

INTRO

Rob started his sermon by explaining that despite the Bible's popularity, many find it challenging to read regularly due to its length, complexity and different genres and literary styles.

- **How would you describe your current rhythm of reading the Bible?**
- **What specific challenges have you faced in developing a consistent Bible reading practice?**

IDEA 1 - LITERARY STYLES IN THE BIBLE

Rob explained that the Bible contains multiple literary genres and styles - narrative, poetry, and discourse, also including biographies, letters and apocalyptic works.

- **When you read Scripture, do you find yourself gravitating toward certain types of biblical literature more than others? What is it about those particular styles that resonates with you?**
- **Why do you think there are so many literary styles in the Bible? What do you think the literary styles convey to us as the readers?**

IDEA 2- UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Rob uses the example of Jeremiah 29:11 to show the importance of understanding historical context as we read and interpret the words of Scripture.

- Did anything surprise you when learning the original context of these words spoken to exiles in Babylon? How does this context deepen or change the meaning of this popular verse?
- Why do you think it's important to understand the historical context in which the book of the Bible were written? What are some of the dangers of taking a verse out of context?
- What resources or tools have you find helpful in growing in your understanding about the historical context of books in the Bible?

EXPERIENCING GOD TOGETHER: MEDITATING ON JEREMIAH 29:11

Start by praying with anticipation that God will bring more of His revelation. Then take 5 minutes to meditate on Jeremiah 29:11 as a life group.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope”

As you meditate, you may find it helpful to reflect on the one or more of the following questions:

- How does knowing that God's words were spoken to people in exile, facing 70 years of waiting, change or deepen your understanding of His promise for "a future and a hope"?
- In what areas of your life might God be asking you to take a longer view of His promises? Where might you need to embrace His timing rather than your own?
- How might God be calling you to be faithfully present in difficult circumstances rather than seeking immediate escape?

PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK - MEDITATING ON THE BIBLE

Rob shared that Scripture is meditation literature.

In Hebrew, the word “meditate” means literally to mutter or speak quietly. The idea is that every day for the rest of your life you slowly, quietly read the Bible out loud to yourself and then go talk about it with your friends, pondering the puzzles, making connections, and discovering what it all means. And as you let the Bible interpret itself, something remarkable happens. The Bible starts to read you. Because ultimately the writers of the Bible want you to adopt this story as your story.

What does it look like for you to meditate on Scripture this week, with anticipation that God will bring his revelation?

What is one practical step you could take this week to slow down your Bible reading and create space for God to speak? Consider trying one of the resources mentioned (Bible Recap, Lectio 365) or setting aside a specific time for slower, more contemplative reading.