and every time, they would use the land we now know as Isreal as the path of least resistance to their enemies. Along the way, anyone who appeared useful: tradesmen, scribes, artisans, or slaves would be swept up and driven into exile. It might last a few months, a few years, or even generations. Those not considered useful, or potential troublemakers, were left behind.

The prophet Jeremiah was one of those left behind, probably because as a religious figure, Nebuchadnezzar might have thought him capable of stirring an uprising. Or, the waring king might have thought that pulling the people away from their religious leaders might make them more vulnerable, and less likely to be a problem.

Jeremiah wrote a letter to

those taken away.

- He didn't tell them to plan for rebellion.
- He didn't encourage them to circle the wagons, and having nothing to do with the enemy.
- He didn't even insist that they set up house churches to keep their faith alive.

Instead, Jeremiah told them to build homes, plant gardens, grow big families, to learn about this new place they found themselves, and become friends with their neighbours.

Now some might say that the prophet was cleverly setting up a quiet rebellion of sorts, that by learning of their enemies' ways, they would have better opportunity to beat them at their own game in the future. Others say that by encouraging large families, in fact, Jeremiah was building an army of sorts. If those in exile grew in numbers for a few generations, they would be a force to be reconned with, as Pharoah had discovered with Moses so many years before.

But I would like to think that Jeremiah was not thinking warfare or rebellion

when he penned these words. I think the prophet said, "Bloom where you are planted."

Jeremiah must have believed that it was likely a long time before God's people would be returned home, else he would not have told them to build homes and plant gardens. But he goes on to say things like:

- Get to know your neighbours
  - Work, and trade and build businesses together
  - Let the children play in the streets with their new friends
  - Be friendly, welcoming, open to opportunities

Nowhere in that does Jeremiah say,

- Plot and scheme your escape
  - Keep only to yourselves
  - Continue your religious practises or else

Jeremiah said,  
*"...seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile."*  
(v14)

Bloom where you are planted, and the love of God

will show itself fully.

The people of the world are still on the move. Today we call them refugees or immigrants. Some move for reasons of safety, food security, better opportunities, or ideological principles. Others are forcibly moved as were the people in the days of Jeremiah, due to civil unrest or invasions by military forces.

But there is another kind of exile underway. Our increased technology and conveniences of travel and communication have allowed us to move further and further from each other, and from our roots. Others are caught in difficult relationships that keep people apart in spirit, or financial realities that force work with no passion for the trade.

We can be exiled in many different ways. We can become bitter and angry...

- That life is not how we want it to be,
- That our life is not taking shape the way we wanted it to,
- That we are not in a place in life where we thought we would end up

Or, we can bloom where we are planted.

You can choose to take where you are, where you have landed, your pleasant

reality, and make the very best of it.

- Be creative with the gifts God gave you
- Be responsive to the world around you
- Be welcoming to those you bump into
- Be willing to try something new

That's not settling for second best.

That's watching the world around you blossom.

That's watching yourself blossom.

That's watching God smile.

It may not be what you had planned.

But it may be exactly what God had imagined.

Bloom where you are planted.