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Seek Your City's Good

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Article Review

What is one concept that stood out to you in this article?

Should Christians escape these urban because urban is full of all kinds of iniquity, a place that hurts our souls, and a place full of all sorts of filth? Or should Christians pray for the urban and make it a place of peace and joy in order to transform an urban full of all kinds of iniquity and filth? We can think of two things as we look at the urban. However, this article does not say that urban is full of sin and that Christians should hate urban. Rather, it is telling them to go to the urban, embrace the people of the urban, and tell them God's peace and restoration. Pastor John Piper says: "Pray to the Lord on behalf of your city. Never lose sight of the ultimate good that the city needs a thousand times more than it needs material prosperity."¹

Pastor John Piper is saying that urban doesn't run like a runaway locomotive for corruption than we think. Rather, the urban is waiting for someone to restore them from this situation. It's really ironic. We usually think of urban as corrupt and sinful places, but urban is waiting for someone to restore them. John Piper's argument makes us rethink how we should look at urban from a different perspective. It also makes us see the urban as a place of ministry rather than a place of living.

What implications does this concept have for leading in a church context?

There is no denying that the urban we live in is a corrupted place full of sin. Because of Adam and Eve's sin, everything was cursed, so the urban cannot be free from these sins either. An urban that is not free from sin is bound to be full of sin. However, through Jeremiah 29:5-7, we need to redefine the situation of the urban. Jeremiah says: "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce... ..Increase in number

¹ John Piper, "Seek Your City's Good", (2012), <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/seek-your-citys-good>

there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." God is telling the Israelites to make it a city of peace, even though they are in Babylon, a sinful city where they are in captivity and worship foreign gods. Wherever God's chosen people are, they have a mission to make it a city of peace.

Living in the New Testament, we need to listen to God's voice. God speaks the same to our churches. "Pray to the Lord for the urban," and "Pray for the urban to prosper and pray for the urban to be at peace." God is still saying the same thing to our churches. Churches should have the heart to pray for the urban and proclaim peace in the urban, throwing away the selfish thinking that only thinks of their own church. And the people of the urban should embrace God with love. This is the mission God has given to the churches.

What needs to change in your life as a result?

I also thought of the urban as a place full of corruption and all kinds of sins. However, as I read Pastor Piper's article, I realized that I was wrong. In a way, I also thought that I am a holy chosen people, so I saw a urban full of sin as an object of loathing. However, through this article, I learned that urban is not objects of loathing, but they are places where I should spread the good news of peace and restoration, and urban is also place to pray for. And I learned that I had a mission to cleanse the urban spiritually so that God could be present in the urban. God wants me to embrace an urban that is corrupt and full of all kinds of iniquity. And God wants to show the mercy of God to the urban through me. Also, through this article, I realized that God wants to pray for the urban and spread God's peace and restoration grace there.

References:

Piper, John. “*Seek Your City’s Good*” *Desiring God*, 2012, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/seek-your-citys-good>