

PM Jeremiah 29:1-7

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 December 2020

Preacher: Rev Kenny Macleod

[0 : 00] Everyone's loving to be with you again this evening. It's a privilege of spending the day with you in worship. And we do pray as we come this evening that God will bless our time together in our evening service.

Wednesday evening at 7pm, the prayer meeting and the Bible study will be led by David, David Kenyon. The collection for Christmas presents for those who have attended the Wednesday drop-in totaled £90.

It has been forwarded to Bethany Christian Trust and Pamela Crosby. The drop-in coordinator has written to thank us for our donations.

They will be going towards items for gift bags that will be handed out to those who may not be receiving any other gifts this Christmas. Envelope Scheme 2021 envelopes are available now from the Treasurer for all who currently place their offering in an envelope.

Additional envelopes are available for those who would like to go on the envelope scheme. It encourages a weekly pattern of giving and enables the administration of gift aid for those interested.

[1 : 09] There is a more detailed notice on the notice board. Total estimates for the eradication of dry rot and the roofing work amount to £21,000.

The roofer plans to undertake his work in January which, when completed, will allow the main contract to proceed. Grant applications were made to two trusts.

We are thankful to our Lord for the great encouragement that the both trusts have responded with offers of grants totaling £10,000. Amounting to nearly 50% of the estimates, the grants are payable on certification that the work has been completed satisfactorily.

Kirk Session, as announced previously, is looking to appoint additional elders. A voting form has been made available to all communicant members. Completed voting forms should be placed in the box available on the side table no later than next Sunday.

Next Lord's Day, 11am, 6pm, Mr. Thompson Mackenzie from Denvale Free Church will be with you preaching. So these are the notices. Well, let us come together and worship God.

[2 : 27] We're going to listen and sing Psalm 46a and sing Psalm's version. And we've got verses 1 to 6 recorded. God is our refuge and our strength, our ever-present aid, and therefore though the earth gives way, we will not be afraid.

And this to God's praise. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. You're a prize porque. Amen. Amen. O my Lord, we will not fear The heart and strength As winds and gold ashore Our river, our waters, streams, delight The city of our Lord The holy place in which The Lord, the silent, fixed our Lord

[4:35] God is within His holy place As sins we will not yield For God will come A grateful day To be your help and shield The nations are in history The kingdoms disappear The Lord, we will not fear mighty voice that the

Lord melts with fear. Well let us say come together and pray.

Let us pray. Lord as we enjoy the words of the psalm and as we listen to the praise our Lord our hearts are lifted towards you as we come this evening to worship you.

We thank you that your word tells us that not only do you join your people you lead the praise of the people and Lord tonight as we think of these things to think that God is here with us it is such pure joy for us to rejoice in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the presence of the God who gave his son to come to seek and to save the lost.

The great gospel message is given to us and it is so good to think Lord that this is what we have for a lost world. We think of the kingdoms that the nations of the world may be in disarray but yet tonight there is order, there is calm, there is contentment all things heavenward we know as we look to it we see a God who is on the throne of glory and tonight as we come we know there is one beside you who makes continual intercession for his own children and as we think of these things Lord as we find ourselves in days of uncertainty not knowing what could be around the corner especially with this pandemic and many Lord as we think in our own nation of the United Kingdoms where over 60,000 people have gone into eternity and Lord this is a huge number of people last year at this time it was spoken about in the far east not a word that it would come this way and Lord it came in 2020 and it has disrupted so many things and when we think of life itself where many

[7:50] Lord now are looking at empty places in their homes and families and in their hearts we pray Lord that these days would be days that we would turn to you again and that the nations of the world would do so to look to the God where there is the salvation given to us through the Lord Jesus Christ and as we rejoice in that salvation as we Lord have it help us to share it with others help us not to keep it for ourselves yes we know that our personal salvation will not be taken from us it is a God given gift to us of faith of grace of all that this entails the giving of your own son that will not be taken from us because of where God begins a good work he will continue it until the day of Jesus Christ and tonight Lord when we rest on the promises of God we do think of others friends family members relations people in our congregations who are still strangers to grace who are going and are blinded by the prince of this world thinking that by their own merit that they can stand on judgment day and say to God here I am this is what I present before you and what I think is presentable to a holy God but yet Lord your word tells us that that is not the case you are 100% perfect you are looking for 100% perfection and Lord we cannot offer that so then if that is the case we are in a hopeless state without God in the world but Lord the great salvation of Jesus Christ is that you have given this gift to us and the gift that we have is a gift from God and anything that is from above is a great gift every good and every perfect gift is from above even the material things that we enjoy this day even the rain that we have

