

Prayer

by Charles Anderson

Charles Anderson explores the profound mystery of prayer through the life of Daniel, emphasizing its significance and the believer's access to God.

Duration: 47:38

Scripture: Daniel 9:19-21, Daniel 9:23-24, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the book of Daniel and the revelation that was given to him. Daniel was mourning for three full weeks, during which he abstained from pleasant food, meat, wine, and anointing himself. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, Daniel was by the side of a great river when he saw a man clothed in linen. The man spoke to Daniel, assuring him that his prayers had been heard and that he should understand the matter and consider the vision. The rest of the chapter reveals the important prophetic subject of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel. The speaker also raises the question of the location of heaven and emphasizes the significance of prayer.

Transcript

I suppose that the most mysterious exercise known to man is the exercise of prayer. I wonder if it ever occurs to you how marvelous, how mysterious, how wonderful is the privilege we have of entrée into the very presence of the Lord of the Universe. To talk to him, to be familiar with what he expects us to say and how he wants us to talk to him.

I confess to you that I, it is a confession. I don't make profession to be a great man of prayer. I wish I were.

I wish I knew more about this thrilling, marvelous thing we call prayer. Only recently I have found myself going back to some of the old standard works. Andrew Murray with Christ in the School of Prayer, and the volumes written by E. M. Bounds, a great student and scholar of the subject of prayer.

I've been trying to learn over again some lessons I thought I had learned a long time ago about this matter of address to the God of the Universe. I find it very difficult to be in a meeting not anticipating or expecting that I shall maybe have any part in it, and someone says, we'll ask our brother Anderson to lead us in prayer. And I say to myself, how can I in one split second of time transport myself from this scene, this temple scene, surrounded here by all these fleshly experiences, and step into the presence of the awesome presence of the majesty on high and properly address him? I wish they hadn't asked me to pray.

Sometimes I don't feel like I want to pray. Oftentimes I don't feel like I know how to do it. I can certainly sympathize with Paul when he says, we know not how to pray as we ought, and especially maybe in these days does I feel a sensitivity on this matter when I hear some prayers, some public prayers that are so thin and so shallow and that seem to ignore the fact that they are in conversation with the almighty God who flung this universe into space.

So I suppose when I come to a biblical portrait tonight, last evening we looked at Joseph and what he suggests to us. Really, I guess Joseph's words to his brethren might be called the Romans 828 of the Old Testament, for it was his interpretation, his interpretation of the adverse circumstances of his life. And so he tried to indicate to them that God had significant meaning in all that happened to him.

Well, we turn to another biblical portrait tonight, and this particular bible character, I think, reflects a couple of aspects of prayer that we may not often have thought of. First of all, let me suggest a definition or two of prayer. The Westminster Catechism says the following, prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will in the name of Christ with confession of our sin and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.

That's quite a remarkable definition of prayer. But John Bunyan, good old John Bunyan, he gives us a broader definition of prayer when he says the following. He says, prayer is an ordinance of God, a sincere, conscious, affectionate pouring out of the soul to God through our Lord Jesus Christ in the grace and help of the Holy Spirit for such things as God has promised or according to his word for the good of the church with submission in faith to the will of God.

Almost sounds like a theologian does this tinker of Bedford. I can only say that I'm happy he was a Baptist. A lot of folks may not know that, but John Bunyan was a great Baptist preacher in his day.

Well, all of these are definitions that seek to somehow approximate what happens to us when we seek the faith and the presence of our God. It still is a mystery, this business of prayer, and yet it becomes the characteristic of a truly born-again Christian. One of the first things said about Saul of Tarsus when he rose from the dusk of the Damascus road, behold he prayed, and that became the characteristic, of course, of Paul's whole life.

We have his many of his remarkable prayers are given to us in the letters, the epistles that he wrote to his beloved converts, but I say again there's an Old Testament character who seems to me to illustrate in his life and his experience some fascinating aspects of prayer that are not revealed elsewhere, and I have reference to Daniel. Now, you may not have thought of Daniel as a man of prayer. Perhaps we sort of get conditioned to certain characteristics of biblical characters, and we can only think of them in the light of that which we have been conditioned to think, and we may think only of Daniel as a great prophet that he was.

