# 9-WEEK STUDY ON THRIVING IN EXILE

# WEEK 6

Exile: Headed Home

Ezra/Nehemiah

### WEEK 6

#### **WEEKLY READING**

Primary text from this week: Daniel 9:1-2, Jeremiah 29:10-14, Ezra 1:1-13

Secondary text from this week: 2 Timothy 2:13

Read ahead for next week: Esther 1-10

#### GETTING STARTED

Goals for this session: To understand that God is faithful, even when people aren't

**Missed the sermon?** Watch it at www.youtube.com/venturamissionary

**Break the Ice:** Describe a time when you have experienced God's faithfulness.

#### GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1. What stood out to you about Pastor Doug's message on Sunday?
- 2. Pastor Doug acknowledged that often the stories of Bible can feel disconnected and disjointed. How has this series helped you connect the stories of the Bible into one overarching story about God and His love for people?
- 3. Pastor Doug pointed our attention to Daniel's realization that the 70 years of Babylonian captivity was almost up (see **Daniel 9:1-2**). Read **Daniel 9:3-6** and discuss Daniel's response.
- 4. Re-read King Cyrus' decree in **Ezra 1:1-3** and reflect on the words, "...the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia." What do you think that phrase means? How do you think God "moved the hearts" of people?
- 5. The prophet Isaiah actually prophesied about Cyrus years before he came into power (read **Isaiah 44:24-28 and 45:13**). How does the fact that God foretold and orchestrated all of those details help you trust God's faithfulness?
- 6. Re-read **2 Timothy 2:13** and reflect on the significance of that verse (Pastor Doug read it from the NLT translation).

Now, read the rest of the passage (2 Timothy 2:8-13) with the insight that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy from prison shortly before being executed for his faith. How does the story behind the letter affect your understanding of this passage?

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## WEEK 6

#### PRAY

**Pray for each other:** Pray for each other's worries, concerns, and challenges.

**Pray on your own:** Thank God for being faithful, even when people aren't. (2 Timothy 2:13)

# **ACTION STEPS**

Think of three people who have wronged you (betrayed you, hurt you, lied to you, etc.), and then think of three people you have wronged. Now, ask God to forgive you and the people who have wronged you.

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