Lord where we think of other places where there is drought where there is famine these things are not known in our land yes we know that because of poverty because Lord we do know that people are depending on food banks in these days we do think as well because of the economy and people losing their jobs but this is where Lord we should kick in because of our love for Jesus when we consider the judgment that he speaks of where he said when did we go and visit those in prison when did we clothe and when did we feed people and you say in the judgment and as much as you have done it into the least of these you do it unto me we pray Lord the blessing of the 90 pound that's been given to Bethany Christian Trust that it would be used for your glory we thank you for their organisation and what they do to help others to alleviate pain and to help them to take the next step forward oh Lord we pray that we would look and to see where the needs are in our towns and cities in our villages and to be able to show Christ to them by our very actions so Lord please remember

Dumfries Free Church we do pray for them as they live and minister in this town we see so many round about such a thriving place beautiful place with its river running through its centre and Lord there's so many attractions but surely the main attraction are the people that live here and Lord the need for them to come to know Christ so Lord we pray that they would be a beacon a light in the midst of the darkness so as to be a drawing and to have a drawing power by the preaching of your word that people would flock to hear post-Covid as we look forward again to fellowship in the gospel of Jesus oh that you would open the windows of heaven and that you would pour your blessing down upon us how our nations need it we think Lord of thanking you for the vaccine that's been given but Lord there's so little in the giving of thanks to you hasn't been mentioned as we seem to see it's all thanks and of course we do give thanks for scientists for doctors and those who have prepared all of this but in record time and surely this is your hand as well because as we think of every good and perfect gift is from God oh that our leaders would thank you and that we as a nation

Lord would have a day of thanksgiving again and to think of what God has done oh that we would return to you and give our hearts to you readily and daily that our lives would be an example of what Christ is and what he's done so Lord bless them then in these days of vacancy we thank you for those who are willing to come to preach how quickly it is and how easy it was to fill the rota we thank you for Robert Dale who's here with them able to preach as well helping out we thank you for Norman and thank you for all the work that he does we think of Jack and Avril at this time where there's been illness we think of others who are not being able to come to church and not able to come in the near future either that you would be with them tonight in their circumstances so Lord in all of these things we bring them to you we thank you that we in Downvale are praying for them and how we would love a settlement for them that you would help us

Lord in the future as we put a schedule up to Presbytery and that you would move the hearts of men and women and to help and regards to the giving of funds and also that we would have enough to have a ministry here because we see the importance of it here in Dumfries so all of these things we bring before you tonight and thank you for the privilege of being there at the Moderator and getting to know them and to get to know them better it's lovely Lord that we can bring them to the throne of glory and prayer and to remind you of them and the work that they're doing so Lord bless us then as we continue now in our worship we ask all of this in the name of Jesus Amen our second item of prayer this evening is Psalm 43 and in that Psalm we're going to sing verses 3 I think down to the verse 5 we have to be selective with our verses just what

[14 : 47] William's kindly found for us O send thy light forth on thy truth let them be guides to me and bring me to thine holy hill even where thy dwellings be to God's praise O send thy life forth on thy truth let them be guides to me and bring me God

O God, how then comes down my soul, all should his courage be.

And while in blessing thoughts are now, is quiet in me.

Still trust in God, born into grace, good cause I yet shall have.

He, O my countenance, Israel, I know that all be saved.

[17:13] Amen. Well, if you can turn with me to the Old Testament and the book of Jeremiah, and we're going to read in chapter 29, verses down to the verse mark 14 of the chapter.

So, Jeremiah chapter 29, I'm reading from the beginning of the chapter. Jeremiah 29 at the beginning.