We think of Daniel as a seer, and he was that. We think of him maybe as a very powerful politician, a leader in the politics of the kingdom of his day, and he was that too, but he was a man who had unusual experiences of prayer, and this is illustrated in a couple of instances in his life. I ask you to turn to Daniel chapter 9, please, at the beginning.

Daniel chapter 9. Now, the chapter begins in a very fascinating way, in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes. That is a sentence that is the purpose of which is to condition the congregation to go to sleep, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans. However, it's quite

important is the date that is here indicated.

You see, the Babylonian captivity is over, and Daniel has lived through it. He was taken as a captive and became a refugee Jewish boy when he was only a youngster, maybe only as young as 14 years old. He couldn't have been much older, maybe a year or two, 16 say, and he had lived the whole 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, so he was now in his 80s.

Don't tell me that life begins at 40. It begins sometimes in your 80s, so they say. I don't know.

Long way to go, but that's what I hear, that some of the most fascinating experiences of God's people often occur in the latter years of their lives. Well, it certainly was true of Daniel. You know, Daniel, by the way, when I was a kid in Sunday school, I didn't stay as long.

I didn't stay there very long. I got out as fast as I could. I mean, out of each session as well as out of Sunday school, and when I was unconverted for a long time, I didn't go to Sunday school or church, but anyway, I can remember just about one thing about Sunday school.

The teachers taught the international Sunday school lesson. Some of you may remember that, and the method, the procedure was to give to every kid in Sunday school a picture card in which there was on one side a biblical picture that was to illustrate that day's lesson. On the other side of the card, there was, I think, I'm trying to recollect, some scripture references, maybe a lesson for the day, the golden text.

I think they put that down, and that was supposed to help you, and of course, you were supposed to study that. In those days, those little cards were as popular among church going kids as baseball cards are today. Of course, this is another day, and at the same time, the teacher had another device.

There, on an easel, was a display of the same picture, only enlarged. You may remember it. Some of you maybe even used it, and you could turn, you could flip these pictures over, you see, but here was this picture, now maybe three feet by four feet or so, and there it was on the platform, and some of our kids would like to go up and peek and see what the next week or the next two weeks pictures were going to be all about.

Now, I don't remember many of the pictures, but one stands out very clearly in my mind. It was Daniel in the lion's den. And there he was, see, over in the corner, a pink-cheeked little boy, just a kid.

He's over here in the corner, and over here are two of the hungriest looking animals you ever did see. All they wanted for supper was lamb chops. They were headed for a good meal, but they didn't have their mouths open.

Their mouths were closed. And here's this brave little kid over in the corner, waiting for something to happen with the lions. And then we always sang, Dare to be a Daniel.

That was the theme song. So, there it was, all in a package. Didn't have too much preparation.

You had it all set. You're a Sunday school teacher. There's only one thing wrong with all of that.

It ain't so. It just isn't true to the Bible. What do you mean by that? I mean that Daniel was no pink-cheeked boy when he got tossed in the lion's den.

Daniel was 84 to 86 years old. Oh, come on. Yes, yes, he was.

How do you know that? Well, because his lion's den experience happened not under the Babylonian kingdom, but under the kingdom that succeeded them, the Medo-Persian kingdom. And the enemies of Daniel, you may recollect, had worked against him, and somehow they'd gotten the king to issue a decree that Daniel should be tossed into a den of lions. And it was an axiom of the new government that the laws of the Medes and the Persians could not be altered or changed, even by the king.

And so, once the edict was issued, it was sealed and finalized. And Daniel, even the king who recognized after he issued the decree that he'd made a terrible mistake, he even could not change that decree. And so, Daniel had to spend at least one night in lion's motel overnight with those lions.

Well, as exciting as all that is, here he comes now down. The Babylonian kingdom has fallen, and a new kingdom succeeds it, this kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. And it's the very first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans.

Now, 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 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem. What do you have here? You have Daniel deeply concerned about the fate of his people. They were still a captive people in a foreign land, and when the government changed, he wondered what was going to happen to them.

And in the midst of his wonderment, he says, I'll get an answer if I search the word of God. And so, he began looking through the prophets, he studied through the scriptures, and he came to Jeremiah chapter 25, which is just where we're going to go, if you'll allow it, and for a moment, Jeremiah chapter 25. You may know all of this, but I'm just underlining it.

