



# THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

## SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Great Opportunity: **For Our Community**

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7, 10-11

February 27/28, 2021

### Part 1: Pray

The primary goal for our Life Group meetings is to experience Jesus in our midst in his presence and power. We want him to be at work by His Spirit ministering to us and through us to one another so that people are cared for and encouraged to lead God-pleasing lives. Ask God to reveal his truth in this passage to transform you through your discussion time.

### Part 2: Read the Text

Read the passage(s) from the sermon. Keep a focus on key words, repeated phrases or major themes.

### Part 3: Reflect on the Sermon

#### *Introduction*

1. In the beginning of the sermon, Brandon said that his favorite question to ask people is, “What brought you to Citrus County?” What about you? How did you end up in Citrus County?

*For Our Community: Settle in Your Place.*

Jer. 29:5-6

1. Eugene Peterson writes,

The aim of the person of faith is not to be as comfortable as possible but to live as deeply and thoroughly as possible—to deal with the reality of life, discover

truth, create beauty, act out love...The only place you have to be human is where you are right now. The only opportunity you will ever have to live by faith is in the circumstances you are provided this very day: this house you live in, this family you find yourself in, this job you have been given, the weather conditions that prevail at this moment.

Take a moment and reflect on this quote. How does this quote challenge what our culture tells us we should aim for in life? How does this quote challenge your own goals and expectations for your life?

2. Scripture teaches us that as Christians, we are exiles, resident aliens on earth. What does it mean to be a “resident alien” on earth? What are some ways you have experienced the tension of living in this world but having a different home?
3. Brandon said that you can’t settle in a place you don’t love. Do you love Citrus County, or do you find yourself complaining about it?

*For Our Community: Seek the Shalom of Your Place (Vocation, Deeds of Mercy, Prayer).  
Jer. 29:7*

1. In Jeremiah 29:7, we are called to seek the *shalom* of the city. Cornelius Plantinga defines shalom as “The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight...Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be.” What might it look like for Citrus County to experience greater *shalom*? What are some particular areas of brokenness in our county, and how might we better seek our county’s flourishing in these areas?
2. For many of us, our jobs are one of the primary places where we can seek the flourishing of our community. When you think about your work, do you typically view it as a calling from God and an opportunity to love your community? How might viewing your work as a calling transform the way you do your job? If you are

retired, what are some of the avenues God has given you to seek the *shalom* of your community?

3. Israel was sent into exile for forsaking the worship of God and turning to idols. But they also were sent into exile for failing to care for the poor and oppressed. How might these two things—forsaking God and forsaking the poor—be related?
4. In addition to our vocation and deeds of mercy, we are to seek the *shalom* of the city through prayer. Prayer is the work. When you think about seeking the flourishing of Citrus County, is prayer your first response? Why or why not? What might this reveal to us about what we believe about prayer?

*For Our Community: The Plans I have for You.*

Jer. 29:10-11, 31:7-14

1. Jeremiah 29:11 is an oft-quoted verse. Who did Brandon say the “you” refers to? How does this change the way we read and apply this verse?
2. Spoiler alert—as Christians, we are people who know how the story ends. We know that God’s plan for bringing *shalom* to the entire cosmos has been fulfilled in Jesus, the Prince of Shalom (Is. 9:6). We get tastes and glimpses of this now, but we look forward to the fullness of *shalom* in the new heavens and the new earth. How does knowing how the story ends change the way we live in the here and now?

#### **Part 4: Summarize the Message**

How would you summarize the sermon to someone who has never heard it? What are your two or three key takeaways from the message and your discussion?

How does this sermon change your perspective on God? Your own heart? And/or, how to follow Jesus?