These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

This was after King Jeconiah and the queen, mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the metal workers, had departed from Jerusalem.

The letter was sent by the hand of Elasa, the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah, the son of Hilkiah, whom Sedekiah, king of Judah, sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

[18:40] It said, 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 their 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 its welfare.

For in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream.

For it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name. I did not send them, declares the Lord. For thus says the Lord, When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise, and bring you back to this place.

[19:55] For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call me, and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes, and gather you from all the nations, and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

And so on. May God bless to us the reading of his own holy word. Our next item of praise is the hymn, Speak, O Lord. Speak, O Lord, as we come to you, to receive the fruit of your holy word.

Take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness.

Let the light of Christ may be seen today, in our acts of love, and our deeds of faith.

[21:30] Speak, O Lord, and fulfill with us all your purposes, all your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.

Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see your majestic love and authority.

Words of power that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

[22:39] Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds. Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.

True sun change from the dawn of time, that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace will stand on your promises, and by faith will walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your church is built, and the earth is built with your glory.

Well, if you can turn back to the portion of scripture we read in Jeremiah chapter 29, and for our text this evening, and for our text this evening, to focus on, we're going to look at this passage, but to read again, if you look at verse 7, where it says, 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.

[24 : 11] It's claimed that 4 million people in the world travel and go to live in a city every month. Now that's quite a phenomenal number when you think of it.

People moving to cities and wanting to live in cities. When was that? Year last October, we were given the privilege, we were given a holiday to go to New York for five days, and while they're getting to know the people, speaking to them, and getting to know about the place, someone said to me that 47% of people living in New York were not born in New York.

People have moved there. People are moving all the time. We have seen here in our passage tonight that the children of Israel, the children of Judah, have left the promised land.

They've left Jerusalem, and they're leaving for a time. We're told that they are to be away, in fact, for 70 years. So, we're looking at a generation of people being taken away, young and old taken away.

So you can imagine that those who are older are not going to be going back to Jerusalem. They are going to die, and they're going to be buried in Babylon, where they were taken to.

[25 : 28] And to look at a passage like this, I think it's interesting for ourselves. Looking around, I'm not sure how many of you come from Dumfries.

Can we put a quick hands up for anyone who was born in Dumfries? One, two, three, four, five. Okay, five, that's good.

But everyone else has been on the move, and we've come, and you've come to settle down here. So, when we look at a passage like this, we see that God has taken the children of Judah away from Jerusalem.

He's taken them to Babylon. What's it going to be like for them? Because it is God and His providence that's brought you here to live in Dumfries for whatever reason, possibly work is work that has brought you here.

And what does it mean then for you in the fact that you are here? What does God expect you to do when you live in Dumfries? And when God does this, He does so in His own purpose.

[26 : 33] It is His own plan. This is how He saw it. This is how He planned it. That this is where you would be. This would be your church. And Dumfries is the place that you call home.

Why did God take the children of Israel or the children of Judah into exile? Well, you see that God at the very beginning made a covenant. God makes covenants.

We saw today the covenant that we have as parents, Christian parents with their children. They come to baptize their children. This is what we believe the covenant that God has and has made for us.

And we live within the regulations of that covenant by bringing up the children in the fear and abomination of the Lord. But in the Old Testament as we see, God made a covenant with the children of Israel.

And as any covenant, it has a legal code. And in their case, the legal code was God's law, which was given to Moses on Mount Sinai for Israel.

[27 : 36] There are responsibilities in the covenant for both sides, for God and also for the children of Israel. And the promise for the children of Israel was that if they were obedient to the covenant of God, there would be blessings in regards to prosperity, health, and safety.

You obey and I will bless you, God is saying. But there was also this, if they disobeyed, then there was a curse. There were curses in the covenant in regards to their disobedience.

And this promise was there would be poverty, there would be sickness, there would be terror. You can read about that in Deuteronomy and chapter 28. Well, as we know, Israel and Judah threw many evil kings.

They were up and down in regards to their faith to God. If the king was someone who was obedient to God, he then would influence the people.

But if not, he brought the people down with him. So they worshipped other gods. They married foreign men and women and things that were in the law that was contrary to the law they were doing.

