



DEAR CHICAGO

A HEART FOR THE CITY

JEREMIAH 29:4-14

SYNOPSIS

During the Babylonian exile, God sent a letter to the Israelites living amongst their captors, calling them to seek the shalom of the city where He had placed them. While Chicago is not Babylon, God has also placed us in our city for a purpose, and because He loves the people here, we should seek their good. Shalom is more than the absence of conflict; it is the peace, wholeness, and flourishing that comes from God, ultimately found in Jesus Christ. We seek the Shalom of Chicago by praying for our city, building roots in our communities, planting through faithful work, and multiplying through our marriages and families.

SERMON OUTLINE

Main Idea: *God sends His people to seek the Shalom of a city.*

1. What is Shalom?
Shalom is more than peace; it is the wholeness, flourishing, and completeness that comes from God. As Christians, Jesus is our peace and source of Shalom.
2. Why Should We Care for the City?
 - a. God has sent us
 - b. God loves the people who live here
 - c. Our Shalom is tied to the Shalom of the city
3. How Do We Seek the Shalom of the City?
We seek the good of our city by
 - a. Praying
 - b. Building
 - c. Planting
 - d. Multiplying

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Observing the Text:** First, make sure to have your group spend time looking at the text, and observing the text without reflecting on the sermon. You want the group to get familiar with the text, and the words, and the flow of thought. Keep making observations until you feel the group has a solid grasp of the entire text.
2. What does it mean to seek the shalom of the city? What are some ways our understanding of “peace” can be smaller than what God intends?
3. The sermon asked, “Are you consuming Chicago, or are you contributing to Chicago?” What is one area where you could become more intentional about contributing to the good of the people around you?
4. Babylon was the enemies of Israel, yet God’s command was still clear that the people of Israel were to seek their good. Are there people in your life who you view as an enemy and have not been seeking their good? What would it look like to seek their Shalom?
5. God told the Israelites to build, plant, and multiply even though they didn’t know exactly what their future would look like. What does this teach us about faithfully investing in the place where God has currently put us?
6. What is one practical way you can seek the Shalom of your neighborhood, workplace, school, or community this week?

FOR THE MEN: GOD’S WARRIORS ARE FORGED, NOT BORN.

You have been sent by God- How does that change the way you view your placement in your home, work, or community? Which area of your life do you feel God commanding you to intentionally seek the Shalom of? How can you take greater responsibility for seeking the good of the people?

FOR THE WOMEN

Do you feel like you are living in the Shalom that God has granted in you? What would it look like for your daily life to be presently living with God’s Shalom and understanding that you are complete and whole in Christ? How can we impart that peace into others as well?

FOR FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Ask your family: “What is one thing we could do this week to make our neighborhood, school, or community better for someone else?” How can we pray for and serve the people God has placed around us?