

“Living in a Strange Land”

Psalm 137:4

Sunday, January 17, 2021

Introduction: I want to talk to you this morning about living in a “strange land.” Let me define what I mean by “strange land.”

- By “strange land” I mean when life is different.
- By “strange land” I mean life is not the same.

In our Scripture today, the Hebrew people were living in a “strange land.” Things were different. Things were not the same.

- In 586 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar deported many of the Jewish people to Babylon where they would be for 70 years (Jeremiah 29:10).
- They were exiles in a foreign strange land. Their hearts were broken. They were homesick for their homeland almost 1700 miles away.
- Their captors demanded that they sing one of the songs of Zion (v.3).
- They responded with a rhetorical question (v.4).

Text: Psalm 137:1-4

- Their Question: “How shall we sing the LORD’S song in a strange land?”
- “Foreign land” in the NKJV and the ESV
- “Pagan land” in the NIV and NLT
- The old KJV makes A+ on this using the word “strange.”

- Their question is a good question. It is a fair question.

Life Application: Over 2500 years later, with more Bible than they had, with the Holy Spirit living in us, and their example to teach us, we sometimes ask the same question when we find ourselves in a “strange land.”

1. **You can be in a “strange land” geographically:** If you have ever moved from one city or from one state to another city or another state, geographically you find yourself in a “strange land.”

Illustration: Dottie and I experienced this when we moved from Georgia to Texas to go to Seminary.

- Things were different.
- Things were not the same.

Illustration: I experienced this when I moved from Sulphur Springs to become pastor of this church in January 1990 (31 years ago). When Dottie moved here in June, she experienced this.

- Things were different.
- Things were not the same.

2. **You can be in a “strange land” circumstantially:** Circumstances can change life. One phone call, one doctor report, one knock on the door, one accident and life can change. You can still live in the same house, drive the same vehicle, bank at the same bank, shop at the same store yet circumstances can change everything.

Personal illustration: Thursday afternoon, May 2, 2019 the doctor told Dottie and me that she had lymphoma. Nothing was different geographically, but circumstantially everything was different. We drove the same highway in the same car to get back home, but nothing was the same. We were in a “strange land.”

Universal illustration: The pandemic changed our lives. Geographically nothing changed. Circumstantially everything changed. Since March 2020 we have lived in a “strange land.”

Member Illustration: Jennifer Cowles text

Life Application: If you find yourself in a “strange land” geographically or circumstantially, understand God travels!

Question: How can we sing the “songs of Zion” when we find ourselves in a “strange land?”

Answer: When you are in a “strange land” remember...

1. **God is with you.**
2. **God is sovereign.**
3. **The Holy Spirit is in you.**
4. **The end is good.**

Conclusion: Life ends good if you have Jesus in your heart. If you have never been saved, Life will not end good.