**Salendine Nook Baptist Church – Church In Transition**

**9th May 2021 - The Forgiveness Of God**

**Welcome**

Welcome to **Church in Transition.**

We are now back worshipping at Church in our In - Person services. We have decided that for the foreseeable future we will be continuing with our flexible worship patterns which will still blends on - line services, home deliveries and E - mailed copies of Church in Transition.

Today’s service will be looking at: **Daniel 9 v. 1 - 19**

The theme for today’s service is: **The Forgiveness Of God.**

Today’s service that is set out in this edition of **Church In Transition** is looking at **The Forgiveness Of God.**

We hope that you will be able to engage with what has been produced for our **Sunday Service** and that you would indeed **Know The Forgiveness Of God in your own life today.**

**Call To Worship**

**Psalm 145 v. 8 - 11 NLT**

The Lord is gracious and merciful,

Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The Lord is good to all,

And his compassion is over all that he has made.

All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,

And all your faithful shall bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,

And tell of your power.

**Moment of Reflection**

Dear God if I Hurt others, give me the strength to apologize. If people hurt me, give me the strength to forgive.

**A General Thanksgiving Prayer**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all people.

We bless you for your creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth your praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days.

We pray this our prayer through Jesus Christ out lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory for ever and ever.

**Amen**

**Moment of Reflection**

At the moment at which I admitted my sin and asked for God’s forgiveness, He gave me the deepest level of understanding of mercy that I could ever have imagined.

**Song Suggestion**

Amazing Grace

Glorious Day

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On Earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

The power, and the glory,

For ever and ever.

**Amen**

**Moment of Reflection**

How do I receive forgiveness from God?

You can’t earn forgiveness from God. You can’t pray for your forgiveness from God. You can only receive it, by faith, through the grace and mercy of God.

**Song Suggestion**

This Is Amazing Grace

My Lord, What Love Is This

**A Responsive Reading**

**Celebrating The Gospel As The Community Of God’s People**

We share together in this responsive reading this morning as we witness together as the people of God. If you are following through at home please pause between the lighter blue print and the bolder green print. If you are responding at Church; the person leading at the front will say the words in lighter blue print and the congregation will respond with the words in bolder green print.

If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved.

***For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved.***

God is the same Lord of all and richly blesses all who call to him.

***As the scripture says: ‘Everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved’.***

But how can they call to him for help if they have not believed?

***And how can they hear if the message is not proclaimed?***

And how can the message be proclaimed if the messengers are not sent out?

***As the scripture says: ‘How wonderful is the coming of messengers to bring good news’.***

Lord you have called us to be your witnesses in the world: Give us grace to hear and obey your call.

***Release us from the bondage of anxiety and fear;***

***Restore us to love, joy and peace as we trust in you;***

***And so strengthen us by your Holy Spirit***

***That, by word and good example,***

***We may glorify you in our daily lives;***

***Through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

**Bible Reading**

**Daniel 9 v. 1 – 19 New International Version**

**Daniel’s Prayer**

**9**In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom— 2in 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. 3So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

4I 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, 5we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. 6We 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.

7“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. 8We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, Lord, because we have sinned against you. 9The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; 10we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. 11All 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. 12You 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. 13Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favour of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. 14The 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.

15“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. 16Lord, 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.

17“Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favour on your desolate sanctuary. 18Give 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. 19Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

**Moment of Reflection**

God wants to forgive you more than you want to ask for it. You’re not waiting on God. He’s waiting on you.

**Church In Transition Thought**

In this mini – series from the Book of Daniel we have looked at some important facts not so much about us, but about God. We have thought about; The Presence of God, The Omnipotence of God and The Intervention of God, and now today we look at our fourth, mind ­ blowing characteristic of this great and holy God: He Forgives.

That does not mean that he turns a blind eye to our sinfulness, for it cost him dearly. The eternal Son of God, our Saviour Jesus, sent to death on a wooden cross, **'carried the burden of our sins'** (**1 Peter 2 v. 24**). Nor does it mean that he looks for nothing on our part but the receiving of his forgiveness. He desires the deep repentant sorrow of which David wrote in **Psalm 51**.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel he chose to record the first words of Jesus' preaching ministry as **'turn back to God'** (**Matthew 4 v. 17**).

