

# EKKLESIA

“I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH”

## Discussion Guide

April 22-23, 2023

### “EKKLESIA” Week 2: “For The City”

#### GATHER

- Describe a time when you were really proud of how God’s people contributed to the wellbeing of a city/community. What did they do and why did that matter? (This could be something you yourself were involved in!)
- If you were at a weekend service, share your takeaways from the message you heard. What was something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?

#### GROW

This weekend’s message was anchored in **Jeremiah 29:1-14** and **Psalms 137**.

Talk through these texts more thoroughly as a group using the outline below. *Feel free to select a suggested question or two in each section to guide your conversation.*

##### 1. **Understand Their Story**

Read and discuss Jeremiah 29:1-14. This text gives both historical information and includes God’s commands to them in that setting.

- Discuss what God’s people were facing when these words were written.
  - Psalm 137 records what people were feeling during this period.
    - What attitude do God’s people have in this Psalm and why do they have it?
      - This is an “imprecatory Psalm”.<sup>1</sup> How does knowing the context help us understand the extreme language of 137:9?
    - Are there parallels between Israel’s experience of “exile” and our experience of being Christians in our city/country/current culture?
      - What things grieve you about our city? Our country?
      - What things make it difficult to “sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land?” (Psalm 137:4)
- Despite their circumstances, what could they have seen about the character of God based on this text (especially 29:10-14, perhaps)?

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/imprecatory-psalms.html>

- Why is it hard for us to see who God is or recognize what God is doing amidst difficulty?
  - Given their situation, how could some of God's instructions (especially 29:5-7, perhaps) have felt?
    - What barriers to obedience do we encounter when in difficult situations?

## 2. **Connect To His Story**

God's desire from the beginning (Gen. 12:1-3) has always been for his people to bless the world in any and every setting.

- Check out Philippians 2:14-16; and/or Titus 3:1-8. What ideas from these texts are parallels to what we see in Jeremiah 29? What is God's vision for how the church interacts with the places it inhabits?

## GO

## 3. **Apply To Our Story**

Northview aspires to make more and better disciples, leaders, and churches - regardless of the time we live in. Unto what end? Primarily: that God be glorified (as we saw last week), but also for the good of our city (as we saw this week). *Feel free to select a section or two to use in your group time.*

- Consider your posture towards the culture we live in.
  - Which biblical character are you most like in your personality and/or spiritual perspective?
    - Pharisee: Stand outside culture to critique it.
    - Sadducee: Live inside culture and compromise your beliefs.
    - Zealot: Live inside culture and radically fight for your beliefs.
    - Essene: Stand outside culture to escape it.
  - There is a better way than all 4 of these postures above: to be what Jesus calls "salt and light" (Matthew 5:13-16). "Good works open the door for good words."
- How can you contribute to the wellbeing of the place you live in (Jeremiah 29:7)? Remember, the church is *you*. Not a building or organization.
  - What does it mean for Abbotsford or Mission (or wherever you live!) to "prosper"? (Are there ways it can flourish even if it does not mean every person becomes a fully devoted follower of Jesus?)
  - What works are you in a position to engage in? (The places where you already spend a lot of time might be a good place to start.)
- How can you pray on behalf of your city? (Jeremiah 29:7)
  - What are the agencies, organizations, leaders that you could intercede for as a group?
  - Who are those who don't currently follow Jesus that you could pray for by name?
  - (See also 1 Timothy 2:1-6, and/or view the the bonus "Prayers For Work" resource<sup>2</sup> and use the prayers that apply to your group!)

<sup>2</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/633371cdcd899b3ab1d896e1/t/6413a3eccf667e3d77d2995d/1679008752217/Prayers%2Bfor%2BWork%2BPDF%2BStandard.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1682110535703937&usq=AOvVaw2p8dOcmH9uFVJzBnuPW0Qb>