**Small Group notes – 11 July 2021**

**Word: Over & Out** – Daniel 9:1-19 & 10 & 12:13

* **Daniel’s prayer**

The first thing to notice in this chapter is Daniel reading the prophecies of Jeremiah the Prophet (Jeremiah 25:1-14 & Jeremiah 29:1-11). Daniel becomes convinced that the exile of God’s people should soon be ending, if God is true to his promise of restoration. Daniel’s prayer itself has three elements: **Adoration, Confession & Petition.**

* **Adoration & Declaration**

Daniel begins the prayer with worship and throughout the prayer declares certain truths about God’s character.

He is great and awesome God – verse 4

He is a covenant keeping God – verse 4

He is merciful – verse 4

He is righteous – verse 7

He is forgiving – verse 9

He is the God who delivered his people out of Egypt – verse 15

* **Confession**

The second element we see is confession. Daniel confesses his own sin and failure and the sins and failure of his people. He looks back over Israel’s history and grieves the disobedience, neglect of covenant responsibilities, and failure to respond to the warnings of the prophets.

We have sinned – verses 5,8,11, 15

We have acted wickedly – verses 5,15

We have rebelled – verses 5,9

We have departed from your commands – verse 5

We have not listened to your prophets – verse 6

* **Petition**

The third element we see in Daniel’s prayer is petition. It is interesting that Daniel does not even begin to petition God until a full confession of sin had been made. He does not blame God for all the calamities that have befallen Israel and suggest that Israel deserves to be rescued, restored because of who they are. However, he begins to express hope and confidence that God will act for good on behalf of Israel because of who God is. God is merciful and forgiving. Also God’s name and reputation is at stake, Israel have become a disgrace, bringing Israel back to Jerusalem will hopefully change this.

After three weeks of fasting and prayer (Daniel 10:2) Daniel receives a remarkable answer through the arrival of the Angel Gabriel, who assures him that he is loved and highly esteemed and that his prayers were heard from the moment he began to plead with God for his people.

The rest of the book of Daniel speaks in detail about what will happen in the future, how empires will rise and fall, how there is a spiritual battle that is raging and how God will bring not just Israel’s exile to an end but all of history.

Daniel intercedes for his people and his prayers are answered. It reminds us that as God’s people prayer is the most important activity we can engage in Prayer is not passive it’s active. It is really doing something. Prayer isn’t the least we can do; it is the most important thing we can do. **Prayer is the central work, which causes all other work to bear fruit.**

Daniel’s account reminds us that prayer is supernatural. It is reaching out of the visible world into the unseen world. Prayer can be difficult at times because we are engaging in spiritual warfare. Paul reminded us in Ephesians 6:12 *“our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”.*

God answered Daniel’s prayers and Israel did go back to Jerusalem. It was not an easy journey back; there were plenty of challenges and plenty of stops and starts to the rebuilding of Jerusalem by God’s people under the guidance of Ezra & Nehemiah and others.

Daniel himself never made it back. He lived out his years in Babylon. *Daniel 12:13*

The book of Daniel ends with Daniel remaining in Babylon but receiving the promise that one day he will receive resurrection life and will be with his God in his kingdom forever.

As we remain in exile, may we be a people who regularly pray for God’s kingdom to come and his will to be done in our world, nation, community and homes. As we wait for the promises of God to be fulfilled may we be encouraged to keep on keeping on.

As we go about our daily business may we have the sure and certain hope and knowledge like Daniel that our future is certain and secure. One day we will be with our God forever.

As we wait, may each of us daily keep a right perspective. May we keep our focus on the prize ahead and not get entangled or distracted by the things of this world.

**Questions**

* Do you find prayer easy or difficult? Does it depend on what you are praying for?
* How do you pray most effectively? Do you have a structure?
* How often do you pray the scriptures?
* What do you think about the idea that prayer at times is engaging in spiritual warfare?
* How often are you encouraged by answered prayer?
* What about unanswered prayer?
* How are you going to make sure you finish well?
* What does It mean to you to live in the light of eternity?
* How are you feeling about the future?
* What have you found most helpful about this current series in Daniel?

**Prayers & Reminders of opportunities to pray together.**

Pray as a group for our world, nation, leaders, and community, (NMBC/MMCC).

**Morning Prayer** – 14 July – 7.30am – Zoom

**Live BU/NMBC Prayer broadcast** – 14 July - 7pm -7.30pm in Zoom with Lynne Green (BU general secretary)

**Members Meeting – 14 July – 8pm – Zoom**