Listen to what the prophet Jeremiah said a long time before Daniel, down at verse, well, 10 will do, of chapter 25. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, sound of the millstone and the light of the candle, and this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years. Specific time element is here introduced.

70 years, and as Daniel reads that in the holy word of God, he says to himself, hallelujah, the 70 years are now up. I've lived to see the fulfillment of this prophecy. What comes next? What is God going to do next? God is going to restore his people.

They're going to be allowed to return, go back to their land, which is exactly what happened under the Medo-Persian empire. They were allowed to return and rebuild the city, and so on. Now, when this all struck Daniel, he felt a tremendous urge to pray, and so what you have from verses 3 all the way down to verse 19 is one of the most remarkable prayers of the old testament.

It's a great prayer. In it, Daniel prays to the Lord and confesses the fact that he and his people do not deserve this mercy from God. They have broken his law.

They have ignored their covenant relationship to him. They have transgressed his ordinances. They have neglected him.

They have sinned against him, and so he's deeply concerned. He says, God, oh, we don't deserve this. I don't deserve it.

I'm just like them. Oh, Lord. Verse 8, he says, to us belongs confusion of faith, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him, 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. And on and on and on he prays until he comes to the, really, I don't know whether he was finished praying or not, but to the interruption of his prayer found at verse 19. Well, back up to verse 18.

Oh, 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 supplication before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. Oh, Lord, hear. Oh, Lord, forgive.

Oh, Lord, hearken and do. Defer not for thine own sake. Oh, my God, for my city and thy people are called by thy name.

Do you get the feeling that here's a man deeply disturbed? Here's a man whose emotions are breaking loose as he talks to God and pleads with him to be merciful and kind to his people. It's a great prayer. Now, I don't know how long it took to pray that prayer.

Some years ago when I was teaching homiletics, which is supposed to be how, you know, the science of how to preach, how to get sermons together and preach, and I guess I illustrated how not to do either one. But at any rate, I used to get the students to sometimes read the scriptures aloud, just as a test. And I tell you, it was most discouraging.

Some of them read it like they were reading a Western Union telegram. Some of them read it like they were bored stiff. And I used to say to them, well, you wouldn't stir anything.

You wouldn't even stir the mice in your church by that kind of a prayer. Who do you think you're talking to and about? Not your neighbor. You're talking to God.

Put a little life in it, boy. So then they'd go back over it. And many times I assigned this prayer to see how they'd read it publicly.

Most fascinating to see. Once in a while, a student would catch fire. And by the time he hit verse 19, we're all about ready to cry, because God got a hold of him as he echoed the prayer of this great prophet.

Now, all of that's remarkable, but there's something that occurs here that is most intriguing. While 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, yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. I said, I don't know how long it takes, it took Daniel to pray this prayer, allowing for hesitancy, time lapses when he was emotionally gripped by his conversation with God.

It couldn't have taken more than a half hour. If you read it straight through, and don't be in such a hurry to do so, try to put some meaning in it, it will only take at the longest 15 minutes. Why this accent on the time element? Oh, if you'll bear with me, we shall see it in just a moment.

His prayer is interrupted by this heavenly visitor, and he informed me, and he talked with me, and he said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding at the beginning of thy supplications

the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou are greatly beloved, therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. And all of you students of Bible prophecy will recognize that what occurs in the rest of this chapter is probably one of the most important eschatological prophetic subjects in all the Bible, for it was the revelation of what is called the 70 weeks of Daniel, in which God spells out in advance his plan, and that what he purposes to do through his covenant people Israel, you see. And the issue then, or the prayer of Daniel, issued in this very special revelation from God.

Now, what I'm concerned about, though, is this little truth that's woven into this prayer situation. Where is heaven? Do you believe that heaven is a place? I shouldn't ask that question of you people in this assembly. I know what kind of an answer I get.

Of course we believe it's a place. It's a condition, indeed, but it's a place. And we think of that place, we think of heaven as a place where our loved ones have gone before, and are waiting for us, and whom we shall see, and with whom we shall enjoy the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then we insert all those scenes from the last book of the Bible that give us a little more detail concerning that place called heaven. Well, then where is it located? Well, the Bible talks about three kinds, or three levels of heaven. The heaven of the clouds, which we can see with the naked eye.

