

Elements of True Prayer

Examining the Prayer of Daniel- Part 9

Tuesday November 17, 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; and Identified with God's People. Tonight- let's look at the sixth element of true prayer-

6. True Intercessory Prayer is Strengthened Through the Confession of Sin

Now, we've already seen that Daniel had personally denied himself in expressing his confession. And if you look at verse 20, he says,

Daniel 9:20

And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

It's so wonderful that Daniel didn't become simply a critic of the Church and say, *"I'm the only righteous one. I'm the only guy out here doing it right and God needs to drag everybody else before God to be chastened and judged."* No, Daniel knew that he was a sinner, too.

And so this whole prayer is really a confession. And the Truth about this is that when God is at work in your life- both repentance and confession becomes the norm. It becomes quite easy to confess your own sin and to repent of your own sin when God is moving in your life. And the opposite is also true. When God is *not* moving in your life- you will simply point out the failings of others and you will not repent and it will be hard for you to verbally confess any sin.

Not confessing sin doesn't mean you have none- it simply means that either you are deceived into thinking you have none or else you are too prideful to be able to admit it. That is a very weak and frail person. A strong person in Christ can confess sin and repent of sin easily and often.

The Truth is that the more devout your soul is; the deeper your love for God is; the higher your standard of holiness is; the truer your commitment to Christ is- the greater will be your sense of your own inherent sinfulness. So please never think that as you mature as a Christian you'll get *less* sensitive to sin. No, it's just the opposite. The more you mature as a Christian- the more sensitive you become to sin. The closer you get to God- the more heinous your own sin becomes and your desire to hate that sin and to confess that sin and to repent of that sin grows.

Perhaps the best Biblical example of this kind of eager confession of sin is found in **Psalms 51**. By the time David had matured and committed the terrible sin that he committed and poured out his heart in **Psalm 51**- it was so evident that sin literally destroyed him. It just crushed him, because he knew so much, and he had walked with God, and he was a man after God's own heart. And then when he committed that awful sin with Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah, it just tore him to ribbons, and he poured out that marvelous **Psalm 51**, when he said,

Psalms 51

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

- 4** Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.
- 5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- 6** Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.
- 7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8** Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
- 9** Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.
- 10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
- 11** Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
- 12** Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.
- 13** Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.
- 14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
- 15** O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
- 16** For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.
- 17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
- 18** Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
- 19** Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

To be continued...