

Intercessory Prayer
Daniel 9:1 – 19
The Laurel Center
February 20, 2015

Main Idea: When we pray, we must approach God with reverence and boldness.

Introduction

one of our most privileged tasks as Christians is to pray for others. We call this intercessory prayer. It is our ability to reach out and ask the Lord to help someone else who is in great need. One of the greatest examples of intercessory prayer is Daniel in chapter 9. Reading through his prayer and studying it can help us to become better prayerers for others. The better we get at learning how to pray for others and bring their needs to God, the more effectively we will be for God's kingdom.

Text – Daniel 9:18–19

18 O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. **19** O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

I. Humbly present your case before God (vv. 1 – 13).

A Know that God hears your voice.

- 1 Every prayer has a setting, the background in which the prayer is set. Knowing the background of a prayer can help us to understand why that prayer is being prayed.
- 2 Daniel gives us the setting of his prayer, the first year of the rule of King Darius. According to the book of Daniel, King Darius is the first king under the Persian Empire when the Babylonian Empire is captured.
- 3 This must've been a disturbing time for the Jewish people because they had been captured by the Babylonians and spent many years in Babylonian captivity.
- 4 Many of them probably thought that when the Babylonians were captured they would be able to go home. But this was not the case just yet. They would end up as subjects of the Persian Empire for a short time.
- 5 Not only did Daniel have a concern for his people in a second captivity under a different Empire, but his concern led him to study the Scriptures in preparation to pray for his people.

- 6 As Daniel study the Scriptures, he found out that Jeremiah had prophesied the amount of time the Israelites would be in captivity. As he read through the prophecies of Jeremiah, he founded Jeremiah 25:12 that God prophesied Israel would be in captivity for 70 years.
- 7 That is a long time and perhaps none of the Israelites realized how long it would really be. They probably did not realize that it would go past the time of the Babylonians to another Empire. World empires became the way to build governments in this part of history.
- 8 As Daniel realize this, he turned to the Lord in prayer. When we see our situation we know that God hears us and listens to every word that we speak.
- 9 **Application:** We can come to the Lord in humility knowing that he hears our prayers and wants to answer them. God is not a far-off God who does not care. He is intimately involved in our lives and in our needs and carers. We can always call on him no matter what the situation. He is a God who listens to his people and provides us with answers to every prayer. Those answers may not be what we expect our hope for but he does answer us what we call on him. We can always trust on God to hear us even when no one else will listen.

B See your situation with his eyes.

- 1 Look at how Daniel approached the Lord after she realized the time that would pass before Israel would return to Jerusalem. He did not just commonly come to the Lord and demand anything of God.
- 2 He came to the Lord in humility, fasting and properly preparing and sackcloth and ashes. He prepared not just his soul but his body to go before the Lord on behalf of his people. He took this seriously. It was not just another prayer.
- 3 He addressed God in the proper manner, humbly realizing how great God is and what God has done for his people through his covenants and actions. It is always a good idea to remember our history before the Lord as we pray. It will help us to see them in the proper light.
- 4 Understanding how great our God is and what he is done for us will always keep us humble before him, as well as reminding us that God is greater than our troubles.
- 5 Beginning in verse five, Daniel approaches God in the proper light of his people. He remembers that they have wrong God and sinned against him. He does not approach God with demands before he realizes his proper place and the proper place of his people.

- 6 Knowing the situation before we go to God on behalf of others is imperative. We do not have to know every little detail but we do have to have an understanding of the situation before we approach them. Knowing the proper situation will help us to clearly define our requests before him.
- 7 Daniel compared the greatness and righteousness of God to the sins of Israel. It was clear in Daniel's mind it was in the right and he was in the wrong. He understood the relationship that Israel had with God.
- 8 Because Daniel understood the situation, he did not ask God to change history or to lessen the punishment the Israelites received in captivity. He did ask God for forgiveness that God would have mercy on them while in captivity.
- 9 **Application:** When we search out the Scriptures and understand our relationship with God, we can ask him for the right things in every situation. We do not need to settle for what we think might be the will of God for what we hope to be God's will for someone else or ourselves. We can have a very good idea and a clear mind about the matters we bring to him when we understand our place with him better. We may not know everything about the situation but what we do know we can pray about. Let us not waste time in our prayers and energy focusing on the wrong things. Let us also be prepared to be serious in our prayers and not just offer up hopes. Let us come to God properly and humbly, preparing to enter his presence. Only then can we expect God to answer our prayers and to hear us out.