Then there is the heaven of the stars, these mystic bodies that populate our lovely Florida skies in the summer and winter. And then there is the heaven of heaven. Paul once says that he, and I think he was speaking of himself, was caught up, he doesn't even know whether he was in the body or not, but he was caught up into the third heaven.

And there he received from the Lord revelations which he was not even allowed to tell other men about, secrets that he carried with him through his martyrdom, probably. Some, maybe, he wrote into his epistles, but not many. He saw things that were not lawful for him to even utter.

Where did he get them? In the third heaven, the very presence of God. So, if we take any of this literally, we would then say that heaven must be located, God's throne must be located, out beyond maybe even the farthest reaches of our universe. Now, in this modern day, we are coming to know far more about our universe than man has ever known before.

The invention of powerful telescopes, the computer science, space travel, all of these factors have begun to expand our conception of the size of this universe. Now, it is almost impossible to compute its size, and when we're trying to talk about how big it is, we are frustrated because we can't get language that is big enough to describe it. So, we start to use certain other devices.

We know that the fastest thing we know now is the speed of light, which travels about 186,000 miles per second. And so, when we want to find out how far out into the universe there is a stellar body of sorts, we say it is so many light years. That's a relatively recent terminology that we use.

Down here on earth, we measure things by feet. So, we get a little ruler 12 inches wide, or long, and we measure it. Now, if you were asking me how far is it from here, say, to Tampa, Florida, and all you gave me was a 12-inch ruler, and I had to, you know, go all the way to Tampa, that would be a chore.

I tell you, I could wish I had at least some kind of a measuring stick that I could throw about 100 feet away, and put a rock there, and run up, and start again. Then, after a little while, I'd want one a thousand feet long, and then, if I get a longer one than that, I'll take it, so that I can measure quickly the distance

between here and there. So, that's what we do when we're trying to measure the distance between earth and these stellar bodies out there.

So, we use the term light year, L-Y. Now, a light year is, in miles, 5,280 feet. It is 186,000 times 60 times 60 times 24 times 365 times 40.

That's a long, that's a fur piece, as they say down there in those mountains in North Carolina. That's a fur piece, brother. Did you get it? You got, you know it? You got the answer.

Some of you may have your computer going right now, the pocket computers, but that's what we say, and they tell us that the nearest fixed star to our earth is at least 40 light years away from earth. That is, 186,000 times 60 times 60 times 24 times 365 times 40 in terms of miles away from earth. Now, that is most intriguing, because if you let it, it'll start to spin your mind.

For instance, we step outside on a nice starry night, and we're inclined to say, aren't the stars beautiful tonight? Now, you are very unscientific when you say that. You must be careful. You have to say, weren't the stars beautiful before I was born? Say, we're not talking about before you were born, we're talking about now.

No, no, no. You're not seeing them as they are now, you're seeing them as they were. Any one of the stars, the nearest one 40 years away, and they tell us that some of the stars in our universe are 500,000 light years from earth.

That is, 186,000 times 60 times 60 times 24 times 365 times 500,000. That's not great. That means if God pulled the shade down on all the stars of heaven tonight so that they, the light was held back, we would still have beautiful starry nights on earth for generations and generations to come, because we would be seeing light that began its long journey maybe before we were even born.

Any further intriguing thoughts? Suppose by some stretch of imagination I could find some swift vehicle that could transport me from here to a star that's 2,000 miles light years, say, from earth, and I could stand on that star and look at earth. I would be seeing events that happened on the earth 2,000 years ago. Literally, I'd be seeing them.

And as I move closer to earth, I would be reviewing history visually, all the events of history. Now, what really excites me is, would it be possible for me to find a star somewhere out there in the vast universe where I could land and see my Savior dying on Calvary's tree? Is that a scientific possibility? Take that home and chew on it. Some of you will say to the leaders of this assembly, where did you get that heretic? Please don't have him back, whatever you do.

Now, here is where this has very on our whole subject. When Daniel knelt to pray, the heavenly visitor who came to bring God's word to him, here's what he said, Daniel, when you first started to pray, a commandment was given that I should come and give you, because you're a man greatly beloved of God, I should give you this revelation. So, therefore, your prayer petition reached from the palace, maybe at Babylon, of Babylon, it reached from the palace of Babylon all the way to the ears of Almighty God on his throne in heaven.