[28 : 52] So, God eventually comes and he punishes them by taking them from the promised land and takes them into exile.

God promised that he would be with Israel. This was part of the covenant promise. I will be with you in the promised land. But now, they're going to be taken away to Babylon.

Now, we're looking at Judah. Previous to this, the northern tribes were taken away by the Assyrians previous to this. And what is interesting in regards to that that we know that they never came back.

Remember, it was Judah and it was those who were in Babylon. They were the ones that came back from the exile. But the ones who went into Assyria, they just dispersed into the world.

Apart from some that the Assyrians put back and they intermarried with a few Jews that were left to go over, they became known as the Samaritans. That is why, you see, the Jews didn't like them because they saw the Samaritans as a mixed race.

[29 : 57] So, they were enemies from the word go. But what about the timeline in regards to Judah? Well, roughly, roughly as we think and scholars tell us, round about 605 BC, that was the turning point in history where the Assyrians fell to the Babylonians.

It was then that there was the first deportation of Jews where they carried off to Babylon. And it was then that scholars tell us that it was round about then that Daniel and his friends were carried off.

Secondly, in 597, the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem and there we are told that Ezekiel, the prophet, was deported and others with him.

And then, finally, in 586, we have the fall of Jerusalem. Yes, a remnant would have been left behind. There always is. But the rest were taken into the foreign land and into the city of Babylon.

So, what do we have here then? What is Jeremiah doing here and writing to the people who are in exile? What's he saying to them? Well, he's writing to the survivors, to the elders of the exile as we see in verse 1.

[31 : 13] These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles and to the priests the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Now, can you imagine? Can you imagine receiving this letter and you've been dragged away from your home and you've been taken to a place where you don't want to be in?

Now, that's different to the folk who have moved to Dumfries. This is your choice. You came here. You're happy with that. But when you're drawn away against your will, I'm sure there would have been a sense of rebellion amongst the people in this.

I'm not going to conform to these people. They dragged us away from our own place. And even God seems to have forgotten us. And even in God's promise, he said that he would only be in the promised land.

God is not going to be here. So, he's not going to be in a foreign city. So, that means I'm just going to do my own thing. in this situation and just get on with my life until, if I can, escape and get back home.

[32 : 26] Now, the point is this. Not all Judah was apostate to God. There were some believers, and they are the ones that Jeremiah is writing to. And Jeremiah, the prophet, is the spokesman of God.

He wrote what God wanted him to write and tell the people. Now, there was false prophets, and we read about them here as well. Do you know, they were saying, as we read Jeremiah, in the whole of Jeremiah, they were saying, listen, we're only going to be here for two years.

Get through these two years, and we'll be away, and that will be us going back home. Surely, we can cope for that length of time. But that wasn't the case at all.

Look at verses 8 down to 10. So, they were giving them false hope.

this is what they were doing. Gene, the people, you're only going to be here for a couple of years. But that is not what God said. And it's so important for us to read and to see what God is saying.

[33 : 48] As we look at our own situation in life, and what is God saying to us here? Why is this pandemic in the world? What is God saying to us?

Remember that judgment begins in the house of God. God. And that is why we have to make a review. We have to review these things and think of them and see what God is saying to us.

So, the question here is, how can the Jews maintain a relationship with God in the current circumstances in a foreign land? Think about it.

The temple is behind them. They can't do their sacrifices and the way they worshipped anymore. They can't make sacrifices in Babylon. They won't be allowed to do that.

So, that is all behind them. So, if they're to worship God in a way, they're going to have to find other ways of meeting with God. Or, they're going to have to get out of this place as fast as possible.

[34 : 49] But God said, no, you're going to be here for 70 years. Now, I hope that we're not going to have this pandemic about us for any length of time. We're looking that these vaccines are God-given and that we will see a way out of this in 2021.

It certainly is our prayer for that. But they must have questioned, is God in Babylon when we cannot do the things we used to be able to do?

And maybe sometimes in our own despondency now, we're thinking, well, you know, 2020, we weren't able to have the Lord's Supper. But you know, really, folk were saying, that's terrible, we should make every means of doing these things.

