

Jeremiah 29

⁴ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Psalms 55:17

Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,
and he hears my voice.

Luke 11

[Jesus] disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” ² And he said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father,...



At Home In Exile

SERMONS IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

One image Scripture uses to interpret our current place in the world is that of “exile.” Since Genesis 3 and mankind’s treasonous rebellion against God, the entire world is in exile and separated from their created home—the presence of God. In the midst of this exile, Christians find themselves having begun their journey home in Jesus. United to Christ, Christians are presently secure in the world that is to come even as they live in the world that “is passing away.” In Jesus, we are at home in exile.

In this overlapping reality of being “in the world” and “in Christ,” we experience pressures to both isolation from the world and assimilation to the world. However, Jesus calls us to a faithful presence in the world. He empowers us to live as his distinct people in a world that desperately needs to find its home in him. Further, he marks us out as a people who intentionally live under him as the reigning King in the middle of a world drunk on the power of empire and autonomy. All this requires careful clarity and courageous devotion – both of which God furnishes to his people.

The book of Daniel is historic “exilic” literature that captures these dynamics well and displays God’s nourishing power and wise ways for his people in exile.

Into the Unknown

February 11, 2024 | Daniel 6 | Pastor Roger Williams

In exile, God empowers his people for distinguished faithfulness through prayer and the promise of his gracious presence.

Daniel 6

¹It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ²and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³Then this Daniel became **distinguished** above all the other high officials and satraps, because **an excellent spirit was in him**. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but **they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful**, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵Then these men said, **“We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”**

⁶Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! ⁷All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ⁹Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

empowered for distinguished faithfulness

¹⁰When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, **he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.** ¹¹Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹²Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ¹³Then they answered and said before the king, **“Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”**

¹⁴Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

through prayer

¹⁶Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁷And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, **“O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”** ²¹Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²²**My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.**” ²³Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

and his gracious presence

²⁵Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

for he is the living God, enduring forever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the end.

²⁷He delivers and rescues;
he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

²⁸So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

for God's glory and our good