And I came immediately when the commandment was given to become God's messenger boy. I came as fast as I could, and the whole round trip took 15 minutes. Do you know what this teaches me about prayer? It teaches me that the scientists are all wrong to start with.

The fastest thing in the universe is not light, it's prayer. When in one moment, poor wretched I, in this weak vessel of the flesh, stumbling along, I don't understand the right vocabulary to use when I address my God, so I fumble through and stutter and say the wrong things. I don't know how to pray as I ought, but when I do, it reaches far beyond the stars and touches God, and he hears.

You know, we may not indeed know how to pray as we ought. There was a simple-minded little boy who lived in England. He got converted, and he never learned how to read or write, and he learned some Bible verses just by somebody patiently trying to teach him memory.

And one day he went to a quiet place, and the quietest place he knew was a graveyard. So he went out to the graveyard, and as there is in England all over, they have stone fences that build them all up, and he was behind the stone fence, and he was praying, and he was saying, Oh God, A B D F G A B C D, Oh God, A S P A, Oh God, A B C D, and somebody heard him, and they climbed up on the wall, looked over, and said, Benny, what in the world are you doing? He said, I'm praying, sir. He said, you're praying? That doesn't sound like prayer to me.

Doesn't even make sense. Yeah, he said, I know. I don't know how to pray.

I don't even know the alphabet, but God knows what I mean, and he puts all the letters back together again the right way. Well, that's good to know. When you don't know how to pray as you ought, you know, God knows how to put the letters back together again, so they'll make sense when we address him in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Well, now I'm only half through. We should go home. What do you want to do? You want to go home? Anybody wants to go home, go.

The rest of us will stay. If you got any patience and time left, and I won't transgress too bad, there's one more lesson that needs to be learned. So Daniel's praying.

He learns the speed of prayer, the swiftness of petition that reaches out across the vastness of our universe and touches God. All right, so now you come to chapter 10, and he's praying again in this chapter, but now there's a different emphasis. In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a thing was revealed to Daniel whose name was called Belshazzar, and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long, and he understood the thing and had understanding of the vision.

In those days, I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. Notice the time element. Three full weeks.

I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. Now in the fourth and twentieth day of the first month, I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel. I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, and he describes this man, and it says he got me down on, or I fell down on my hands and knees, and he said, verse 11, he said, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright, for unto thee am I now sent.

And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then he said, don't be afraid, Daniel, fear not, for from the first day that thou did set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy word were heard. That verifies that first principle of prayer.

His words were heard, and I am come for thy word. But, and this is one of the most significant butts in the Old Testament, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days, and lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days, for yet the vision is for many days.

I come with a very important message. What's going to happen to your people whom God has chosen for himself in the latter days? And on my journey from God's presence to you, I was withstood by the prince of Persia for three full weeks, the exact time that Daniel was mourning and fasting. And when you come to the end of the chapter, he adds another sentence, and he says, verse 19, O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yes, be strong.

And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and he said, let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me. Then said he, knowest thou wherefore I am come to thee? Do ye understand what I brought, the message I brought? And now I have to go back. I'll return to fight with the prince of Persia, and when I'm gone forth, lo, the prince of Grisha shall come.

What is all of this prince of Persia and prince of Grisha business here? I cannot accept any interpretation that makes these princes human beings. No human prince would have the ability, or the skill, or the power to withstand a heavenly messenger, and hold him back from delivering the message God commissioned him to bring. So, these must be other kinds of princes, and indeed they were.

These are satanic beings. Why then denominate them prince of Persia, and prince of Grisha, and so on? Well, I haven't the time to develop this much further, but the startling fact that's presented in the bible is that every one of the spiritual princes set over the governments of this present world system are directly under the control and in the hands of Satan. They are sympathetic to Satan's program, and they are antagonistic to the program of God.

When we become saved, we are delivered from their jurisdiction. We're delivered from the kingdom of Satan and translated into the kingdom of God's dear son, and this, of course, incurs the deadly hatred and enmity of our previous master, who is constantly making a bid for the return of our vassalage. There was a book that was out of print for a long time, it's back in print now, and I think it would pay you to buy it.

