

***A People for Others***

**Jeremiah 29:1; 4-7**

**EXPLORING THE SERMON**

- \* What did you hear?
- \* What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- \* What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

**KEY VERSES**

*These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

As our new Director for the Institute of Missional Formation, Allen Hilton will be involved with various projects along with Mission and Discipleship that help us figure out how we are formed to be missional. Whitney Bell has helped us consider this over the last few years as our Director of Mission. **How has your perspective on being a missional people changed these last few years, or through this series about how we change?**

Our scripture passage takes place 400 years before Jesus, as Jerusalem has just been taken over by King Nebuchadnezzar and the people have been sent away to exile in Babylon (present-day Iraq). As they hunker down and try to wait out their time there, Jeremiah's vision was a different one - a vision from God for them to instead plant roots, and seek the welfare of this city in which they had landed. **As an inwardly-focused people, what do you think this was like for them? When have you been called to serve in a foreign land to which you had no connection?**

Jeremiah wanted people to look around and see what's getting in the way of the city's welfare. The word behind welfare in Hebrew is *shalom*, which means to seek the absolute flourish and thriving of a place or people. And in its *shalom*, we will find our own. Christians have traditionally entered the world through evangelism, service, and justice. Becoming a missional people involves asking what is getting in the way of people flourishing, and what plans does God have for our involvement. We are not naturally inclined to think about others before ourselves. Throughout scripture we see the heroes of our faith constantly escaping seeking the welfare of others. We have the opportunity to be improvisational in figuring out how we can help God in the world. **How do we move to where other people are the center of our attention? What does this mean to you in the context of your daily life?**