

Let your light shine before others

Jeremia 29:1-14

- Word of welcome
- Song
- Intercession prayer
- Votum (Opening prayer): Psalm 122
- Blessing
- Hymn of praise: Lied 207: 1, 4, 5
- Law: Luke 18: 9-14
- Confession of sin: Song 235: 1-2
- Word of grace
- Confession of faith: Nicea
- Song: 286
- Children sermon
- Offerings
- Prayer
- Scripture reading: Jeremia 29:1-14
- Sermon
- Prayer
- Song: 488:1-4
- Blessing
- Amen

How does one live in a post Christian world, in 2021? How do you, as a Christian, live in a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to Christians? How do you make your light shine before the people? It is very easy to sit under a stone in Babylon and say, "Where is everything going?" It is very easy to long with nostalgia for how

everything once was. It is very easy to complain about what is all wrong. But this is not the message that the Lord is sending to the Jews in Babylon through the mouth of Jeremiah. Jeremiah sent a letter to Babylon to the believers there with what the Lord had revealed to them. And the letter is absolutely shocking. In Babylon, the Lord says Christians do good. They make themselves at home and build and live and work there. Yes, they resist the culture there but also love self-sacrificially. "Thus saith the Lord ... Build houses and inhabit them, plant gardens and eat the fruits thereof ... Promote the prosperity of the city ... and pray to the Lord for the city."

For those of us who grew up in 'Jerusalem', it is very difficult to be Christians in Babylon. That is why the message of the Lord is so hard to hear. That's why we complain so much. We complain no one comes to church. We complain that the malls are so full on Sundays. We complain about the young people who just no longer show any interest in religion. However, the Lord brings the believers in Babylon to other insights. We too must open our eyes and realize that we are staying in Babylon and that it will not help to keep complaining that things are no longer as they once were. It is the Lord who has placed us here and it is here that we must let our light shine, where we as foreigners must follow in Christ's footsteps.