

Flourishing in Exile

Craig Rees

BIG IDEA

God calls His people to seek flourishing even when life is not ideal; exile does not suspend God's purposes.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Genesis 1:28; 2:8,15; 3:1-24; 11:1-9; 12:1-3; Psalm 1:3; Jeremiah 1:10; 29:4-11

1. Can you think of a season where you are physically present but emotionally holding back, treating that season like a waiting room?
2. In Jeremiah 29:4, God identifies Himself as “the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel.” Why would both names have mattered to people living in Babylon?
3. What does God’s statement, “I carried you into exile,” reveal about His authority over Israel’s circumstances? What does it not mean about every painful circumstance we experience?
4. When have changed circumstances made God feel absent? What helped—or could help—you remember that your location may change without changing your relationship with Him?
5. What circumstance are you allowing (or did you allow) to describe not only where you are, but who you are? How does your identity in God challenge that diminished identity?
6. Read Jeremiah 29:5-6. What do the commands to build, settle, plant, marry, and multiply reveal about how God wanted the exiles to approach life in Babylon?
7. What act of faithfulness have you postponed until your conditions improve? What could planting in that area look like now?
8. Psalm 1:3 promises fruit “in season.” What roots might God be developing in you during a season when little visible fruit is appearing?
9. What could you plant now that someone else may benefit from later? What do you want those who follow you to inherit rather than have to rescue?
10. Read Jeremiah 29:7. Who or what are you tempted to resent rather than pray for? What practical action could you take this week to seek their shalom while remaining faithful to God?