

## Sept. 6, 2020 — Small Group Questions

### Read Daniel 9:1-19

1. In all likelihood, Daniel took for himself King Solomon's words from 1 Kings 8 to pray towards Jerusalem whenever the people of Israel find themselves in exile. What does a posture of exilic prayer, a disposition of exilic attentiveness and urgency look like for us Christians today?

*There is daily constancy towards praying for the state of the Church locally and globally in the midst of her internal divisions, disagreements, and hypocrisies. Exilic prayer could look like being in constant vigil and regular fasting for the witness and purity of the Church amidst exile. Personally, it means taking on special regimens of spiritual disciplines from time to time as you are moved by God to pray and fast for Christians around the world, locally, in our church, or for yourself, your family, and friends. This present time of the Church in exile always calls for a season of prayer and supplications until Jesus' return.*

2. In verses 4-14, Daniel confesses the sins of his people out of faith in the unchanging character of God. Why is it imperative for us Christians to confess our sins to God even though we already know we are forgiven in Jesus Christ?

*Confessing sins is not a way to get God off our backs. Confessing sins is not a way of penance, to somehow repay God's grace towards us. Confessing sins is a gift and a grace wherein we are invited to shed the light of God's truth to our falsehoods, to open what is shadowy and hidden in our lives to the light of God's embrace. We confess sins because we already have a loving relationship with God, not as a way to earn the relationship. Confessing sins is more for us than it is for God when we step into God's light with the darkness of our being. Confessing sins is always an exercise of faith, acknowledging that we are sinners, that we still sin, and believing that God is righteous and just to forgive us because of the merits and virtues of Jesus. Overall, confessing sins is Christian humility, to admit our imperfection, and then to acknowledge that God is the only One who can perfect us and forgive us.*

3. In verses 15-19, Daniel makes his request for God to take His people out of exile, out of hope in God's promise to rescue and restore. How should we as Christians make our requests and intercessions before God in light of His promises in Jesus Christ?

*We can ask God for things and make requests to Him because He is generous to give us all things according to His will in Jesus. Like Daniel, our prayers to God should come from a place of hope and trust that God gives generously, that God is not begrudging, that God is powerful and able to do so much more than we can ask or imagine, that God is good and could never respond to us with evil. But in light of God's holy goodness, we should not presume upon His*

*will and kindness. We approach Him with all that we are and all of our requests with solemn confidence, with humble joy, and with glad reverence.*

4. Daniel understood that there is no restoration without the confession and forgiveness of sins. As part of the Anglican Church of Canada, we have our institutional and historic sins to confess and from which to repent. What ways and how are we to acknowledge and repent from the atrocities of the residential school systems that were set up against the Indigenous Peoples of Canada?

*This last question does not need to be divisive or to be exhaustive in our responses. The group is invited to consider the first few steps towards being aware of our Anglican history with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. And so, the first step is to become aware and learn about the history of the residential school systems and the relationship between the Anglican Church and the First Nations peoples. A good resource and website to visit is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Even as we have not participated or would ever give support to the atrocities of the Church in the past, we are part of that history and we like Daniel can acknowledge and confess the sins of our forebears to the step towards restoration and reconciliation. If anything, we can start by learning about the history, to start talking about them, to reflect and consider, to pray, and to do as we are personally able to in keeping with our conscience and the calls to action.*