

God's Mercy - Our Hope

Scripture: Daniel 9:15-25a

Date: February 19, 2021

Message: *O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.*

Daniel 9:8

Daniel's prophecy comes to a people who have been cut off from their land because of their unfaithfulness to God; a people which did not anticipate that they would find themselves carried off into exile, but were, nonetheless. The question for these dispossessed people is "what now?", "how do we get back to the land of promise that God had given us?", or even "will we ever get back to the land of promise?"

It would be easy for Daniel, or anyone else in the Babylonian exile, to look at their situation and determine that the onus was on them to do enough to present themselves as righteous before God.

However, in this prayer of personal and corporate repentance in Daniel 9, the prophet recognizes that their hope of being restored to Jerusalem, and even their forgiveness, does not rest in their ability to do enough righteous acts, but rather in the nature of God; namely his mercy.

Particularly during this time of Lent, it is right for us to practice self-reflection and self-examination, both individually and on behalf of those corporate bodies to which we belong, as Daniel did throughout his prayer. We need to confess, as the prophet did, those ways we have erred and sinned against God and neighbor. Yet the good news is this: our hope for forgiveness and reconciliation is not rooted in our ability to impress God with our righteousness, but rather in His nature as the God whose property it is to show mercy and forgiveness.

Prayer: *God, help us to recognize our own sins, individually and corporately. We can never do enough to deserve your forgiveness. Thank you for your great mercy. Amen.*