II. Boldly bring your requests before God (vv. 14 – 19).

A Come before God with respect and reverence.

- 1 Daniel takes the time and preparation that God would expect from his people. The more we learn about prayer the more that we realize God does not simply accept every half hearted, haphazard approach to his throne.
- 2 Surely God hears every prayer of his people. But there are different types of prayers and different approaches we take before God. There are common prayers in which we ask God for things that we think would be great. But sometimes we don't even take them seriously.
- 3 What I mean is that we ask God for things we hope for but are not necessarily things we even need or want. We ask him because they would be nice but we don't need them to survive.
- 4 There is nothing wrong with these types of prayers but because God knows our heart he may not take as much stock in them as we would. Since we do not see the mysterious or absolutely necessary, he understands that.

- 5 These types of prayers help us to continue growing in our relationship with them. But in intercessory prayer there are very serious means at hand. And each type of meat may have a different approach.
- 6 In every prayer we should approach God reverently, knowing that he is greater than us and our problems. Daniels very careful to realize his place before God.
- 7 Daniels reminded of the Exodus and how God brought his people out with a mighty hand. He knows that God will once again do this when it is time to leave the exile and returned to Israel.
- 8 Well God's own reputation is tied to his relationship with his people, he has clearly outlined that when they sin against him they must bear their discipline so that they do not do it again before God. Just because we are unfaithful does not mean that God will not be faithful.
- 9 If God has promised in his covenants with us that we will bear our iniquity before him, then we will indeed. God is faithful to carry out his disciplines with justice and we deserve this discipline when we sin against them. We have violated our unfaithfulness with him not his faithfulness with us.

B Give your requests to God genuinely.

- 1 Once we know our place before God and properly understand what our request should be, the Lord has shown us that he wants us in his presence and we know how to come before him humbly but boldly.
- 2 He is our father and wants to hear from us and be with us. When we come before him properly he loves to be with us. If we treat them disrespectfully he will remind us of our place.
- 3 Prayer becomes a powerful method for us to growing relationship with our God. We are learning how to be with him and he is teaching us about himself more deeply with each prayer.
- 4 Daniel realizes after he reviews and researches the Scriptures and Israel's relationship with him that it is best to pray for mercy in the exile. More than anything else while God cannot change the situation until the discipline is complete, he can bring mercy to his people as they repent in their situation.
- 5 Daniel prays for what is really the most in their situation. While it would be a wishful prayer, a hopeful prayer, to ask that God would change what he has already declared.
- 6 Instead, Daniel asks that God would forgive his people and goes before him with repentance. The exile is all about repentance before God for the sins of the nation. Daniel intercedes for the nation and for his people and

asks God to forgive them and be merciful to them. He does not ask God to change his decree or to make the exile shorter than he has declared.

- 7 It is important that we accept God's discipline for us but also ask for his forgiveness and mercy as we go through that discipline. To ask God to change what he has declared is a prayer that will most likely go unanswered. God will not say yes to something he is already said no to.
- 8 We must be careful to pray as we need to, as Scripture ordains, and as God expects. If we hope to see God answer our prayers with an affirmative, we must know his timing, his plans, and our history and standing with him.

Conclusion

Prayer is an important time between us and God in which we can grow into his plan for us and for others. When we come to God on others' behalf, we must know as much as we can about the situation. We pray they stop but we know, the situation at hand and the way the Scriptures have outlined our relationship with God and his expectations. We come to God in humility and repentance, seeking the proper needs before him. Our reverence and respect for him helps us to properly seek the needs of others and ourselves.

Prayer is an important time with God and it must not be wasted. We must fulfill God's expectations of us, prepare ourselves to enter his presence and properly ask for the needs that agree with God's will and the situation. These pointers will help us in our prayers to be more effective. They will also give God the open door to answer the prayers in the way that we hope. We must not be frivolous and in prayer time, asking God for things he has already declared he cannot do. Let us become more effective prayer warriors so that we can see God do miraculous and marvelous things for others and for us.