

SERMON REFLECTIONS

We are exiles in “Babylon”

Daniel 1 | 5 January 2025 | Rev Dr Aaron Tay

Reflection Questions

1. Daniel and God’s people were in exile, but it was God who put them there. We, as God’s people, are also in “exile” (in the non-Christian world) to fulfil His purposes.

To be in exile is to be in a place or a society in where the God you believe in and the religion (values) you have always followed is no longer the dominant force.

Most of us live and work in a secular, pluralistic environment where our beliefs are not shared – we live and work in a place of spiritual exile. We are exiles in “Babylon”.

What are the purposes that God has called us to fulfil in “Babylon”?

- You may give answers pertaining to the book of Daniel (if you are familiar with this book, share the purposes that Daniel and his friends fulfilled in their lives in Babylon).
- You may also share other biblical, theological and personal answers to this question.

Our Vision

To be disciples of Jesus Christ

Our Mission

We exist to make disciples who love God, love one another and love the lost



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2. There is a tension that confronted the Israelites in exile, and therefore us in the world, between opportunities to succeed and pressure to compromise one's faith.

Are we willing to make a stand?

- a) What could be the situations in our lives and careers where our conscience and ethical beliefs trouble us? Look at the possible situations in your career. If you cannot remember personal examples, think of stories/news you have read.
 - b) How would you be able to stand up to the pressure of your bosses and colleagues if they want you to do something against your Christian ethical belief?
 - c) List some of what we Christian believe, with regards to ethics in the workplace.
3. There are at least three possible reactions to pressure to conform to the "Babylonian" culture:
 - i. Christ OF Culture: This belief sees God operative in all areas of life and tends towards assimilation with the surrounding culture. (ANYTHING GOES!)

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- ii. Christ AGAINST Culture: sees human culture as fallen and evil and opposed to God, thus to be shunned and battled against. (EVERYTHING ALSO CANNOT!)

- iii. Christ the TRANSFORMER of Culture. This seeks to work with God's redemptive purpose by an involvement that does not assimilate to culture, but confronts it with the aim of transforming it. (EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE BUT NOT EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL – need to KNOW GOD's GENERAL WILL, need to PRAY, DISCERN and OBEY.)

Give examples (of individual Christians or the church) responding to the pressures of culture according to each of the above reactions. Discuss.

- 4. What are your hopes, prayers and goals for 2025: for yourself, your family, your DG, your career, the church?

- 5. Do share as much as you are comfortable to, and pray for each other.

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