



small groups

Discussion Guide



Blessed Are the Placemakers

Jeremiah 29.1-7

Ice Breaker

(5 minutes)

Andy told a story about Vedran Smajlovic, a cellist of the Sarajevo Opera. Do you have any hidden musical talents?

Lesson Review

(40 minutes)

Andy began his sermon by taking us back to the beginning of the Bible, noting how sin's entrance into paradise vandalized shalom, and that the wholeness and harmony we were created to enjoy with God and with each other was fundamentally violated. Andy also noted God's redemptive plan to restore shalom through Jesus, and continued by the people of God as they seek to become shalom placemakers. Andy said, "Placemakers are people called by God to experience His grace and then transform a place by sharing it—that's who Israel was, and that's who we are as believers... becoming a placemaker - a biblical "good neighbor" requires sacrifice, service, and selflessness."

Discuss

- What do you think about the idea of being a “placemaker”?
- Can you give examples of sacrifice, service and selflessness that being a “placemaker” requires?
- Why do you think it is hard for people to do this today, specifically as it relates to being a good neighbor?

The church is by its nature an embedded community, a community that embodies the presence of Christ in the world. Andy said that our posture in this world should not be to isolate, to escalate, or to assimilate. Rather we are called to seek shalom, to live out the gospel in a way that people see that we're blessed, living "question-posing lives" among the pagans. Here is the quote Andy used from Barry Jones' book:

“Live question-posing lives – of integrity, compassion and justice “among the pagans” in such a way those lives are noticed. Think of the places we live and the people who live there as our own personal parish, the place God has planted us and the people he’s called us to love. The neighbors who live in closest proximity to us are usually not people we’ve chosen, but they are ‘those who have been given to us’ and ‘those to whom we have been given’”

– Barry Jones, *Dwell*

Read Jeremiah 29.1-7 and 1 Peter 2.11, then Discuss

- How do you think the recipients of Jeremiah’s letter reacted when they were told to seek the shalom of the city they found themselves in exile in?
- What was the posture the prophet Jeremiah was calling exiled Israel to take up?
- Can you give a story of someone who lives/lived a "question posing life" that intrigued you and encouraged your faith journey?

Andy ended his sermon by talking about third places, which he said are “unique opportunities for missionally minded people to do life in the proximity of others.” Andy quoted Lance Ford and Brad Brisco when talking about third places.

“A third place is a public setting that hosts regular, voluntary and informal gatherings of people. It is a place to relax. It is a place where people enjoy visiting. Third places provide the opportunity to know and be known. They are place where people like to hang out”

– Lance Ford and Brad Brisco

Discuss

- What do you think about the idea of having a third place?
- What are the benefits and challenges of having a third place?

Application

(15 minutes)

Andy offered these two points as application: (1) Identify the places you live, work and play; (2) Ask God to help you become a placemaker.

- Do you have a third place that Andy talked about? Why or why not? How can you serve the needs in those third places?
- Is there a third place that your small group can adopt?
- Andy challenged each IBCer to spend one hour at your third place observing. Then, ask God to help you become a placemaker who transforms that space.