



DATE	June 5, 2016
SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	Plans to Prosper
SERIES	The Bible is full of wisdom, and many of us have favorite verses. But many of the sayings hanging on our walls and wrapped around our coffee cups are taken out of context. They may inspire or encourage us, but their meaning is distorted. Let's clarify some of the most misused verses in the Bible.

INTRODUCTION: Pastor David said that the reason for this series is to read and understand Scripture. As a group, spend a moment to re-read Jeremiah 29:1-14.

1. Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." How have you understood this verse in your life? Have you ever memorized it? Try reading it in various versions. In what ways can it be taken out of context?
2. Discuss the difference between a "promise" and a "principle." How can we discern whether a word from God is specific (for a certain group of people) or general (for all)?
3. Were the terms "Exegesis" and "Eisegesis" new to you? What experience or thoughts do you have with "reading in" rather than "pulling out" meaning from the Bible? Discuss Jeremiah 29:11 in light of these two ways of studying scripture. In what ways did the historical context given in the sermon change or add to your understanding of this familiar passage?
4. What was your reaction to Pastor David's point that we are living in exile? Have you ever thought about the church being exiled from Eden?
5. What principles of God's PLAN spoke to you most specifically? Choose one or more to share.
 - a. Tell about a time when God's plan interrupted yours. How did you respond? What happens in your walk with God when His plans do not coincide with yours?
 - b. The principle in vv. 5 & 6 is to permeate, to "settle into" the culture where we have been placed. Discuss the following: to assimilate vs. to isolate (Jeremiah 28). What meaning can you draw out of these passages?
 - c. In what ways do you help the culture and/or individuals around you to flourish?
 - d. Share about a time when you experienced God's protection in a time of exile.
 - e. We can have hope in our circumstances. Re-read vv. 12-14. In your life, how do you seek God, know that He listens to you, and find Him? Can you give examples?
 - f. God's plan has a future that will bring us home. We cannot see the future, but we can reflect on the past. How has God proven this principle to be true in your life?

Pastor David concluded, "God is always up to something when we are in exile." What is He up to in your life?