

Elements of True Prayer

Examining the Prayer of Daniel- Part 10

Tuesday December 1, 2009

Daniel 9:1-19

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

So here Daniel prays and fasts and repents- not only for the people of God- but also for himself. And as this man fervently and effectually prays- we see eight different elements of true intercessory prayer emerging and flowing out of this marvelous prayer. Now these eight elements are not *explicitly* taught here in **Daniel 9**- but they are *implicitly* found here. They are not the *purpose* of the prayer- yet they become, for us, a very good purpose- because they help us to see what is included in true intercessory prayer:

True Prayer is:

1. Generated by the Word of God
2. Grounded in God's Will
3. Characterized by Fervency
4. Realized Through Self Denial
5. Identified With God's People
6. Strengthened Through the Confession of Sin
7. Dependant on God's Character
8. Completed in God's Glory

Now in previous studies- we have already seen that true intercessory prayer is generated by the Word of God; Grounded in God's Will; Characterized by Fervency; Realized through Self Denial; Identified with God's People; and Strengthened Through the Confession of Sin. Tonight- let's look at the seventh element of true prayer-

7. True Prayer is Dependant on God's Character

If God was like the false gods of the Philistines- it really wouldn't do a lot of good to ask for forgiveness- because their gods were evil and cruel gods in their own mind. But the one true living God of the Holy Bible is not so. We pray our prayer of forgiveness and our prayer of confession and we call on God on the behalf of His people and we intercede for the needs of others precisely because we believe God hears and responds. So in reality- all of our prayers are based on the Divine Character of God Himself.

Now, notice how that Character is developed beginning in verse 4.

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Look what Daniel said about God here:

... O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

So first of all- Daniel says that God is "great". That word means: *powerful*. In other words- Daniel prayed to God because God is powerful enough to answer his prayers. God has the ability to change Daniel's circumstances. The God of the Bible is not impotent- He is Omnipotent. God has all the infinite Resources at His disposal that Daniel needs. He is the God in verse 15 Who

... brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown

That is the God to Whom Daniel prayed. It is so wonderful to know that when we pray- we go to a God Who is Omnipotent. It would be awful for us to have to pray to a god who was the second or the third most powerful deity in the Universe and had to work everything through somebody else. That would give us no hope at all that that kind of a god could answer our prayers. Why would you ever pray to a "god" who does not have the power to answer your prayers?

Then Daniel says that God is "dreadful". Now the Hebrew word that was translated here into English as "dreadful" is *yare*, which means: *to be feared and to hold in awe; to cause astonishment; to inspire godly reverence*. This word has to do with Majesty. So the God to Whom we pray is not only all Powerful- but He is also to be honored and feared and respected. This God deserves to be glorified. He is to be exalted. He is to be lifted up. He is to be praised. And this God is worthy of all of that. But Daniel said this God is even more than All Powerful and Majestic-

He is the most powerful, and he is the most majestic...Look what else.

... O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant...

This is the God Who keeps the Covenant. So not only do we see His Power and His Majesty here- but now we see that God is faithful. So that tells us that when God makes a Promise- He will always keep that Promise and He will never break His Promise.

God made a Covenant with His people that He would never forsake them. And God said if they sin and they repent and turn from that sin- God promised that He would forgive them. And God promised that if they would obey Him- He would restore them. And so that is what Daniel trusted in and that is what we should trust in today- not our own ability to "make things happen"- but we may trust in a God Who is all Powerful and Majestic and a God Who *cannot* lie and a God Who is utterly Faithful and Trustworthy and Reliable.

Psalms 50:15

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Psalms 91:15

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Jeremiah 29:12-13

12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 33:3

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

We pray to God because God has the Power to answer our prayers. We pray to God because He is the most Majestic Being in the Universe, and He is worthy of our prayers. And we pray to God because He is a faithful God Who will keep His Promises.

... O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

God has Mercy to them that love Him and who keep His Commandments. Now this word, "Mercy" here is really Love. God forgives because God loves. He will grant us what we ask in His Will because He loves. It's one thing to be Powerful. It's something else to be Majestic. And it's especially wonderful to be Faithful. But what encompasses all of these attributes is pure and perfect Love.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee...

Righteousness belongs to God- He has Ownership of Righteousness- Righteousness is part of God's Own Personal Character and He is in no way unrighteous. How wonderful it is to know that! God can never do a wrong thing. He is always right- no matter what He does- it's always right. We pray to a God Who is always right. And that means that God never makes a mistake and never has a folly and never has a blunder. So the God to Whom we pray is All Powerful, Majestic, Faithful, Loving, and absolutely and perfectly right.

And then how wonderful to know that our God is Merciful and Forgiving. And that may be the heart of it all. In verse 9 it says,

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses...

So this tells us that our God is very Gracious. So the God to Whom we pray is All Powerful, Majestic, Faithful, Loving, Righteous, and Gracious. And that is the kind of God Whom we seek and bring our petitions to.

So as we gather at the Lord's table, and we look at the Cross- we see all of those things. As I look at the Cross, I see His Power, because on that Cross Jesus conquered sin and death and Satan and hell. As I look at the Cross- we see His Majesty, for there He is, a victim in appearance of the Romans and the Jews. And yet step by step Christ is in full control of every single thing that's happening on the Cross. And one standing afar off and watching Jesus control His Own dying and control every event to fulfill Old Testament Prophecy uttered in absolute astonishment, "Truly this was the Son of God!" So Jesus was Majestic- even in dying.

As we look at the Cross- we see His Faithfulness. He said that He would die for us. He said that He had to go to the Cross. He said the Son of Man had to die. Even though in the Garden- He agonized about it- but He kept His Promise. Jesus is Faithful.

As we look at the Cross- we see His Love, because He shouldn't have been there. I should have been there- you should have been there- but not Jesus. But because He loved- He took our place. And when we look at the Cross- we see His Righteousness- because it is God's perfect Righteousness that put Him there. He couldn't just forgive sinners- He couldn't just act like sin doesn't matter. Sin had to be fully paid for and all of God's Fury and Wrath against sin had to be poured out because God cannot and He will not tolerate sin. Sin's full penalty must be paid. And on the Cross- we see God's Mercy and Forgiveness- Jesus is Gracious.

And what we must realize is that all that God is to Daniel- God is also to us. And Daniel knows it from his dealings with his people, and we know it from the Cross. So we see God's Power; His Majesty; His Faithfulness; His Love; His Righteousness; and His Grace in Jesus Christ on the Cross. And that is the basis of all our prayers.

I'm so glad to pray to a God Who is All Powerful. I'm so glad to pray to a God Who's absolutely Majestic and Who controls all the circumstances of the whole world. I'm so glad to pray to a God Who's absolutely Faithful to His children, and a God Who loves them fully. I'm glad to pray to a God Who's utterly and absolutely

Righteous and Who will always do what is right. And I'm so glad to pray to a God
Who is gracious and Who forgives and forgives and forgives!