

Theme: To thrive in our exile, we must labor to see others experience shalom, remember that our God is the Living, Eternal God, that the kingdoms of this world pass away but that God's Kingdom endures forever, and that God rescues and saves His people into His kingdom.

I. Intro - Surviving As A POW

- A. Admiral Stockdale; Medal of Honor for POW conduct
- B. Two groups did not survive as POW's
 - 1. "We will never go home"
 - 2. "We will be home by Christmas"
- C. One group survived - "We will go home - but not for a long time"
- D. This is a lot like how we need to think to thrive in exile!

II. Daniel - Thriving In Exile!

- A. Daniel thrived as an exile in the Persian empire
 - So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Daniel 6:28
 - 1. Daniel "prospered" under the Persians - he thrived
 - 2. Even though he had been thrown into the lion's den!
 - 3. Daniel was able to thrive as an exile in this pagan kingdom!
- B. Daniel thrived throughout the entire time of exile!
 - The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service... ²¹ And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. Daniel 1:19, 21
 - 1. Daniel began to thrive under Nebuchadnezzar

- 2. He continued to thrive until Cyrus!
- 3. Cyrus gave the decree for Jews to return home!
 - In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: ²³ "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you — may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up." ² Chronicles 36:22–23
 - a. Daniel saw Cyrus give the decree!
 - b. Daniel literally outlasted the exile!
- 4. This means that Daniel was able to thrive during the entire period of the exile, serving various kings and empires!

III. A Theology For Thriving In Exile

- A. A note about Darius' decree
 - 1. Who is Darius? - I think Cyrus (After Hours)
 - 2. His decree sums up the lessons of chapters 1-6
 - 3. He may not be a Jew, but his words have been guided by Yahweh to teach us how to thrive in exile!
- B. To thrive exiles must labor to see others experience shalom
 - Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly!" Daniel 6:25

1. Darius is writing to all peoples, cultures - not just Jews
2. He wants to see them 'prosper greatly'
3. This is not the same word as 'prosper' in v28 - it is the Aramaic equivalent of "shalom"
4. Jeremiah had told the exiles this 70 years before
Also, **seek** the **peace and prosperity** of the city to which I have carried you into exile. **Pray** to the Lord for it, because if it **prosper**s, you too will **prosper**." Jeremiah 29:7
 - a. The words in red are all "shalom"
 - b. The exiles must not only seek shalom for themselves - they must **pray** and **seek**/labor for the city of their exile to experience God's blessing as well!
5. This was always God's call for His people
I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and **you will be a blessing**.³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you**." Genesis 12:2-3
 - a. This is God's covenant promise & blessing to Abram
 - b. God will bless Abram - and Abram will be a blessing to others
 - c. The blessing is not just for Abram and his people, but for all peoples!
6. God blesses His people so that they might be a blessing to others!
7. The primary blessing is the Gospel

The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." Galatians 3:8

- a. Paul tells us the primary blessing envisioned in Genesis 12:2-3 is the Gospel itself!
 - b. God's exile people must always reach out with the Good News of Christ to the people around them - even if they are persecuted for doing so!
 - c. Consider all the people Daniel touched with his faith - the steward in chapter 1, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius.
8. But God's people are also to labor to bless others through their callings and acts of service, working for the good of their city of exile - as Daniel did!
 9. Daniel served in the king's court so that his exile land would prosper, and we must labor in our callings and acts of service to be a blessing for the city of our exile.
 10. The people of God must never restrict the blessings of God for themselves but rather actively seek to be a blessing to the land of their exile.
- C. To thrive exiles must remember that our God is the Living, Eternal God
I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For **he is the living God and he endures forever**... Dan 6:26
1. Our God is the ONLY actual living God, and He is eternal
 2. A play on the greeting to kings - O king live forever!
 3. Human kings are mortal and will die - our God is the source of all life and is the Eternal God!

4. To be faithful and thrive in our exile, we must constantly commune with God so that we remember Who He is, and the limited nature and power of the humans all around us.

D. To thrive exiles must remember that the kingdoms of this world pass away, but the Kingdom of God endures forever!

I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; **his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.** Daniel 6:26

1. This is the lesson of Daniel 2 - and also Daniel 7!
2. Babylon had already fallen, Persia would one day fall to Alexander, and the Greek and Roman empires would fall as well.
3. The kingdoms of this world are all limited and temporary - only the kingdom of God will endure forever!

E. To thrive exiles must remember that our God rescues and saves His people!

He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” Dan 6:27

1. Because He is the Living, Eternal, Powerful God, Yahweh is able to rescue and save His people.
2. Daniel is a prime example of God’s ability to save - throughout the whole time of the exile, and especially in the lion’s den.
3. Throughout history God has delivered His exile people of faith, protecting them from their enemies and even allowing them to thrive against all odds!

who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; **who shut the mouths of lions,** **³⁴quenched the fury of the flames,** and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Hebrews 11:33–35

- a. Daniel and his friends are in view here!
- b. Many examples of God rescuing and saving His people, and letting them thrive in the worst of times!

4. However, we must also remember that God sometimes allows His people to suffer now, choosing to allow them to suffer and die and then delivering them out of death.

Others were tortured and **refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.** ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated — ³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Hebrews 11:35–38

- a. A litany of terrible suffering for God’s exile people!
- b. The hope that sustained was the hope of the resurrection!
- c. Like Admiral Stockdale’s example - those who think they will always be delivered will compromise when suffering comes, and those who forget ultimate deliverance will lose hope.

IV. Applying the Word

A. Am I saturating myself regarding God's true nature?

1. The experience of exile can make God seem impotent or distant
2. The forces against us will seem big and God will seem small if we do not purposefully saturate ourselves in the truth of God's nature, character, and work.
3. This is why exiles must gather for worship - to be reminded of the truth, to worship God, to encourage one another to stand strong, and to receive God's grace for our pilgrim journey.
4. Do I make gathering with God's people the highest priority, or is it something that must fit in around other things?
5. Do I spend more time in God's Word meditating on His nature, character, and work, or keeping up with the latest cultural and political news?
6. Saturate yourself in God and His truth this week!

B. Am I actively praying and laboring to spread God's blessings to others?

1. The universe is built with the principle that there must be expansion for life to flourish! That which is static and does not allow pass-through is dead or dying!
2. God's covenant with His people has always called us to the mission of passing on God's blessing to others!

3. God's call for exiles specifically commands us to pray and labor for our land of exile to experience God's shalom.
4. Do I actively pray for our country?
5. Do I actively look for ways to promote the common good? BRCC offers many ways to do this regularly!
6. Do I actively pray for and look for opportunities to share the Gospel with the lost around me?
7. You are blessed - be a blessing!

C. The Lord's Table

1. At this Table, we rehearse the faith
2. At this Table, we commune with God
3. At this Table, we are strengthened for our journey
4. The Apostles Creed & the Table

Thriving In Exile

Daniel 6:25-28

September 5, 2021

Communion

Genesis 12:2-3

Teaching keywords: Blessing; God; exile and return; salvation and deliverance

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Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: “May you prosper greatly! ²⁶ “I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. “For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. ²⁷ He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” ²⁸ So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Daniel 6:25–28