But yet, we're listening to what the government's been saying to us, what we're allowed to do, we're scared of this virus, that people will catch it, we have to be careful. And as I look at this and thought, Israel, you're not going to, Judah, you're not going to be able to make sacrifices for the 70 years that you are going to be there.

But you see, it was God that took them there. So if God took them there, God can cope with these things. Do you know, sometimes we seem to put God in our boxes and thinking that God can't cope with this.

[36 : 12] God is so much bigger than we are. And God can cope with the fact that the pandemic would not allow us to sit at the Lord and say, of course we miss these things and there's way around it and we're looking at this in the future for 2021.

But meantime, let us keep our eyes focused on God and think, well, if God knows about this pandemic, which he does, he's right in the midst of it, then God is okay with these things and help us keep on going with God in these things.

You see, God gets Jeremiah to send them a letter to tell them what to do. And this is so fitting for us in our day as well because God loves Dumfries.

You can guarantee that. He loves Dumfries. He loves the people of Dumfries and he would love the people of Dumfries come to faith. it is his wish that this was.

How is that going to happen? Well, notice what he's saying here. The first thing we notice, it is that it was God who sent them into the exile. So, I'm not saying you're in exile in Dumfries, but it is God who sent you here for a purpose.

[37 : 29] Look at verse 4. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

In the NIV, it says, it says the words, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

It's as if I carried you there. It is my purpose for you to be going through what you are going through right now. and you know, it is God's purpose for us to have experienced 2020 for a reason.

He is speaking to us individually. He's speaking to us as churches. He's speaking to us as a nation in these things. It's God's intention for this to happen.

But then notice what he says in verse 5. Build houses and live in them. Hold on a minute. We'll build tents because we don't want to live here.

[38 : 37] But it's not what God said. I want you to build houses because you're going to be here for a time. You are going to have to settle down here.

Nothing is going to happen in a hurry. You were carried here for a reason and I'm going to keep you here for a reason. What should give them contentment about this?

Contentment about this is that God says build a house. Don't put a tent up. I want you to build a house in Babylon.

He has not forgotten them. He's not forgotten them. No, this is God saying this to them. Just as I was with you in Jerusalem, I am going to be with you as well in Babylon.

I will be here. Now in many ways the children of Judah would not have thought that this was the case. No, we left God behind. Some folk think that we've left God behind in the past in the United Kingdom.

[39 : 40] I was listening the other day John thinking, thinking, oh, we've left God behind.

But you know, God is still here. God is in the 2020s here in the United Kingdom and he has a remnant of his people all over the place as he has a remnant here tonight.

And you know, what is going to happen is what God wants to happen here and he wants to use his people to take the gospel but this is your church so please settle feel settled I'm sure you are settled in the free church but you know we're never settled and we'll see that in a moment there's a reason for we need to keep on working as God is wanting we pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven now when we do that we are praying Lord if I'm wanting if I'm not obedient to your will so I need you to come and to help me to be obedient to you so are we content with our Lord right now of course we are because I'm sure you fellowship with one another together but you're wanting more you're wanting more and we'll see how that works the one who was still the people who were still in

Jerusalem the ones they left behind you know they were actually worse off than the ones that were carried off in Babylon at least the folk in Babylon had food they had everything we'll see that in a minute but the poor folk that were left in Jerusalem they were left in poverty they were always under threat and they were under the threat of the sword and terror they were all alone but notice what happens here build houses and live in them plant gardens and eat their produce obviously they weren't given much land to work with but they were given gardens we are told you see we're fortunate we're fortunate if we do have a garden I don't know if there's gardens there I was up with Norman one day at the manse and we were looking around the manse and while we were out in the garden what

I noticed was he gave us an opportunity to speak to speak to the lady next door Norman introduced me to her and we spoke about the flowers and things and where do you come from it is a great opportunity to speak to others when we're out in our gardens and these things and notice what God says to them build houses and live in them plant gardens and eat of their produce I think and I'm sure you do too think it is good stewardship to have a nice garden I remember when we came to our house in Glasgow I'm not saying anything about the previous folk over there but when I looked beyond the fence outside where there's houses looking down onto it it was like an absolute wilderness the ground and the fence wasn't painted so I'm not boasting in any way here but when I saw that this is a mess and people are looking at that and say who lives in that house so what do you need to do you need to paint the fence you need to cut the grass and you know the amazing thing was this the amount of because we were looking on to that and it was awful this is a man's

