

Love Your Country and Seek the Kingdom

Text: Jeremiah 29:4–7

Bottom Line:

Christian patriotism is love of neighbor on a national scale.

Key Idea:

America is not our ultimate home, but it is our present assignment. God's people are called to love the place where He has put them without worshiping it, and to critique what is broken without despising it.

READ

Read **Jeremiah 29:4–7** aloud.

God's people are in exile in Babylon. They are not home, and Babylon does not share their values or worship their God. Yet God does not tell them to withdraw, assimilate, or take over. He tells them to build, plant, multiply, seek the peace and prosperity of the city, and pray for it.

Read also:

Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 2:11–17; 1 Timothy 2:1–2; Mark 12:30–31

DISCUSS

1. When you think about America right now, what rises up first in you: gratitude, grief, anger, hope, cynicism, pride, concern, or something else?
 2. The sermon says Christians are called neither to worship the nation nor despise it. Which temptation feels stronger in our culture today?
 3. Jeremiah 29 was written to people living in a place that was not their ultimate home. How does that help us think about faithful citizenship today?
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COME AND SEE

God Places His People on Purpose

The exiles were in Babylon because God had allowed them to be there. Their location was not accidental. In a similar way, Acts 17 teaches that God marks out the times and places where people live so they might seek Him.

See also: **Acts 17:26–27; Esther 4:14; Matthew 5:13–16**

God Gives His People a Third Way

In exile, Israel could have assimilated into Babylon or withdrawn in bitterness from Babylon. God gives them a better way: faithful presence. Build houses. Plant gardens. Raise families. Seek the city's shalom. Pray for it.

See also: **Daniel 1:8; Daniel 6:10; John 17:15–18**

Shalom Means More Than Peace

Jeremiah 29:7 says to seek the “peace and prosperity” of the city. The Hebrew idea is **shalom**: wholeness, flourishing, justice, health, right relationship, and life as God intended it. To seek shalom is to work for the good of our neighbors.

See also: **Isaiah 58:6–12; Micah 6:8; Luke 10:25–37**

FOLLOW ME

1. Name What's Good

The sermon begins with a rhythm of gratitude and prayer: name what is good and ask God for what is needed.

- What are you genuinely grateful for in this country?
- What freedoms, opportunities, protections, people, or ideals do you thank God for?
- How can gratitude keep you from becoming cynical?

Practice:

Name three things you are grateful for in your country, community, and neighborhood.

2. Ask God for What's Needed

Christian gratitude should also be truthful. We do not have to pretend everything is right in order to give thanks.

- What burdens you most about our nation right now?
- Where do you see injustice, fear, division, loneliness, idolatry, or despair?

- How can you lament what is broken without becoming bitter or hopeless?

Prayer Prompt:

“Lord, thank You for _____ . Please bring healing to _____.”

3. Build, Don't Just Consume

God tells the exiles, “Build houses and settle down.”

- Where are you tempted to treat your city or country like a hotel: using it, consuming from it, but not investing in it?
- What would it look like to “unpack your boxes” where God has placed you?
- How can you make your neighborhood, workplace, school, or church better than it was when you arrived?

4. Plant Gardens, Not Grievances

Planting a garden is slow, hopeful, ordinary faithfulness.

- What are you currently planting with your words, habits, time, and influence?
- Are you planting patience, truth, hospitality, mercy, beauty, and courage?
- Or are you mostly planting criticism, fear, suspicion, and complaint?

Reflect:

What is one small act of faithfulness that could add to the spiritual soil around you this week?

5. Seek the Shalom of the City

God says, “If it prospers, you too will prosper.”

- How is your good connected to your neighbor's good?
- Who is included when Jesus says, “Love your neighbor as yourself”?
- What would it mean to seek the flourishing of people who do not share your politics, religion, values, or background?

Ask:

Where is something broken near me, and what resource has God given me to bring repair?

6. Pray for the Nation

Prayer keeps patriotism from becoming idolatry and keeps critique from becoming contempt.

- How often do you pray for your country compared to how often you criticize it? Do you pray for leaders you did not vote for?
- How might prayer reshape your tone, your activism, your grief, and your hope?

GO AND BE

This week, practice faithful citizenship as kingdom people.

Name what's good.

Thank God for three specific gifts you have received through this country or community.

Ask for what's needed.

Pray for one area of brokenness in our nation, city, or neighborhood.

Seek shalom.

Take one concrete action for the good of your neighbor: encourage, serve, welcome, give, listen, repair, vote, volunteer, or pray with someone.

Live for the King.

Remember: God is Father. Christ is King. Heaven is home. The nations are real, but they are not final.