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“God’s Kindness Leads us to Repentance”

Daniel 9

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What is your view of God? Is he a loving, merciful God or an angry, unforgiving God? How you view the Lord will determine whether you approach him when you sin or whether you avoid him. Daniel was broken and contrite before the Lord because he read the book of Jeremiah and saw that God revealed himself as a merciful, loving heavenly father. That’s who God is, and that’s why he is approachable when we sin too. In this message Pastor Gary teaches about repentance and how we can draw near to God.

Historical Background

1. **Daniel 9:1-2** - *“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans - in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”*
 - a. Jeremiah was ministering as a prophet of the Lord when Daniel was a young man.
 - b. God’s message to the Jewish people through Jeremiah was for the Jewish people to turn from sin and idolatry and turn to God, and if they didn’t repent, they would come under siege (586 B.C.) by King Nebuchadnezzar and be exiled to Babylon for seventy years.
 - c. When he was reading Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years of captivity, Daniel must have realized that period of exile was almost over.
 - d. There is no historical record of Daniel’s death or where he was buried, but Bible scholars believe he died and was buried in Babylon.
2. **Jeremiah 29:10-14** - *“For thus says the Lord: ‘After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord,*

thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.’ ”

3. When Daniel read the words of Jeremiah concerning God’s mercy and love for him and the Jewish people, he was deeply moved.
 - a. **Daniel 9:3-4** - *“Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, **sackcloth, and ashes**. And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession...”* (Emphasis added)
 - i. These were visible signs of grief and mourning.
 - b. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for doing these things because they were doing it for “show” and not because of a personal understanding of sin and grieving the Lord.
 - c. Daniel did these things because he was broken by his sin and the national sin of the Jewish people.
 - d. **Daniel 9:5-11** - *“[We] have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day - to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. O Lord, to us belongs shame of face to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.”*

Repentance From Sin

4. Pastor Gary said, “The Bible is a basically a book about repentance. It is about turning from sin and turning towards God and having relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ. That’s what the Bible is all about. It’s God’s love letter to mankind to help us understand that he is righteous, and we are not. He is holy and we are not. He’s perfect and we are not. How do you get to a righteous and perfect

and holy God? Certainly not by our own good works, because none of us is good enough and can do enough good to get to that level where God is. So, God bridged the gap between his perfect holiness and our imperfect unrighteousness [and] unholiness. [He] bridged that gap with the sacrifice of his son Jesus who died on the cross for our sins. The Bible says that if we put our faith in what Christ did, we can have our sins forgiven [and] we can be made right with God [and have] relationship and fellowship with the creator of the universe!"

5. The first words recorded in the Bible from John the Baptist and Jesus were about repentance.
 - a. **Matthew 3:2** - *"[John the Baptist said,] 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' "*
 - b. **Matthew 4:17** - *"... Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' "*
6. Daniel was moved and came to the place of humility and repentance because he saw God's mercy, faithfulness, patience, and forgiveness in Jeremiah's writings.
 - a. **Romans 2:4** - *"... it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance."* (1984 NIV)
7. Pastor Gary said, "When we have an encounter with the goodness of God, when get a glimpse of the patience of God and the forgiveness of God, when we see God as a merciful, loving father, as he truly is, it motivates us to draw near to him.
8. Someone has said that religion and relationship can be defined in this way.
 - a. Religion - "I messed up. My father is going to kill me!"
 - b. Relationship - "I messed up. I need to call my father!"
9. Pastor Gary said, "[God] is not angry and unforgiving. Unfortunately, a lot of people have a misperception of God. [They think] he's always angry, he's always irritable, [and] he always wants to hurt [them]... and he's quick to punish. That is not an accurate [assessment of who God is]. Listen, God is certainly just and there comes a day of punishment, and he will balance every inequity and he will settle every score, but our father in heaven is longsuffering with us [and] he is patient with us..."
 - a. **2 Peter 3:9** - *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*
 - b. **Ezekiel 33:11** - *"[God said,] 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!' "*
10. Pastor Gary said, "Mercy motivates, and anger intimidates. ... Without a proper view of God, when we sin we are reluctant to draw near to him because we think God is just angry and unforgiving. We don't turn to the one who loves us and can forgive

us because we think that God always walks around like he's in a bad mood. ... Any distance between [ourselves] and God is [on us, because of who God really is]!"

11. [Lamentations 3:22-23](#) - *"Because of the Lord's great **love** we are not consumed, for his **compassions** never fail. They are new every morning; great is your **faithfulness**."* (Emphasis added) (1984 NIV)

God Is Loving (Merciful)

12. [Psalm 103:10-11](#) - *"He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him."*
13. [Romans 5:8](#) - *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
14. [Jeremiah 31:3](#) - *"The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: 'Yes; I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.'"*

God Is Compassionate

15. [Psalm 145:8-9](#) - *"The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."*
16. [Psalm 51:1-2](#) - *"[David said,] 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.'"*

God Is Faithful

17. [Psalm 145:13b](#) - *"The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made."* (1984 NIV)
18. [Psalm 36:5](#) - *"Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds."*

Conclusion

19. Pastor Gary said, "[These are the reasons] why Daniel could easily repent of his sins and draw near to God because he was motivated by the mercies of God. He [realized] the seventy years [of exile] are about up. Look at how faithful God is! He

has never forgotten about us! ... So, why wouldn't we want to draw near to God when we [come] to understand who he really is? ... Every single morning when you get up, there's a new dose of God's love, mercy, compassion, and faithfulness for you! ... It's an opportunity for a new day and a clean start!"

20. **Isaiah 55:7** – *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Daniel 9:1-19** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Allow the people in your group to share their experience about being broken and humbled by personal sin. (See #3 above)
3. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments concerning what it means to repent. (See #4 and #5 above)
4. How has your view of God changed since you came to faith? (See #6 and #7 above)
5. How has your understanding of who God is brought you to the place of repentance?
6. Read and discuss one person's observation about the difference between religion and relationship. (See #8 above)
7. Read and discuss **2 Peter 3:9** and **Ezekiel 33:11** and Pastor Gary's comments about the goodness of God. (See #9 and #10 above)
8. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared concerning the mercy, compassion, and faithfulness of the Lord. (See #11 through #18 above)
9. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning every person's need to draw near to God. (See #19 and #20 above)
10. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)