

York St Small Groups

Sermon Based Studies

SUNDAY 9 JUNE 2019

Speaker: Colette Harrison

Difference Makers

Ezra 1: 1-7



Please note that these studies are designed to be explored after hearing the Sunday Sermon and also to be accompanied by a time of prayer/sharing and supper.

To listen to this message again please head to the York St Website or download from iTunes.

Webpage: www.yorkst.com.au

GETTING STARTED

Q1. What do you think when you hear the phrase “share your faith”? Do you have a positive or negative reaction? Why?

Q2. As followers of Jesus, we have real hope and we’re called to share it. But *how* we share it makes a difference. Discuss why you think this matters. Where does love fit into this?

INTO THE WORD

Read Jeremiah 29: 1-14

God's people were in exile in Babylon because of their own sin. Yet God still seeks them, still speaks to them, and still encourages them with his promises. This letter was written to the first of the three groups exiled to Babylon, a group that included Daniel. It is likely that Jeremiah's letter to the exiles was not very popular. There were false prophets among the Jews who were saying something very different from Jeremiah. He said that God's word was that the Babylonian exile would last seventy years, while the false prophets were saying it would be only two years.

Q3. Although Jeremiah's message would not have been popular, how do you think his letter brought hope and encouragement to the exiles? What does it tell us about God?

Read Ezra 1: 1-7

Q4. Whose prophecy did Cyrus king of Persia fulfill in issuing a proclamation to rebuild the temple? Why did Cyrus allow the exiles to leave? Although he's not mentioned what role do you think Daniel had in this? Why? (Daniel 6:28)

Read Daniel 6: 3-5

Q5. As you reflect on Daniel's life what was it about him that enabled him to gain influence and point others to God, all without compromising his beliefs. How did he do it?

GOING DEEPER

Q6. Daniel stood up for God's truth whilst living in a morally corrupt culture. Despite the challenges he faced he neither *separated* himself, instead he lived and worked within that culture, nor *assimilated* into it. What can we learn from his example?

Q7. 'Love God, love others, work hard, and people will notice.' This was true of Daniel. For us, there won't always be times to share our faith in direct conversation, which is exactly why our actions matter. (Actions speak louder than words.) Regardless, work and personal relationships all deserve respect, open communication, honesty, integrity and commitment. In what way does this make a difference? Why?

CONCLUSION & PRAYER

What can you do to be a Daniel in the culture God has placed you?
What can your group members do to continue to encourage you to stand strong and love well as you influence the world for Christ?

Pray for one another.