

“True Prayer – Part 1”
Daniel 9:1-19
(Preached at Trinity, September 7, 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.
 - A. It's interesting the text says,
Daniel 9:1 NAU - "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans"
 1. It could simply read "became king" but it would also be correct to read it as a causative passive – "was made king"
 2. This most likely refers to Darius as a viceroy of King Cyrus. Darius was "made" king by Cyrus.
 3. But we know the first cause of all things is God. He raises up and brings down.
1 Samuel 2:6-8 NAU - "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. ⁸ "He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them."
 - B. The first year of King Darius would be immediately after the death of Belshazzar and the defeat of Babylon. This would have probably occurred before the account of Daniel and the lions' den of **Chapter 6**. As we've seen, Daniel follows a general chronology but not necessarily a linear chronology.
2. Daniel was not only a man of prayer, he was also a student of God's Word and he was familiar with the Word of the Lord spoken to Jeremiah the prophet. In Jeremiah 25 we find Jeremiah's prophecy regarding the duration of God's judgment upon Israel.
Jeremiah 25:11-12 NAU - "This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.'"
3. Babylon's assault upon Jerusalem took place in three phases which involved three deportations. The first occurred in 606 B.C. Daniel was carried away during this first deportation. The second deportation took place in 597 which included Ezekiel. The final fall of Jerusalem took place in 586 B.C.
 - A. This means if you date the first year of Darius from the fall of Jerusalem it would have been only 48 years.
 - B. But if you date it from the first deportation when Daniel was carried off into Babylon it has been 67 years. This means from this point there was only three years to go.

4. Daniel knew the promise of God and believed the promises of God but knowing and believing the promises of God does not lead us to carelessness in prayer. In fact, prayer is often praying God's promises back to Him.
We know that prayer is the means by which God brings about much of His sovereign purpose. James says, "You do not have because you do not ask" (4:2).
5. There is another aspect to this. In **Chapter 8** we read that Daniel had received a vision that was most troubling to him. He would have had this vision about a year before the situation of **Chapter 9**. The vision was so disturbing that it left him sick.
Daniel 8:27 NAU - "Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up *again* and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain *it*."
 - A. The troubling aspect was not his lack of understanding of the vision.
I stated last week that there were many aspects of Daniel's visions of which he was not given the meaning. I also stated last week that a full understanding of Daniel's visions is not necessary in order for us to profit from them. But there were other aspects of Daniel's visions that he understood clearly. Gabriel had given him the interpretation that God's people would suffer. The troubling aspect was *why*. Why was it necessary for Israel to suffer this great persecution?
 - B. So Daniel was driven to prayer; continual, unceasing prayer. This would have been the context of the lions' den episode.
6. In the first part of this chapter Daniel records for us the content of his prayer.
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."
7. Why does Daniel record this prayer? He was mindful of the importance of encouraging others in prayer. This was one reason he wasn't about to retreat to secrecy when threatened with the lions' den. Daniel wanted his fellow believers to understand the importance of prayer. We shouldn't overlook the similarity between Daniel's prayer in this chapter and the prayer of the Levites in **Nehemiah 9**.
Nehemiah 9:1-3 NAU - "Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth and with dirt upon them. ² The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. ³ While they stood in their place, they read from the book of the law of the LORD their God for a fourth of the day; and for *another* fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God."
8. Daniel teaches and encourages us to prayer. Tonight I want us to examine Daniel's prayer. It teaches us much about the nature of true prayer.
 - I. True prayer is intimately connected to the Word of God
 - A. Daniel's prayer was the fruit of his study of the Word of God
Daniel 9:2 NAU - "I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed* as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet"
 1. The Word of God formed the basis for Daniel's prayer. It's in almost every verse.
 - a. He speaks of God's covenant and His commandments in **Verse 4**
 - b. He speaks of God's commandments and ordinances in **Verse 5**
 - c. In **Verse 10** Daniel speaks of "His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets."