[44 : 05] Christian people live there and their garden was an absolute tip what kind of witness is that what is God saying to the people build houses and live there plant gardens and eat of their well if you're going to eat of their produce it has to be a good garden it is important well at the pandemic during the first lockdown the best place for me to meet anyone was doing this stripper land as I did it with my moor I got to meet Christopher and Lorraine I got to meet Colin and his wife Mary I got to meet Jim and Anne the neighbours I would never have met if it wasn't for my garden and every one of them knew that I was a preacher because of our conversation and speaking to them spoke to them about the gospel giving us opportunities what about the Babylonians did they love gardens what about the hanging gardens of

Babylon of course they loved gardens so what does God do you plant your gardens this is going to be an opportunity to be able to speak to your neighbours where did you get these beautiful flowers and speak to them about all of these things because all of these things are important well some rebelled against the Babylonians and they were carried off in chains and imprisoned as we are told in the Bible but others who behaved what did they do they had liberty and they were given gardens notice verse 6 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 now this meant that they had to marry their own kind this wasn't

Babylonians that they were to marry this was their own kind because this is from God you see and God does not contradict himself because in his law he said that they are to marry each other not foreigners and this is important you see because the danger that was one of the reasons that Israel were taken into exile because they married other foreigners foreign people and people who did not know God and before long they themselves were dragged into apostasy and worship of other gods so what happens here we're told that they had to grow numerically do numbers matter to God of course they do of course they matter to God you see what does numbers mean numbers means strength we become stronger when there's people here in any given time you think of a generation of 70 years of what this is you have three or four generations within that period of time so what do you have say if there was three in this period of 70 years what does

God say to them I want you to grow so those so those who received his word were baptized and they were added that day around three thousand souls again in

Acts 2 47 the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved so what is God saying to us increase in number do not decrease and the Abrahamic covenant was similar he was asked to increase and now that is being transferred here notice what it says that they may be sons and daughters in verse 6 multiply there and do not decrease God is looking to the future I want you to consolidate I want you to have children and I want you to grow I want you to grow to increase and not to decrease well wasn't that the same thing that happened where Pharaoh got worried in Egypt because they said that the Hebrew women were having so many children and it became a worry that there would be more of them than us if we are obedient to

[50 : 09] God in exile then God will increase his church but then notice in verse 7 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 you will find your welfare we know that Babylon doesn't give us good connotations in regards to a city but what is God saying to his people I want you to pray for that city I want you to pray for Glasgow I want you to pray for Dempries pray where I have placed you the NIV again seek the peace and the prosperity of the city they are not to have a bad attitude oh see this place it's just awful I hate living here I don't like its people and everything that is not what God is saying seek the peace and pray for it pray for it daily and through it notice what it says through it you will find your welfare it means that we will find our peace by praying for where we stay well they were to learn of course they were to learn of

God's judgment on them to be there in the first place it was their fault that they were there but they were to promote the city's interest promote the city's interest they are to show the same concern to Babylon as Jerusalem when they lived there notice what it says in verse 7 as we read it pray to the Lord on its behalf this is more than survival isn't it this is more than survival more than getting through the 70 years this is God saying no I want you to pray for the city and for your own welfare for the city and yours this is God's people praying through them there would be a blessing in Babylon through them there would be a blessing in Babylon and then

God gives the people the most beautiful promise that we have in verses 10 and 11 for this says the Lord when 70 years are completed for Babylon I will visit you and I will fulfill to you my promise he's going to visit them in a special way that doesn't mean that he wasn't with them he was with them all the time I will visit you and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place for I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a future and a hope you see in God's time it's all in God's timing and what do we do we keep on being faithful in the work that God has given us to do and to say and in his time he's going to visit in a special way and he's going to bring them time we get on with the business of doing church in a