It's entitled, it was entitled, maybe they have a new title now, it was called Earth's Earliest Ages by G. H. Pember, and there is a significant paragraph in Pember's book. If you'll bear with me, I'll quote it. He says, the whole aerial surrounding our planet is densely populated with a hostile race of beings unutterably superior in wisdom and power to ourselves, having had during a vast number of years every conceivable experience of the weak points of humanity, and possessing the incalculable advantage of being themselves invisible, though as spiritual intelligences they are probably able not merely to judge us by our words and our outward expression of countenance, but even to read the innermost thoughts of our hearts, cooperating with a most perfect and never failing organization, and lastly directed by a leader of consummate wisdom and skill who is assisted by powerful princes, and finds his subjects so numerous that if we are able to lay any stretch on the word legion in the memorable narrative of Luke, he is able to spare some six thousand of them to guard one miserable captive.

And, here in Daniel, we have the astonishing revelation that as Daniel prepared himself in prayer to receive God's revelation to him, a battle royal was provoked in heaven. Satan began to move to keep the heavenly messenger from ever reaching the prophet of God, lest the revelation, the message that he brought, should be disseminated. And so, there was a battle in the aerial, in the invisible air round about

our planet, and it was so fierce between this heavenly messenger and one of the demons who had the title prince of Persia.

The conflict was so sharp that the heavenly messenger had to send a message back to heaven for help, and Michael the archangel was sent to defeat this satanic force that was seeking to frustrate God's plan and God's purpose. It's rather fearsome to think that maybe in this invisible anvil surrounding our very planet earth, there may be going on right now battles that we cannot even concede in intensity. And, when you and I as a believer kneel to pray, we must never forget that we must invade and penetrate a kingdom of power far superior to ourselves, a satanic force that is determined to frustrate every plan and purpose that God has for your life and mine.

That's why prayer becomes a battle. That's why our prayers must reach beyond the silly, simple, shallow, little request that we pray for. I go to some churches, and I think I'm in a clinic.

They pray for everything from aggravated dandruff to ingrown toenails, and they go up and down the human anatomy and pray for everything that is sick and weak among God's people. And, while I have recognized that we should pray for one another when we're ill, we've got to reach out beyond that and realize that we're in a battle against the forces of hell, and it's time that we begin to marshal some of our prayer strength to fight against these forces. While there are still more than two billion souls going to hell without Jesus Christ, who've never heard the gospel message on our planet, our prayer life ought to be totally transformed from the little stuff that we're petitioning God for to battering like a ram, a battering ram against the forces of hell.

So, Daniel teaches me the speed of prayer and the power of prayer as it engages the enemy. Well, so much more could be said, but let me say this. I don't know who wrote this.

Maybe it was a native from Africa, but here's how it goes. From a convert in Uganda comes to us a story grander is the lesson that it teaches than a sermon often preaches. For they tell what sore temptations come to them, what need of patience, and a need all else outweighing of a place for private pray.

So, each convert chose a corner far away from eye of scorners in the jungle where he could pray to God in solitude. And so often when he thithered that the grass would fade and wither where he trod, and you can trace by the path each praying place. If they hear the evil tiding that a brother is backsliding and that some are even saying he no longer cares for praying, then they say to one another very softly and gently, brother you'll forgive us now for showing on your path the grass is growing.

And the erring one relenting soon is bitterly repenting. Ah, how sad I am at knowing on my path the grass is growing, but it shall be so no longer. Prayer I need to make me stronger.

On my path so oft I'm going, soon no grass will there be growing. Question, any grass on your prayer path? Lord, we seek thy face because we need to see thee. We favor the psalmist, my soul panteth after God like the hind pants for the water brooks.

So we are hungry for thee. Forgive us for the times we've rushed into thy presence with unworthy petitions in our hands, when we could be involved more and more in the great battle for the souls of men, or for the greater purposes of God. We worship and adore and praise thee tonight for who thou art and for this mysterious and inestimable privilege of prayer.

Savior, teach us to pray. Spirit of God, teach us how to pray as we go up, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Father, we look at our prayer path, see if there is any grass growing there.

We're ashamed that oft time we have to wade through the grass to find the place of prayer. Forgive us, we pray, and again we ask, teach us how to pray. In Jesus name, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7943.mp3>
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