**Small Group Study Guide**

God’s People in Tough Times |

From Sunday March 15, 2020

**Appetizer:**

**Question:** This has been an unprecedented time in our church, in our country, and in our world. Sunday services were cancelled and the sermon was preached using online mediums. In a social culture, we have become an introverts dream and an extroverts nightmare, encouraged to stay away from large groups and stick to your home.

These are realities that we didn’t anticipate happening. They can bring out the worst in humanity (hording and panic) and can bring out the best (community and caring for one another.

**Share a time when you were placed in a situation outside of your control. What did you and the people around you do to normalize life? What was the experience like?**

**A couple questions from the passage:**

Read Jeremiah 29:1-13. **What stands out to you in the passage?** What are some of your initial observations?

**What do you think life was like for an Israelite in Babylon? What would be some of their biggest concerns? Why do you think Jeremiah’s advice would have sounded odd to them?**

**Main Course:**

When Jeff reflected on the passage, he suggested that Jeremiah is asking the people of God to “bloom where they are planted.” In other words, wherever we find ourselves in life, we set down roots and establish a foundation.

**Question:** What are some of the challenges to “blooming where you are planted” when it comes to being in a place you didn’t choose to be?

The second point that Jeff saw in the passage was this idea of “embracing the common good.” It came out of Jeremiah 29:7. What is the common good? What does it mean for Christians to embrace the common good? What are some of the challenges when it comes to embracing the common good?

Sometimes Christians get anxious around the language of the common good because they are concerned about being separate from the world and not wanting to water down the gospel. However, the Scriptures are explicit when it comes to the gospel being good news for humanity as a whole. **How can being united with the community at this time be good for the gospel?**

**Dessert:**

**Challenge:**

We live in a relationally dysfunctional world, and yet we have this amazing gift of being more connected than at any other time in history. Brainstorm ways that you as a group can:

1. Remain connected during this current crisis.

2. Make a different in the communities of the Okanagan.

Choose one thing that you will do as a group and commit to it.

Remember to close with prayer, asking God to pull back the spread of the virus, draw us closer together, and open up doors for us as Christians to represent Jesus well.