How important it is for children of any age to hear a parent or leader at church say, **'I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that.'** We expect children to apologise, but do we set an example? Do they hear us telling God we are sorry and need his forgiveness?

How often are sermons preached on the Bible's great prayers of penitence, including **Daniel 9**? Here Daniel identifies himself with all the sinfulness of his own people. This is not Babylon he is praying for, but Judah.

In **Daniel 9 v. 1 – 3**, we are told that Daniel and his friends were suffering as the consequences of the sins of others. Because of his nation’s sins, Daniel and other ‘innocent bystanders’ were forced into captivity. We all suffer from the injustices of others. When this happens, we would do well to follow Daniel’s example. He did not waste his time or energy merely blaming others and complaining about the injustice. He confessed the sins of his people and asked God for comfort and deliverance.

Each of these quotations from **Daniel 9**; tell us so much about God and his forgiveness.

**'Our Lord, you are a great and fearsome God, and you faithfully keep your agreement with those who love and obey you'** (**Daniel 9 v. 4**). It is thinking about a God like this that can draw us into penitence.

**'Lord God, you are merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against you'** (**Daniel 9 v. 9**). God's nature is not altered by our behaviour, but our behaviour can be changed by God's nature.

**'Please show mercy to your chosen city, not because we deserve it, but because of your great kindness'** (**Daniel 9 v. 18**). As Christians we bear God's name and can bring it into disrepute.

So it is for God's sake, not just our own, that we need him to show us his mercy and forgiveness. **'Forgive us ... to bring honour to yourself’** (**Daniel 9 v. 19**).

We all need to know the forgiveness of God in our lives and **Daniel 9 v. 1 – 19** can help us I believe, better our understanding of this fact.

About seventy years have gone by since we first met Daniel. He knew that Jeremiah had foreseen seven decades of captivity (**Jeremiah 25 v. 11**), and so, sensitively he began to prepare himself for the possibility that his people might have an opportunity to return to their homeland. But before that could happen, the Jews needed to be at one with their God. Daniel prayed for this with great humility, but also great confidence.

Those qualities that mark out his prayer in **Daniel 9 v. 1 - 19** are a notable model for us to follow in our own lives before God. So where did these qualities come from?

**FROM KNOWING GOD**

Understanding God can lead us to pray in a way which pleases him. There is no shortcut to understanding God - it comes from prolonged time in his presence and service. For Daniel that meant: studying the Word Of God (**Daniel 9 v. 13**); listening to the prophets (**Daniel 9 v. 2**); and acknowledging who God is (**Daniel 9 v. 4, 7, 9, 14**).

**FROM KNOWING THE WORLD**

To pray for the world, we need to have one eye on the cross and one eye on the television news.

Everyone is guilty of sinning against God, and we all need redemption from the eternal consequences of sin that we see in **Romans 6 v. 23**: that is death. Even the godly Prophet Daniel admitted his sins, asked for God’s mercy, and surrendered his life to God. Daniel looked at the world and understood how far it had fallen short of God's standards (**Daniel 9 v. 7, 8, 11, 12**). He brought to God for forgiveness even those things in which he had no personal involvement, but which he was part of because of his shared humanity.

We also need to do the same thing with regards to the sins that entangle us, and their consequences. What God did in Daniel’s time, is also applicable to our time.

**FROM KNOWING HIS NEED**

Refusal to see the truth about our own sins has the power to blind us to the dangers about us. Daniel said that the people of Israel had suffered all the curses that God had promised to send for their disobedience. Yet even after all their suffering, the people still wouldn't do right and follow God. Had the Israelites been spiritually honest, they could have been aware of their first mistakes and corrected the situation immediately. They could have avoided much of their severe punishment. We must be careful not to resist the truth that we are sinful. This can lead to spiritual blindness that endangers our lives. We need to be honest with ourselves and God and ask him to help us overcome our sins.

Traditional evangelism invites people to repent before they come into relationship with God. But in fact, it is often only when our love for God has grown over time that we come to realise how deeply we have hurt him. And then repentance follows.

Daniel had served God through a faithful lifetime, but when he sought forgiveness it was with dramatic seriousness (**Daniel 9 v. 3**).

