

“True Prayer – Part 2”
Daniel 9:1-19
(Preached at Trinity, September 14, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Daniel 9 opens in the first year of King Darius. We've seen that one of the great characteristics of Daniel was his life of prayer – he was a man of prayer.
 - A. In **Chapter 2** Nebuchadnezzar in a fit of rage ordered the execution all of his wise men.

Daniel 2:12-13 NAU - "the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³ So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill *them*."

What was Daniel's response? What would you do in time of crisis?
He gathered together his three faithful friends and they prayed.

Daniel 2:17-18 NAU - "Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, ¹⁸ so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."
 - B. Again, in **Chapter 6** when once again threatened with death Daniel did what he was accustomed to doing—he prayed.

Daniel 6:10 NAU - " Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously."
2. So it shouldn't surprise us to find Daniel praying in this chapter, which actually takes place before the **Chapter 6** lions' den episode.
 - A. What we also find here is that Daniel was also a student of the written Scriptures.

Daniel 9:2 NAU - " in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed* as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years."
 - B. He actually refers to God's Word over 10 times in this section of **Chapter 9**.
Daniel's prayer was the fruit of his study of the Word of God
 - C. Daniel was pleading with God based upon God's promise given in His Word and upon His covenant relationship with His people.

Daniel 9:4 NAU - "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,"

3. I pointed out last time that this is one of the greatest prayers recorded in Scripture:
Daniel 9:19 NAU - "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."
4. Daniel records this prayer for the encouragement of God's people. This was one reason Daniel didn't retreat to secrecy when threatened with the lions' den. Daniel wanted his fellow believers to understand the importance of prayer.
5. **Daniel 9** sets before us several important principles regarding true prayer.
 - True prayer is fueled by the Word of God. We pray God's promises back to Him.
 - True prayer maintains an exalted view of God. In prayer we approach God with holy reverence.
Daniel 9:4 NAU - "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God"
 - True prayer is always motivated by a desire for the glory of God
Daniel's chief concern was the holy name of God
Daniel 9:19 NAU - "O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."
 - a. The psalmist revealed this clearly in **Psalm 115**
Psalms 115:1 NAS - "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Thy name give glory Because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth."
 - b. When we pray our heart shouldn't be to mold God's plan to our agenda but for God to glorify Himself.
6. Tonight I want us to continue to profit from Daniel's example as we examine the characteristics of true prayer.
 - I. True prayer maintains a proper humility before God
 - A. We see this humility clearly with Daniel
Daniel 9:3 NAU - "So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes."
Daniel 9:7 NAU - "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day"
Daniel 9:18 NAU - "we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion."
 1. Daniel always showed himself a gentleman—a man of meekness and humility. He was always respectful to those in authority over him
 2. There is no greater need for humility than when we approach God
 3. Daniel covered his prayer in dust and buffeted himself with fasting.
 - B. Pride is our greatest enemy
 1. We are most concerned about what is happening to us. We want others to focus their attention upon us.
 2. Meekness is a willingness to seek obscurity. It doesn't seek publicity. It's a willingness to praise others; to give others honor.

3. Too often people fail to approach God with humility
Salvation demands humbling ourselves before God.
Humility should characterize the Christian
Matthew 5:5 KJV - "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." - (mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness)

C. Prayer is a place where we need to guard our hearts

1. Public prayer is sometimes a platform for displaying our eloquence
2. Even private prayer can be characterized by selfish desires and pride in our accomplishments
3. The parable of the Pharisee and tax collector is most instructive
Luke 18:10-14 NAU - "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' ¹³ "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' ¹⁴ "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."
 - a. The Pharisee's prayer was scholastic and rehearsed but God did not hear him. God heard his words only to condemn him.
 - b. The tax-collector would not even lift his eyes towards heaven. He bowed low in humility and self-abasement – and God was well-pleased.
4. Pride hinders our prayer life
James 4:3-6 NAS - "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? ⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
 - a. That which opens the heavens in prayer is lowliness of mind. Paul said, **Philippians 2:5** - "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus"
 - b. Pride is that which closes God's ears is pride
"God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
5. E.M. Bounds – "Prayer has no beginning, no ending, no being, without humility. As a ship is made for the sea, so prayer is made for humility, and so humility is made for prayer."

II. True prayer always includes confession before God

A. Daniel set the sins of Israel before God

Daniel 9:5 NAU - "we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances."

1. Notice Daniel included himself in his prayer of confession and contrition
 2. Daniel was just a boy when God unleashed His judgment upon Judah. He had spent his entire adult life in captivity. Not once do we have an example of unfaithfulness in Daniel's life. Yet Daniel confessed that he was a sinner.
 3. He declared the justness of God's condemnation
Daniel 9:7 NAU - "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day-- to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You."
Daniel 9:14 NAU - "Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice."
 4. He pleaded for God's mercy
Daniel 9:18 NAU - "O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion."
 The word for "compassion" (חַנּוּן) is often translated "mercy" which is how the KJV, NIV, ESV translate it
 5. Daniel's plea is a passionate plea for God's mercy
Daniel 9:19 NAU - "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! "
Verse 19 has been called the Kyrie eleison of the OT (Κύριε ἐλέησόν)
- B. An important aspect of our prayer life must include confession
1. This side of heaven we will not be freed completely from sin. Our life is still in need of repentance and still in need of confession
1 John 1:9 NAU - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 2. This was the great characteristic of the prayer of the tax collector that was well-pleasing to God.
 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'"
 3. God's mercy is always rich towards His people who humbly bow before Him.
- III. True prayer recognizes our covenant relationship with God
Jeremiah 31:33 KJV - "But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."
- A. Daniel recognizes God to be *his* God
Daniel 9:4 NAU - " I prayed to the LORD my God"

1. Daniel plead before God on the basis of His covenant relationship with His people

Daniel 9:4 NAU - "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,"

Daniel 9:15 NAU - "And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself"

Daniel 9:16 NAU - " let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people *have become* a reproach to all those around us."

Daniel 9:17 NAU - "So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary."

Daniel 9:18 NAU - "Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name"
 2. Daniel confesses that they had sinned, yet he pleads to God by virtue of God's covenant. God was righteous in His condemnation, but Daniel reminds God of His covenant promises.

Daniel 9:19 NAU - "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."
 3. Daniel finds comfort in the promises of God for His people as they are departing from Babylon—promises that look forward to the ultimate deliverance of God's people in Christ.

Isaiah 40:1-2 NAU - "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. ² "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins."
- B. Our great hope and confidence is through Christ
1. God's promises are sure. When we hear the words "My People" we claim them as our own through Christ.
 2. He came to redeem His people from their sins. We are His beloved Bride

Ephesians 5:25-27 NAU - " just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."
 3. There is no prayer apart from Christ. There is no access before God's throne apart from Christ.

John 14:6 NAU - "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

4. But for those who find comfort under the covering of Christ we have boldness of access.
Ephesians 3:11-12 NAU - "*This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.*"
5. Through Christ we are able to pray, "Our Father." We are able to approach Him as His dear children.

Conclusion:

1. Daniel is demonstrating before us the kind of prayer that honors God. He is teaching us.
 True prayer is the fruit of God's Word in our hearts.
 True prayer comes before God in holy reverence.
 True prayer maintains God's glory as its chief interest.
 True prayer is clothed in humility
 True prayer is exposes our sin and demands confession and a plea for mercy
 True prayer is for God's people alone. We come on the basis of our relationship with Christ.
2. Daniel's instruction is by way of example. But it is powerful instruction. I pray it will transform the way we approach God in prayer.