

# The CIA

05 - Dwelling with God

Church on the Park via Home & Zoom | Sunday, 06 MAR 2022 | Glen Gerhauser

**Text:** “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, ‘Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce. ‘Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. ‘Seek the welfare [shalom] of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare [shalom] you will have welfare [shalom]’” (Jer. 29:4-7).

**Theme:** The church in action loves with God’s love.

**Intro:** What do I mean by the CIA? I mean the Church In Action. Little did we know last week that another flood would rock Brisbane, and our beloved meeting place would be inundated with water. At the same time, Ukraine is being bombarded by Russia, and the world is trying to walk on eggshells with Putin so that we don’t have another world war. These times call us to arise and be the church of Jesus our Messiah. And while many will put on a tough face, know that they are deeply hurting and shaken inside. Last week, we saw from Romans 8:31-39 that none of these things have the power to sever us from our Messiah’s love. Today, we will explore three ways Jesus’ love should flow through us.

## 1) Love your city and community with God’s love (Jer. 29:4-9).

- If the Jews had any excuse not to love their city, they could have found it in their Babylonian captivity.
  - What a time they lived in!
    - The Babylonians just destroyed their capital city, Jerusalem.
    - The Babylonians ripped apart God’s house and ripped Israel out of their homeland.
    - The Jews even saw their babies dashed against the rocks (Psalm 137).
- And yet God says for them to seek the shalom of the city they’ve been deported to.
  - In other words, settle in and make a positive difference in the community. Don’t cause trouble but seek peace.
- Yahweh even has the audacity to tell them to pray for their cities — to ask him to prosper them.
  - We would think that they should curse their invaders and sabotage their cities.
  - But here is a very different response—it’s a response of transcendent love.
  - And the Lord makes it clear that they shouldn’t seek to escape their city but invest in it.

- If God called the Israelites to love the cities of their enemy, how much more are we called to love our own city.
  - This is when we need to be the Church in Action, praying for our city and looking for opportunities to act.
    - This is one of the things Ushchi and I did yesterday as we walked around Milton/Rosalie/Auchenflower and prayed for the flood-affected area (show photos).
    - On Monday, Anna was an example of this when she brought dinner to our neighbours.
    - And I'm sure you have a testimony too of how God has used you.
- Observe in our opening passage that God's will is the multiplication of his people, his seed—even in the middle of hostile territory.
- God's love is not stagnate like a mosquito-infested swamp. Instead, God's love flows like a river.
- God is seeking to deliver us from small-minded thinking. He wants us to have his heart for the cities we live in.
  - It's easy for us to fall into the trap of just thinking about our own life, family or church.
    - But our purpose as a church is to transform our city.
    - So how do we do this?

## 2) Love Yahweh's voice (Psalm 29).

- As the floodwaters devastated parts of Brisbane and Queensland, the Holy Spirit led me to Psalm 29.
  - I was inspired to embark on a fresh translation of Psalm 29 (see translation in endnotes).
- Psalm 29 is a vivid portrait of the power and glory of Yahweh's voice.
  - Greater than the storms and floods we go through is Yahweh's voice.
- Psalm 29 is a poetic song (*mizmor*) that paints a picture of a massive storm rolling down through Israel.
  - It seems to begin in the Mediterranean Sea by Lebanon and makes its way to the southern border of Israel, Kadesh (Barnea).
  - The storm rocks the land, even causing deer to give birth to their fawn prematurely.
  - The storm reminds David of Yahweh's voice.
    - We should also hear God's voice through his creation.
- There's also a wordplay with the Hebrew word for voice – *qol*. *Qol* also means thunder or a great noise.
- Whatever is going on, we should daily seek what God is saying.
  - And what God says will rumble and shake us because it disrupts our comfortable way of thinking.
  - You see this with Jeremiah—what he said was contrary to what most of the exiles wanted to hear.
    - Revenge and justice probably are what they wanted to hear. Jeremiah was painted as a compromised rebel because he advocated loving their city, their Babylonian city.

- You know you are hearing God's voice when it stokes, shakes and even shatters you.
- Yet, God's voice will always give you true strength and shalom.
- The Church in Action has a responsibility to hear God's voice and proclaim what he is saying.
  - And we have to embody this message. Otherwise, it's just our word and not God's.
- The Sunday before the flood, Anna spoke a message about mud and how Jesus used mud to cause the man born blind to see (John 9).
  - The following Sunday, our whole meeting place is flooded and covered with mud.
  - What does God want to do through this flood?
  - He wants to open our eyes to see him and his Kingdom
    - And first, he desires to heal the eyes of the church before he can open the eyes of the lost.
- We love Yahweh's voice by valuing it more than our daily bread.

### **3) Last and most important, love the Lord (Rom. 8:28).**

- Of course, all three of these ways to love are one.
- It's the Messiah's love within you that enables you to love the Lord.
  - It's not by our own goodness or strength that we love the Lord.
  - It's the love of Jesus in us that moves us to love our Father.
  - Loving the Lord always begins with receiving the Lord's love.
- Romans 8:28 says God works all things together for the good of those who LOVE GOD.
- Lovers are givers.
  - And that's what the beginning of Psalm 29 calls us to do: 'Come, give to Yahweh, children of might.'
- Lovers are worshippers.
  - Again, the call of the beginning of Psalm 29 is to worship Yahweh.
- Lovers value Yahweh's voice above every other voice.
- Lovers know that Yahweh always reciprocates the love we give to him.
  - He gives back.
    - He gives us strength, refuge and shalom.
- Lovers are the greatest witness of Jesus' glory.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, 1) Love your city and community with God's love; 2) Love Yahweh's voice, and 3) Last and most important, love the Lord. All these three are one and cannot be separated. When we do these things we are the Church in Action.

## ENDNOTES

### Psalm 29 (Inspiration Translation)

Come, give to Yahweh,  
Children of might;  
Come, give to Yahweh  
Glory and strength.

Come, give to Yahweh  
The glory fit for his Name –  
Bow down to Yahweh's  
Holy and royal radiance.

Yahweh's voice soars  
Over the waters,  
The God of glory roars –  
Yahweh thunders  
Over the great waters.

Yahweh's voice is strong,  
Yahweh's voice is splendid,  
Yahweh's voice shatters mighty trees –  
Yahweh shatters the cedars of Lebanon.

He moves Lebanon to leap,  
Bounding like a young bull;  
Even Siryon springs like  
The offspring of a wild bull.

Yahweh's voice stokes fiery flames,  
Yahweh's voice shakes the paddock –  
Yahweh shakes the pasture of Kadesh.  
Yahweh's voice moves the deer to bare  
Suddenly in the thicket –  
And in the temple, all cry, "Glory!"

Yahweh dwells over the deluge,  
Yahweh sits enthroned as King forever.  
Yahweh gives refuge and strength to his people.  
Yahweh blesses his people with shalom –  
peace, wholeness and security.