

Elements of True Prayer

Examining the Prayer of Daniel- Part 8

Tuesday November 2, 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 and Realized through Self Denial. So tonight let's look at how true genuine Prayer is Identified with God's People.

Daniel 9:4-16

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.

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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.

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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.

We, Us, and Our

Listen to Daniel's own personal identification with the people of God:

Verse 5, "**We** have sinned... "

Verse 6, "Neither have **we** hearkened."

Verse 7, "Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto **us** confusion of faces."

Verse 8, "O, Lord, to **us** belongeth confusion."

Verse 10, "**Neither have we obeyed.**"

Verse 11, "**Yea, all Israel has transgressed, and Thy curse is poured us.. because... we have sinned against Him.**"

Verse 12, "**He spake against us, our judged that judged us.**"

Verse 13, "**us... our... we**".

Verse 14, "**us... we**".

Verse 15, "**And we have done wickedly.**"

Verse 16, "**Our sin... our fathers... a reproach to all that are about us.**"

Daniel never said, "*I have tried to serve You but they didn't. I love You and want to walk with You- but they don't*". No, Daniel never prayed that way and we shouldn't pray that way either because true prayer groups God's people together.

True, intercessory prayer always identifies the one praying with the people being prayed for. And this is an amazing thing. The Apostle Paul did this when he said in **Ephesians 6:18**:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

And then in the very next two verses- he said:

Ephesians 6:19&20

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

In other words- Paul was asking them to,

"Pray most of all for me."...

Setting Ourselves Aside

So the focus of our prayers is to be on others after we've taken care of setting our self aside. You go into prayer, and you realize, first of all, you don't even belong there. But the Word of God has called you there. And you seek the Will of God. And you set your own will aside, and then you pour out your heart on behalf of others. And Daniel sees himself bound up with others also. It was true of those in Israel that they saw themselves as a part of the total entity. And I believe that's true in the Body of Christ today.

I think it's very clear that, when you study **1Corinthians 12**- that you find that we're all one Body. And when one member hurts- the whole Body is supposed to suffer. And when one rejoices- the whole Body is supposed to rejoice.

We Are Linked

I have to begin to realize that as the Pastor of this Church- I am linked with the sins of this Church. I have to encompass myself in that. Wives are linked with the sins of their husbands; husbands are linked with the sins of their wives; Parents are linked with the sins of their children; and children are linked with the sins of their parents. And as citizens of this country- we are linked with the sins of our nation. **1Samuel 12:23-25** says this:

23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

We must all learn that the focal point of our prayer life is not ourselves. When we really become Biblical- we will begin to recognize God's Will and we will get me out of the picture- and we will start praying for others.

And there are, in Christianity today around this country and the world, Christians who are completely missing the boat in prayer, because all they've got in prayer is "I", "me", and "mine". And they're not embracing the needs of God's people.

The Apostle Paul always prayed for others and Jesus taught us to do the same:

- ✓ **Give us this day our daily bread**
- ✓ **Forgive us our debts**
- ✓ **Lead us not into temptation**

Prayer is an Opportunity to be Burdened for Someone Else

There's a sense in which we- as the people of God- encompass one another and that means that our prayers are not a private, personal exercise for us to get some of God's goodies- but rather an opportunity for us to be burdened and inconvenienced by somebody else's needs. **Galatians 6:2** says

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

... and what is the "law of Christ"? The law of Christ is the new Commandment,

John 13:34

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Philippians 1:3-5

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

Colossians 1:3&4

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints

Philemon 4

I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

2Corinthians 1:9-11

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Mutual Prayer Removes Selfishness

Prayer in the early Church was mutual. I pray for you and you pray for me. That way nobody was allowed to manifest selfishness. And this is the way that the true Body of Christ is supposed to function. And we really need to learn this.

We are to pray for those in authority over us. Pray for leaders. Pray for those in need. And Daniel saw his people- in their sin- and Daniel gathered his people into his arms and he prayed for them. He didn't distance himself from them or their sins. Daniel refused to separate himself from their shortcomings. He included himself in their failures and in their follies. And this mutuality caused Daniel to pray for them.

Daniel always said, "we", and "us" not "them" or "they". He didn't stand apart as if he were self-righteous. A self-righteous man would repudiate such an identification with chastened sinners.

Daniel *could* have prayed, "*Boy, am I ever glad that I'm not a part of that bunch. I mean I've been really true to God for over 80 years and I've been faithful and I'm a child of God who dwells among a bunch of backslid pagans. I'm the guy with all the visions. I'm the guy that shut the mouths of the lion. I'm the guy that overcame Nebuchadnezzar.*"

He *could* have prayed that way- but he didn't. And there are scores of people today in the modern Church who are so self-righteous- they would never in a million

years identify with the sins of others- but not Daniel. He embraced them, because they were his people too. And in his mind that was fashioned after God's Word- Daniel knew that he really was a sinner, too and he knew he had failed, too; and he knew that he deserved God's Wrath too. And so the knowledge of his own sin encouraged him not to be ashamed to identify himself with the sin of God's people.

Daniel saw himself as part of the larger group of the people of God and not simply as an individual believer. And we are to see ourselves as members of the Church- the Body of Jesus Christ and not simply as individual members.

Romans 12:3-5

³ For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

⁵ So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

How Will the Answers to my Prayers Affect Others?

So Daniel passionately interceded for his people. And we can see this very same desire with Paul in **Romans 9** where Paul says that he prays so much for the Salvation of Israel- that in their being saved- he can almost wish that he himself would lose his own Salvation if that were necessary to get them saved. That is how much Paul was concerned about them. What a marvelous and thrilling example!

So what is the secret of true intercession? That in our prayers, we say "we" and "ours" and not "I", "me", or "mine".

We must be careful, dear friends, that our prayers are not so self centered that we are utterly unconcerned how the answer to those prayers would affect somebody else. We must consider that if God did answer what we are asking Him to do- how would that answer affect other people? And as you begin to think about that- the way you pray will change. Paul desired to be lost himself so that the Jew would be saved. How many of us would actually desire something like that?

And we must be vigilant to guard our hearts so that we are really praying on behalf of what is best for the *whole* Body of Christ- and *not* just what is best for us. And by doing that- God will be Glorified; Christ will be exalted; and we all will be edified in Love.

I love you all.