- d. In **Verse 11** and again in **Verse 13** he speaks of that "written in the law of Moses"
 - e. In **Verse 12** Daniel appeals further to the Word of God: "Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us"
 - f. In **Verse 13** he speaks of the "truth"
 - g. In **Verses 10, 11, 14** - "we have not obeyed His voice."
2. Daniel was pleading with God based upon God's promise given in His Word.
- B. God's Word must always direct our prayers
1. God reveals Himself through His Word. We learn about the God we pray to in His Word. The Bible protects us from forming false idolatrous thoughts about God.
 2. The Bible is a living Book. By this we mean that the Holy Spirit is continually applying it to our lives. He uses it to draw us to prayer, to remind us of God's promises, to convict us of sin, to praise Him for His goodness.
 3. God is pleased when we pray His Word back to Him. The Puritans referred to this as "pleading the promises."
 - a. James writes of the "prayer of faith"
James 5:15 KJV - "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick"
 - b. The "prayer of faith" is the prayer that rests upon what God has already promised to do.
Daniel 9:16 NAU - "O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem"
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."
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."
- II. True prayer maintains an exalted view of God
- A. Daniel saw God in all His infinite greatness
Daniel 9:4 NAU - "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God"
1. The word "awesome" has lost its force today. People will say, "That was an awesome meal," or "He is an awesome ballplayer," or "That's an awesome truck," or simply, "Awesome dude."
 - a. The Hebrew word is אָוֶם which means fear
 - b. It was the word used by Jacob when he prayed to God for deliverance from Esau.
Genesis 32:11 NAU - "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me *and* the mothers with the children."
 - c. The dictionary definition of awesome is "something that inspires feelings of reverence, fear, and wonder."
 2. Daniel saw God in all His greatness and bowed in holy reverence

- B. We must always approach God with holy reverence
1. We are plagued by an unholy familiarity with God today—we barge into His presence in worship and in prayer without due consideration
The line between the sacred and profane has been blurred
 2. Years ago there was a fad that encouraged “conversational” prayer
“Hi God, Bob here. I’ve had a pretty good day.”
This is a point in favor of the KJV. It used sacred language
 3. There has also been a tendency towards casual worship – shorts, t-shirt, and flip-flops.
 4. On one hand we have boldness of access and sweet intimacy with God but we never forget His infinite holiness—He dwells in light inaccessible.
 5. The Seraphim are continually in the presence of God but we see nothing of a relaxing of their holy reverence
Isaiah 6:2-3 NAU - "Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."
 6. The writer of Hebrews admonishes us:
Hebrews 12:28-29 NAU - "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire."
KJV - "reverence and godly fear:"
- III. True prayer is always has an eye upon the glory of God
- A. Daniel’s prayer was for God’s glory. Daniel was most concerned about the honor of God. **Verse 19 - For Your own sake, O my God**
1. His great interest was God’s great name. The emphasis is upon God and His city called by His name. Daniel was grieved because God’s city laid desolate.
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."
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."
 2. We saw the same thing in the Psalms
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. We must always be mindful of God’s glory as we come before Him
1. There is nothing so precious to God as His own glory.
It is a glory that cannot be shared with any other being
Isaiah 42:8 KJV - "I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another"

2. He does all that He does for His own glory.
His glory should be our great interest. Our great desire is that our life bring Him glory.
3. When we come before Him in prayer our chief interest must not be in having our will accomplished. It must be that the glory of God might be magnified upon the earth.
 - a. The man was born blind so that as an adult his healing might bring glory to God
John 9:1-3 NAU - "As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "*It was neither that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him."
 - b. God may receive greater glory from your sickness than from your healing. How will you pray?
 - c. This was at the heart of Jesus prayer:
Luke 22:42 KJV - " Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."
 - D. Our prayer life must not simply be about getting God to do our will. It is about God working in us to the full measure of His glory. Do you pray like that?
- C. This was the expression of Daniel's life
 1. We saw this in **Chapter 1**
Daniel 1:8 NAU - "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank"
We can hear Paul's words:
1 Corinthians 10:31 NAU - " Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
 2. Our own life must be an expression of the glory of God. Our heart's desire must be the words of Daniel's prayer –
Daniel 9:19 NAU - "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God"
Sinclair Ferguson – "Only when that phrase is present in our hearts and not merely in our words have we been mastered by a true motive. Unfortunately, sin clouds our minds precisely at this point. We mistakenly think that God's glory and our blessing are incompatible."
 3. The psalmist states it the best:
Psalms 115:1 KJV - "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory"

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.
2. I pray that we have been instructed this evening.
Next week I'll set some other characteristics of true prayer as Daniel continues to instruct us.