



Senior Pastor, Kevin Flannery

Series: Exiles in Babylon: Living as Strangers in a Fallen World

Sermon Title: A Prayer-Shaped People

Spring Term: Week 17 of 20

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**Ice breaker:** Share with the group about a time when something looked “fine” on the surface—but underneath, it wasn’t. (A job that seemed stable but was quietly toxic. A relationship that looked strong but lacked trust. A season of life where everything appeared “together,” but your heart felt distant from God.)

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**Read and Reflect on Daniel 9:1-19:** *In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.<sup>3</sup> So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.<sup>4</sup> I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: “Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments,<sup>5</sup> we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.<sup>6</sup> We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.<sup>7</sup> “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you.<sup>8</sup> We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, Lord, because we have sinned against you.<sup>9</sup> The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;<sup>10</sup> we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.<sup>11</sup> All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. “Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you.<sup>12</sup> You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.<sup>14</sup> The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.<sup>15</sup> “Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong.<sup>16</sup> Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.<sup>17</sup> “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.<sup>18</sup> Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.<sup>19</sup> Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”*

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**Three Sermon Points and Scripture** (take your time reviewing the sermon points and scripture with some summary information before diving into the questions below, we’re mixing up the format for you this week.)

- 1. God’s Word Drives Daniel to Prayer** (Daniel 9:1–3; Jeremiah 25:11–12; Jeremiah 29:10). Daniel reads Scripture and interprets reality through it, God’s promises lead him *into* prayer, not away from it, true faith responds to God’s Word with dependence. Key Insight: We don’t read Scripture through culture—we read culture through Scripture.
- 2. God’s Holiness Drives Daniel to Confession** (Daniel 9:4–14; 1 John 1:8–9; Psalm 51). Daniel confesses corporately (“we have sinned”), He names sin honestly—no minimizing, no distancing, he affirms God is right, even in judgment. Key Insight: Confession is not self-hatred—it is truth-telling before a holy God.

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3. **God's Mercy Drives Daniel to Hope** (Daniel 9:15–19; Exodus 34:6–7; Romans 5:8). Daniel appeals to God's character, not human worth. "We do not make requests... because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy" (v.18). His deepest concern: God's name and glory. Key Insight: Repentance is the empty hand that reaches for mercy.

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### Discussion Questions

1. **Scripture & Perspective.** What currently shapes how you interpret your life—Scripture or circumstances? What would it look like to "read your life through the Word" this week?
  2. **Prayer & Dependence.** Do God's promises lead you to pray more, or do they sometimes make you less intentional in prayer? Where might you be assuming God will act instead of actively seeking Him?
  3. **Confession & Ownership.** Why is it easier to identify sin in others than in ourselves? What would it look like to practice honest, specific confession? Consider these: Pride dressed up as achievement. Greed dressed up as prudence. Self-rule dressed up as authenticity. Prayerlessness dressed up as busyness.
  4. **Comfort & Exile.** Where have you grown comfortable with things that should grieve you spiritually? How can we avoid "normalizing exile" in our lives or church?
  5. **Mercy & Motivation.** Do you relate to God based on performance or mercy? How does the cross reshape your confidence in approaching God?
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### Digging Deeper (Optional)

1. **Personal Reflection:** Spend time in Psalm 139:23–24, ask God to reveal areas of hidden sin or spiritual drift.
  2. **Practice Confession, use Daniel's pattern:** Start with God's character, Name sin specifically, Acknowledge God's righteousness, Appeal to His mercy.
  3. **Gospel Connection (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13-14):** Jesus is the greater Daniel: He doesn't just confess sin—He carries it, He doesn't just plead for mercy—He secures it
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**Closing Prayer (consider spending some extra time in prayer this week):** Heavenly Father, You are the great and awesome God, righteous in all Your ways and faithful in covenant love. We confess that we have sinned—personally and corporately. We have been proud, prayerless, and often more concerned with appearances than with Your presence. Lord, You are right in all You do. Yet You are also rich in mercy. We do not come to You based on our righteousness, but because of Your great compassion. Thank You for Jesus—the greater intercessor—who bore our sin, carried our shame, and secured our forgiveness at the cross. Teach us to be a prayer-shaped people: anchored in Your Word, honest in confession, confident in Your mercy. For Your name's sake, renew us. For Your glory, restore us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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### Faith in Action:

- May 10 – Mother's Day, (Sanctuary, Photo Station, Treats and Prayer for all women)
- Volunteer for Summer Bible Camp – sign up today, email Maggie Aquaro at [maggiea@coswayne.org](mailto:maggiea@coswayne.org)