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Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2016 1:00 AM
To: fred@orcutfamily.net
Subject: One Nation Under God Devotional - November 1

ONE NATION UNDER GOD Devotional

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A Future of Hope

These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But **seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.** For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you

deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. **For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.** Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Jeremiah 29:1-14 (ESV)

Reflection

As the upcoming elections draw near, the rhetoric from the candidates, their parties, the media, and other groups, paints a bleak portrait of our future. If we buy into it all, it doesn't matter who wins the election, the losers will be the everyday citizens like you and me. If we buy in to all the naysaying, we have virtually no hope.

I would imagine that's how the Jewish exiles felt when they were ripped from their homeland in Jerusalem and taken into captivity.

In 605 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Jerusalem and seized its citizens and their property. Over the next eighteen years, Judeans were deported to Babylon to live as captives in this foreign land. They didn't have the rights held by ordinary citizens nor did they have a voice in the governance of the land. The only

Challenge

We should pray for the welfare of our city, our county, and its leaders. If we do, God promises, through his divine providence, peace and a future of hope for those who follow him.

For Discussion

When was the last time you prayed for the welfare of our community, our city, our county, our state, and our nation?

When was the last time

thing they had was the memory of the freedoms and hope they had when they lived in Jerusalem.

Then God sent word through his prophet Jeremiah of a hopeful future for his followers, a future that would eventually call them home to Jerusalem. But, in the meantime, God tells them to pray for the welfare of the very city and government that's holding them captive. "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare (Jeremiah 29:7, CEB)." God tells them if they do, though their present circumstances look pretty bleak, their future looks bright and promises to provide hope. "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.' (Jeremiah 29:11, CEB)."

If they, who were held captive in a foreign land, were called to pray for its welfare, how much more are we, who are free to have voice and vote in our homeland, called to pray for our city's and our county's welfare? How much more should we be grateful for our community and those who willing to lead?

Prayer

Gracious and sovereign God, we come to you this day and ask your blessing upon our city, our county, our state, and our nation. May your peace be poured out over our elected officials, those called to public service, those who protect and defend us, and all who reside in this great country! In Christ's holy name we pray. Amen!

you prayed for the welfare
of our elected officials?



Scott Goodfellow is the Senior Pastor at Granbury First United Methodist Church. Prior to coming to Granbury, Scott pastored United Methodist churches in Brock and Nolanville, Texas. He answered his call to ministry in 2009 after a 17-year career in homebuilding. Scott's passion for sharing the love of Christ evidenced itself through his volunteer work in children's and youth ministries, bible study leadership, mission work, and worship participation. Scott graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Mary Hardin Baylor. He later attended Perkins School of Theology at SMU where he earned his Master of Divinity degree. Two years later he was ordained as an Elder in the United Methodist Church. Scott, his wife, and two sons live in Granbury. Since moving to Granbury, Scott's greatest desire is to introduce others to Christ and to assist them in their development as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Website:

www.funcgranbury.org



Join Us
Sunday, November 6 at 6:00 p.m.
ONE NATION UNDER GOD
Multi Congregation
Worship and Prayer Gathering
Shanley Park
Houston and Rucker Streets
Granbury

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