

East Hill Church Sermon Discussion Guide:

Citizens of Heaven: Settle In (Jeremiah 29)

Speaker: Pastor Keith Jenkins

Date: October 6, 2024

Introduction:

In this powerful sermon, Pastor Keith Jenkins continued the "Citizens of Heaven" series by exploring Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon. He emphasized how believers can live faithfully and purposefully even in challenging circumstances.

1. Living as Exiles on Mission:

Pastor Keith discussed God's instructions for the Israelites to settle in and build lives in Babylon, despite being in exile.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we apply the concept of "settling in" to our lives as Christians in a secular world?
2. What challenges do you face in balancing being "in the world but not of the world"?

Supporting Verses:

Jeremiah 29:5-6 - "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away!"

Context and Reflection:

- Historical/Cultural Context: The Israelites were in forced exile in Babylon, hoping for a quick return to their homeland.

- Theological Significance: God was calling His people to be faithful and productive even in difficult circumstances.
- Application: We should seek to live purposeful, faithful lives wherever God has placed us, even if it feels temporary or challenging.

2. Working for Peace and Praying for Our Communities:

Pastor Keith emphasized the importance of actively seeking the welfare of the places where we live.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we practically work for peace and prosperity in our communities?
2. What challenges do you face in praying for those who might oppose or persecute you?

Supporting Verse:

Jeremiah 29:7 - "And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare."

Context and Reflection:

- Historical/Cultural Context: The exiles might have been tempted to resent or undermine their captors.
- Theological Significance: God calls His people to be a blessing even to those who may oppose them.
- Application: We should actively seek the good of our communities and pray for our leaders, regardless of our personal feelings toward them.

3. Trusting in God's Plan:

Pastor Keith highlighted the importance of trusting in God's plan, even when circumstances seem dire.

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you experienced God's faithfulness in difficult times?
2. What helps you maintain hope when facing uncertain or challenging situations?

Supporting Verse:

Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Context and Reflection:

- Historical/Cultural Context: The exiles were facing a long period of captivity and uncertainty.
- Theological Significance: This verse affirms God's sovereign care and positive intentions for His people, even in adversity.
- Application: We can trust in God's good plans for us, even when our current circumstances are difficult.

Conclusion:

Pastor Keith Jenkins' message reminded us that as citizens of heaven, we are called to live purposefully and faithfully wherever God has placed us. By settling in, working for peace, praying for our communities, and trusting in God's plan, we can be effective witnesses for Christ even in challenging circumstances.

Reflection Questions:

1. In what ways can you "settle in" and make a positive impact where God has placed you right now?
2. How can you cultivate a mindset of being "on mission" in your daily life?
3. What steps can you take to more actively work for peace and pray for your community this week?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for your sovereign care over our lives. Help us to trust in your good plans for us, even when circumstances are challenging. Give us the courage to settle in and live purposefully wherever you have placed us. Empower us to work for peace and to pray earnestly for our communities. May our lives be a testimony to your grace and love, even in exile. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

References:

Primary Sources:

"Citizens of Heaven: Settle In (Jeremiah 29)," East Hill Church, 10/06/2024. Delivered by Pastor Keith Jenkins.

Sermon Notes, East Hill Church.

The Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV). Biblica, Inc.™, 2011.

Secondary Sources:

Thompson, J.A. "The Book of Jeremiah." The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Eerdmans, 1980.

Swindoll, Charles R. "Insights on Jeremiah, Lamentations." Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary. Tyndale House Publishers, 2016.

Wright, Christopher J.H. "The Message of Jeremiah." The Bible Speaks Today. InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Collaborative Contributions:

LLM Contributions: Based on a mixture of licensed data, data created by AI models, and publicly available data, synthesized for the study of the provided sermon notes and biblical passages.

LLM Training Data:

LLM Training Data. Includes a diverse range of texts (books, websites, and other publications) up to April 2024.