



"RETURN TO ME"

## Communal Sin - June 17, 2020

### Introduction by Craig Stephens

*To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. - Daniel 9:8 (ESV)*

The prophet Daniel was just a boy when he was taken from Jerusalem. The Babylonian empire had conquered Judah, captured God's people, and exiled them to Babylon. Daniel had done well in Babylon, he learned, grew, and even served honorably in government. He had remained faithful to God and faced many trials from his rulers. He survived numerous plots against him, even surviving a night in the lion's den.

As Daniel matured into an old man, his heart and mind looked toward his homeland. He treasured the words of the prophet Jeremiah, to whom God revealed that Israel's exile would only last 70 years. Daniel knew that time was coming and prayed that God would fulfill His promise. He prayed that God's judgment would relent.

Yet Daniel saw the sins of his people. He confessed that sin had crept into their midst. They had forgotten the ways of the Lord and been corrupted by the culture around them. God's people had followed the ways of the nation and worshipped foreign gods. What was once seen as a sinful rebellion had become normal to the next generation. At the end of Daniel's life, God's people were hardly aware of their sin.

Sadly, because of their disobedience, an angel of the Lord told Daniel that he would not return to the Promised Land. Because of the sin of God's people, their exile would be extended seven times longer.

We can see many similarities in the book of Daniel to our present day. We know that we are people drawn to sin with a long history. We know that sin has crept into our culture, our nation, and even our church. We fear that these sinful patterns have become so normal, so ordinary, that we can't see them anymore.

So for our Joel Moment this week, we gather as a church in humility with prayer and fasting. We will ask God to open our eyes. We will ask Him to reveal the sin that has crept into our midst, that we have accepted, and even approved because it seems so ordinary. We will ask for God to give us prophetic eyes to recognize the sins of previous generations that we've tacitly accepted as righteous standard. We will ask God to show us the sin in our communities, nation, and church. We will ask God to reveal the ideas and systems that have been built on sin and



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normalized with the passing of time. And we will confess, repent, and ask for forgiveness that God may bring blessing and peace to us again.

### **Morning Prayer Guide by Audrey Young**

Let's start the morning with the Lord's prayer, Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV):

*"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one."*

Have you ever had to apologize on behalf of a friend, family member? Has anyone asked you why we have to live in a fallen world as a result of Adam and Eve's sins that we did not commit?

Throughout Scripture we see God engaging with people not only as individuals but corporately. There are many instances where the people of Israel suffered as a result of communal sin or an individual repents on behalf of his people or even his ancestors.

It has been said that the American church is complicit to the racism we see in our society today. According to Jemar Tisby, a Christian historian, author, and speaker, "Christians participated in this system of white supremacy—a concept that identifies white people and white culture as normal and superior—even if they claim people of color as their brothers and sisters in Christ." Do you think the church can move on towards anti-racist endeavors without dealing with our church history? The purpose of remembering and recognizing how each of us may have participated in the communal sin of racism, whether explicit or complicit, is to grieve because as the apostle Paul said, "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret" (ESV).

One may say, "I wasn't a slave owner, I wasn't a part of any white American church that oppressed people of color during the 19th century." However, can we deny the influence that



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history, society, and culture have on us? In the same way that we take credit for humanity's accomplishments as a society, should we not acknowledge the impact of our society's sins?

Be still and take a few breaths. As you prayerfully read the following Scripture, slow down, listen, and pray that God would speak to you.

Read Daniel 9:4-19 (NIV) twice and focus on the parts that speak to you.

Spend a few minutes in silence and read the passage again. Reflect on the text. What stood out to you? Is there something you need to confess to God? Where do you sense God is leading you to take action?

Pray about what God puts on your mind.

End this morning time by listening to Refiner by Maverick City Music and Steffany Gretzinger.

Daniel 9:4-19:

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

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





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*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. Lord, 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.*

*Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give 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. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.'"*

### **Evening Prayer Guide by Erin Gates**

This morning we prayed the Lord's Prayer. What might it look like for God's *kingdom to come*, and *his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven*? What is heaven like? Read Revelation 7:9-17. What response does this elicit? Pray to see more tastes of this on earth!

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD, Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (Psalm 84:1,2)*



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**Between 3:00 PM—4:00 PM: Join the Joel Moment Prayer Gathering. Go to Zoom.com and enter Meeting ID and Password.**

## Order of Events

### Confession and Repentance of Communal Sin

**Craig Stephens** - [An introduction and reflection on communal sin]

*To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. - Daniel 9:8 (ESV)*

**Kevin Watson** - [A review of the Biblical response to sin, a personal reflection, and prayer]

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." -Genesis 3:8-13 (ESV)*

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." -Daniel 3:16-18 (ESV)*

**Kristen Adams** - [An explanation on the effects of communal sin, and a prayer]

*For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.  
1 Cor. 15:21-22 (ESV)*

*And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone. -  
Numbers 23:13 (ESV)*



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*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but many. If the foot should say, “because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body... If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

*1 Cor. 12:12–20, 26 (ESV)*

**Erik Bahl** - [A Biblical confession of communal sin, and a prayer]

*1 Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”*

*3 Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. 4 Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” 5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.*

*6 When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:*

*“By the decree of the king and his nobles:*

*Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”*

*10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. - Jonah 3:1-10 (ESV)*





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**Krista Nipper** - [The hope of Christ and freedom from sin in His body, and prayer]

*Romans 5:16-19 English Standard Version (ESV)*

*16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*

*18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

*Romans 6:23 English Standard Version (ESV)*

*23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*Acts 1:8 English Standard Version (ESV)*

*8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

*Ezekiel 11:19-20 English Standard Version (ESV)*

*And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

*Romans 15:13 English Standard Version (ESV)*

*13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*



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## Group Prayer Prompts

**Group Prayer Prompt #1 (7 minutes)** - As we participate in systems and affiliate with groups run by sinful humans, sin is bound to creep in. Let's pray for God to open our eyes to the sin in our midst and give us the wisdom and courage to repent.

**Group Prayer Prompt #2 (7 minutes)** - When the Ninevites were confronted with their sin, they responded with prayer and fasting. Like the king of Nineveh, let's spend time reflecting on the glory, might, goodness, and holiness of God. And like the Ninevites, let's pray for forgiveness and seek God's mercy for the sin in our community.

**Group Prayer Prompt #3 (7 minutes)** - Jesus has conquered sin and death and bought us with His blood. Because of His death on the cross, we no longer have to be enslaved by sin. We are free to pursue holiness and righteousness. Let's spend time in prayer giving thanks to God for His Son, and praying for obedience and righteousness in our lives and the life of the church.

**Record verses and insights from Joel Moment Part 2 — that is, time after 4:00 PM — when we talk, intercede and catch up.**