God honouring way we build houses we have God honouring gardens we increase in number and we pray for the prosperity of where we live the city in this instance Babylon isn't that what God wants us to do here in Dumfries and for us in Glasgow or wherever we stay God does have a plan God has a plan for Dumfries plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a future and a hope where do we have this of course we have it in the Lord Jesus Christ don't we we have been blessed you know incredible I know that the situation with your own church building and sometimes sometimes I think it's good exercise to hold on to these things lightly and of course we look after them we care for them because they're like the garden they're like the garden that

God wants us to look after and we can worry and think this place has fallen apart is needing 21,000 to sort but through one man at Presbytery saying to Norman did you think of applying to these two trusts by one conversation we got 10,000 pounds isn't that amazing what God is doing do you think God is not interested with Dumfries of course he is there are souls here to be one for Jesus you folk need to be fed with the gospel of Jesus so that you grow in your faith and people to be saved of course he is interested what does God then expect of us when we see him giving the one hand in giving you always receive now that's what's so incredible that we've seen that time and time in

[55 : 38] God's providence what does Paul say in Romans 12:1 he says this I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship or as another version says which is your reasonable service this is what God expects of us so the question is what can we do what can we do for Jesus this week in Dumfries what can I do for Jesus this week in Glasgow well a good place to start would be to pray to the Lord on its behalf pray for Dumfries pray that God would come in his power and come and show you what he means that he means business here for people because he's placed you here for a reason he's got you in this church for a reason and he speaks to the exiles here of a future and a hope we should be encouraged by

God's word and we should be moving forward by it and strengthened by it and leaving all our burdens with him and when we do that he is the one that sustains us yes there were 70 years or so in Jerusalem in Babylon and the most amazing thing is how God moved Cyrus to ask the question should you not want to go back to where you come from and from all of that the movement again of some moving back where the temple was once more built and the sacrifices of the children of Israel were made and never again in their history did they worship other gods they got in the 70 years that they were there they got that out of their system and you know what is amazing about God is this we've been looking at for the last

I don't know five or six weeks we started thinking of looking at Isaiah and the suffering servant that's promised in Isaiah we were going to start in chapter 40 and we are still in chapter 40 because there's so much in it because in the previous chapter there Isaiah warned Hezekiah that they were going to be carried off into Babylon but in the very next chapter this is what he begins with comfort comfort my people says your God speaks tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that her warfare has ended that her iniquity is pardoned that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins this is a hundred years before they went into exile but God is giving them words of comfort before they go oh yes you're going into exile but I'm speaking to you words of comfort you are not going alone you are going to go with me

I will go with you my voice is starting to go so on these thoughts please be encouraged I'm certainly encouraged for you and just the little things the little things a little thing of ten thousand pounds we are so thankful to the Lord for it was there all the time but it took the Lord's people to get it into motion we could have said we'll never get it what's the point send that email and they can refuse us but you know when it comes you see God's hand in it and please as well as I'm sure you are aren't we seeing God's hand in this vaccine that's been found in less than a year they tell us that it takes nine ten years to find a vaccine there's some folk out there saying that don't believe it don't take it this is all

Bill Gates that's doing this I never heard anything so ridiculous what's it going to do with Bill Gates this has got to do with God and God wanting us to live a life so that we can seek the welfare of Dumfries and see it growing for Christ and ourselves growing too in the Lord so please be encouraged you're in good hands you're in God's hands and that's what counts may God bless to us these poems well our closing item of praise is Psalm 107 that speaks to us of God's blessing on north south east and west it's in the Scottish Psalter where it says the words that we have there and gathered he gathered them out of their lands from north south east and west they strayed into desert pathless ways no city found to rest for thirst and hunger in their face their soul when straits then pressed they cried unto the Lord and he then frees from their distress then also in a way to walk that right as he did guide that they might to a city go wherein they might abide the city that they were to abide in was Babylon or you couldn't write it you couldn't write it but God did and God was there with them may God bless the praising of his word and and father then out of the last from our side east and west i foot j peace me some

[62:18] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Well, we'll close with a benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore. Amen.

in it. Hey. Yeah. Oh.

[64:02] Thank you.