

流亡（被擄）中的盼望

耶利米書 29:1, 4-7

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「家」（homeplace）互咱想到聯想到人和地，[Frederick Buechner](#) 的書 *Longing for Home*，講到「家」的了解：同時是咱出生的所在，以及咱終極的目的地。家有兩層的意義：一個是我記得的家；另外是夢中的家。

咱住在一個無家（homeless）的世代裡……無家可歸，四處隴是家，但是無一位真正可以講是家。咱活在一個充滿難民的世代……[台裔美國藝術家 Yu-Wen Wu](#) 的創作 *遷移 Migration*，指出：人口遷移將是本世紀最大、決定性問題。流離失所（displace）的人數不斷破紀錄。多多人繼續越界並遷移，尋找安全和更好的生活。

一種是戰爭的難民。還有另一種，是自然災害造成的難民……

咱常常認認為災難沒發生在咱，咱沒睹到大的風颳、地動、火災、沒有戰爭。很多人認為自己的安全是靠自己的能力得到的。想像上帝是咱的保險，上帝和咱同在。總是，事實上，咱住在一個很脆弱的自然環境裡。

今仔日所讀的耶利米書29章的經文，是為住在這兩種情形的人所寫的：（一）倚起在放逐、流亡的命運裡的人；（二）以及有的還在猶大自己的土地的人。先知互您虛假的盼望和平安，很快會回歸，用聖殿掛保證，……總是，耶利米講：毋倘相信聽假先知所講的白賊……耶利米講：「您欲在此七十年……您著起厝、來倚起，作園來食伊的果子；娶某來生子，生兒育女，定居吧……在你流亡中，貢獻倚起的土地。」

咱定居在這，心內猶原渴望完滿，感覺這個完滿才是「真正的家」、才是終極的目的地……在上帝裡面的活命，咱才有真正的平安。是咱真正的家鄉。

基督講：「我換新萬物！」一切都換新，全新的世界。這是家鄉。總是，在到彼以前，咱猶住在流亡中間。

舊約學者 Walter Brueggemann 認為住在流亡的地的人有三個選擇：1. 絕望，2. 同化，3. 重新想像。第三才是耶利米對猶大的人講的，和

所倚起的所在作伙開創一個有希望的團體，和這個團體作伙在上帝裡找到家。

這是一個重新想像（reimagine）的時刻。希望和重新想像，甚至在咱被抓的階段，咱猶原欲開花、繁榮。分享在被抓旅程中的希望，這對我個人的意義是什麼？

1. 認出這是恩賜的空間。咱當分享。分享咱所得到的，好好管理這個團體的資源，創造一個親像您對待我佷呢的一個好款待的空間。
2. 將這個時刻看作是值得慶祝的時間。咱在這個等候的期間，彼此好款待，充電，迎接異象，找到勇氣的空間。
3. 創造一個青翠的地球。地球本身是難民，地球在流亡被抓中……咱欲佷怎創造一個青翠和美的地球、回饋大地？

咱能倘重新想像，在流亡中找到幸福和繁榮嗎？

雖然沒一個所在是安全的，總是，最美和最圓滿的境界就是上帝和咱相及同在。在夏甲和利百加的故事，夏甲講：我一世人隴活在流亡中，我是人口販的受害者、我受虐待、後來受放捨，總是，當咱看到沒任何一個所在是安全的時準，上帝有看到咱。

Hope in the Exile
Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

"Home" brings people and places to mind. Frederick Buechner's book, *Longing for Home*, talks about "home" as the place where we are born, and our ultimate final destination. Home has two meanings: one is the home we remember; the other is the home of our dreams.

For many people today, we are living in a homeless era. Being homeless is when you live everywhere, but you cannot really call anyplace home. Taiwanese-American artist Yu-Wen Wu, in her art project entitled "Migration," presents migration as the decisive issue of this century. The number of displaced people around the globe continues to break historical records. Millions of people continue to cross borders, migrating to find a safer and better life.

Many of these are war refugees, others are fleeing natural disasters.

For us who live in relatively safe environments, this fact can be easily forgotten. We don't think that disasters are not likely to hit us. We probably won't ever experience devastating Hurricanes, earthquakes, forest fires, or war in our neighborhoods. In our security we imagine that our lives are basically under control—our own control—and our security is in our own hands. Of course, we believe in a God who is always with us, but this belief can easily become like an insurance policy that we doubt we will ever need until the future. We have things under control ourselves, but it is nice to know God is there as a backup when we need some extra help. Homeless people, displaced people, cannot have such illusions. We shouldn't either. In fact, we all live in a very fragile environment.

Today's text, Jeremiah 29, was written in a time of terrible disaster: the violent conquest of Judah by the Babylonians and the apparent end of the Israelite people. He wrote both for those who were carried away into exile, and for those who remained in the now conquered Judah. There were false prophet's proclaiming that the exiles would soon return, and life would return to normal, but Jeremiah said: don't listen to the false prophets' lies. Jeremiah told the people that the exile would be seventy years. They needed to accept reality and go about adjusting to life outside their homeland. They should build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat the produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters... and seek the welfare of the city where God had sent them. Jeremiah knew it was pointless to look back to a past that was gone.

The exiles of Judah who settled in Babylon followed the advice of Jeremiah, but they looked ahead to a home in the future: Their hearts could never feel completely at home in Babylon, so they looked to God who alone could carry them to their real home, the place of ultimate fulfillment. Hope in God and a future home gave them the faith to survive their exile in this world.

Our actual home, our real security, our only peace is found by sharing in the life of God. Day by day, God is our home and God our ultimate destination. Christ tells us not to look backward, not to live in the past and not put earthly homes ahead of our

allegiance to him. "Behold, I make all things new!" A new world that is now in the making but that will be realized fully only in the future, that is our true home

For now, however, we live in the midst of the exile. Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann believes that people living in exile have three choices: 1) Despair; 2) Assimilate; 3) Reimagine the future. The prophet Jeremiah counseled the third option. He told the exiles of Judah to create a new community, and follow in faith the God who would build for them a new home.

This is a moment of reimagination. We must hope, not despair, and we must re-imagine our future. What does it mean for us to share hope as people who journey in exile?

1. Recognize that this is a gifted space: God has given us gifts to share with others, to create a space of hospitality where people can feel welcomed and safe. We can use our gifts for the welfare of the city where God has planted us.
2. Think of this moment as a time worth celebrating. During this waiting period, we rejoice together and lift each other up, grateful to God who has given us friends in the exile who are on the journey with us.
3. Work to Create a verdant earth. The earth itself is a refugee. The bible talks of God's plans to renew and restore a new earth. How can we who journey in exile be part of renewing and restoring the earth?

We can find happiness and glory in exile when we reimagine the future and act in faith today. No place outside is truly safe outside the presence of God, but in the presence of God anyplace can be the place we experience joy and fulfillment. Hagar, like Jeremiah, knew this truth. She was an exile, a victim of human trafficking, abused and tossed aside to face an uncertain future with no obvious security. Yet, in her exile she encountered the living God, who promised always to be with her and who showed her an amazing future.

Let us this morning remember these stories and receive this truth into our hearts. God is with us in the exile and he has seen the future. Take courage and live with joy. We *are* going home.