**ILLUSTRATION**

***The best cinematic image of God's forgiveness that I know of comes in Roland Joffe's The Mission, the film which won the Palme d'Or at the 1987 Cannes Festival.***

The Robert de Niro character, Mendoza, has killed his brother in a fight over a woman. He is brought desperately low with remorse and feels that only a barely endurable penance will get rid of his guilt.

In 1750, he fills a net with the armour of his past life as a soldier, and sets about climbing a huge South American waterfall, dragging the load behind him. Urged on by his priest and his friends, he struggles painfully slowly up the perilous climb. He is undaunted by bruises of falling stones or the cuts of the briars he is dragging himself through. He ignores those who, fearing for his life, saying, **'You've done enough.'** And still he edges forward with the dreadful weight in tow.

At the top of the falls he collapses, a broken and exhausted man. A native child comes up to him and cuts the net. The burden which he has dragged for so long goes crashing down the waterfall and is swept away for ever. As the music swells, the viewer's heart pumps with the joy of sharing his feeling of total forgiveness and release from guilt.

We as Christians will only know the full bliss of what it means to be forgiven when we have understood the hurt we have caused God in rebelling against him. That might come at the moment we first turn to him or years later but come it will. And thanks be to Jesus that because of his suffering on the cross, a mere word or thought of repentance cuts the burden of our past lives from our backs, not an agonising penance in the jungle!

Daniel fully understood the nature of sin - rebellion (**v. 5**), refusal to acknowledge God (**v. 6**), faithlessness (**v. 7**), disobedience to the laws of God (**v. 10**). No wonder his plea to God was so urgent (**Daniel 9 v. 19**).

**FROM KNOWING THE RESULT**

Daniel had utter confidence that he and his nation would find forgiveness. This was not because he earned it through his prayer, but because it is in the very nature of God to have mercy (**Daniel 9 v. 18**).

The hundreds of years since Daniel, have seen God himself take human flesh, to live and die among us for the forgiveness of humankind. If Daniel had confidence in God's mercy, how much more confident can we be. May we who are deeply aware of our shortcomings not only find the forgiveness which is ours through God's gift, but also the peace that comes from knowing that the past is behind us (**Luke 7 v. 47 - 50**).

**Prayers of Intercession**

Our minds are so often full of words, and what is worse our hearts are often clogged up with thoughts and ideas as well, which leaves little room for meeting God in simplicity and stillness. So this morning we are going to have space to pray ourselves, guided with leads and prompts.

So first, let us take a little time to notice how many good things surround us, how much there is that we take for granted, and how much our lives have been blessed this last week with good people and enjoyable experiences.

***Silence***

We pray now for some of those people and places in the news, things we will read in the Sunday papers when we get home, or maybe have seen on our TV screens during this past week. We hold them now within God’s love.

***Silence***

We turn now to pray for the Church, for any of the big issues facing it at present and we pray for our own church, particularly with many opportunities and any problems that lie before us. We ask for guidance and grace for the Church.

***Silence***

Between us all, we know many people who are struggling today with illness, crises, big decisions and major changes in life. God’s care for them is even greater than ours, but let us show our own love and concern for them as we pray, naming our own people in quiet trust before God.

***Silence***

Each of us has things on our mind, perhaps things we hesitate to mention to anyone else. But our heavenly Father understands us totally, and wants only the very best outcome for us. Let us pray to him in the honesty of our own hearts.

***Silence***

These, Lord, are the prayers of your people this morning. We ask you to take each one of these prayers and answer them in your own time and in your own way. And in the meantime give us expectant and trustful hearts. For Jesus’ sake

**Amen**

**Song Suggestion**

You Alone Can Rescue

To God Be The Glory

**Offerings**

Now that we find ourselves once again holding In - Person services in Church, we are able to give of our finances to the work of the Lord when we are in church.

However, if you feel that you are not ready to return to In - Person services yet, please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you until the time arises when you feel that you can physically meet with us again and share in the finances of the church.

**Blessing**

Go forth into the world in peace:

Be of good courage;

Hold fast to that which is good;

Render to no one evil for evil;

Strengthen the faint - hearted;

Support the weak;

Help the afflicted;

Honour all people;

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**