

# (Daniel) Daniel the Intercessor

by David Guzik

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*David Guzik's sermon on Daniel emphasizes the power of prayer in engaging with God's promises and understanding biblical prophecy.*

**Duration:** 53:42

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:10-13, Daniel 9:1-2, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Intercession"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the reliability and inspiration of the scriptures. They emphasize that while there may be some minor errors or copying mistakes in the transmission of the Bible, the overall record is absolutely reliable. The speaker then focuses on Daniel chapter 9, specifically the prayer of Daniel. They explain that Daniel was reading the book of Jeremiah and discovered a prophecy about the desolation of Jerusalem for 70 years. This sets the stage for the spectacular prophecy that will be discussed in the next part of Daniel chapter 9.

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## Transcript

Tonight we're in Daniel chapter 9 and we've been going through the book of Daniel chapter by chapter. Tonight we're going to switch gears and do it half a chapter by half a chapter and we're just going to cover Daniel chapter 9 verses 1 through 19. That might make study just a little bit shorter.

This is one of those chapters that's sort of too long to cover in one night, but I'm not going to say it's too short to cover in two nights, but we'll have maybe just a little shorter time with some time of prayer at the end beginning here at Daniel chapter 9 verse 1. We're going to take a look at verses 1 through 19. Now, Daniel chapter 9 is deservedly so one of the most famous and significant chapters of biblical prophecy in the entire Bible. In Daniel chapter 9, you have a roadmap, a, an outline, a grid for biblical prophecy, as well as one of the most amazingly fulfilled prophecies.

I will suggest to you down to the exact day in fulfillment ever uttered in the Bible. All that exciting stuff is for next week. Tonight we have the excitement of looking at what is often overlooked in Daniel chapter 9, and that's the great prayer of Daniel.

I want you to remember this and keep what we studied tonight in mind when we studied a second half of Daniel chapter 9, which contains that spectacular prophecy. What we have in front of us tonight is the prayer that paved the way for this spectacular prophecy. Chapter 9 verse 1. In the first year of Darius, the

son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who has made king over the realm of the Chaldeans in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books, the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord given through Jeremiah, the prophet that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Daniel was reading his Bible. Specifically, he was reading the scroll or the book of Jeremiah. And as he read it, verse two tells us that he understood by the books the number of the years specified.

Can we grab onto that right now? Daniel read something in biblical prophecy and he understood it. He might say, well, duh. Well, it's not such an obvious point to many people.

There are many people who act as if biblical prophecy is absolutely incomprehensible and we should do nothing with having to study it or learn it. Well, I want you to know that Daniel understood it. Daniel read the book of Jeremiah.

He read some of its passages of predictive prophecy and he understood it. Now, I'm not trying to imply for a moment that we can understand every detail of biblical prophecy. We fully acknowledge that there are some loose ends that we won't be able to grab a hold of probably until they're fulfilled and we look back in retrospect.

Nevertheless, in the whole, in the main, in the significant points, biblical prophecy can be understood. God doesn't give us a shell game in the scriptures, something that you just can't understand at all and just try to make sense of it best you can. And I want you to notice as well that Daniel understood this in verse two by the books.

In other words, the specific words recorded in God inspired books. Sometimes we skip over this idea much too quickly, but it is absolutely essential. It forms an irreducible foundation for the Christian life to say that this book is God speaking to us, that the words in this book are inspired.

Now we have to understand what we mean when we say that, first of all, we believe that the scriptures are inspired perfectly from God, number one in the originals. It might shock you to find out that the Bible wasn't composed in English, not even King James English. It was composed in mainly two languages, but there's a little bit of a third one.

Matter of fact, in the book of Daniel, it was composed in Hebrew, Greek, and there's a couple of chapters in the book of Daniel that are kind of unique in the entire Bible. They were written in Aramaic. And in the original, what scholars like to call the autographs, the scripture is absolutely inspired.

We say, well, we don't have the autographs. We don't have that original scroll that Daniel put his pen to to write the book of Daniel. You're absolutely correct.

But what we have are extremely reliable copies of the original. I could get into statistical data analysis and tell you that the copies that we have because of cross comparison and checking and all the rest of it have been judged to be 98.5 percent absolutely accurate. You say, well, what about that one point five percent of the text that we're really not sure of just because of time goes on, there's possible corruption or error or this or that in the text.

What about that one point five percent? Well, praise God that there's not a single doctrine or truth or understanding about God or salvation or the Christian life or anything that rests on that very, very small

percentage of the biblical text that we say, well, we don't know exactly if you said 70 or 7000 here. It's not really sure. It's not really certain.

You see, it doesn't make a whole lot of difference, does it? And these are usually where these little corruptions or mistakes or copying errors have crept in and the transmission of a number or so forth. The record that we have, though, is absolutely reliable as copies. And then we understand as well that the scriptures are perfectly inspired as understood in their literary context.

In other words, we understand that the Bible uses similes and metaphors and figures of speech. The favorite one I like to bring up and you've probably heard me bring this up a time or two is when David in the Psalms, when he says, I cried so much I made my bed swim. He doesn't mean that so much liquid came out of his tear ducts that he floated his bed in his room.

We give David the artistic license to use some figures of speech. And so, yes, we do believe the Bible literally, but it's not a wooden literalism. It's a literalism that understands its literary context.

Sometimes it's speaking poetically and when it speaks poetically, we give it the poetic license. But when it speaks in history, we regard that it speaks absolutely true history. And so forth and so on, you see, Daniel couldn't read Second Timothy 316, but he knew it.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and it's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness. Daniel knew that. And as he read the book of Jeremiah, he understood something here.

And what did he understand? Well, it tells us there in Daniel understood the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah. Daniel was reading in the book of Jeremiah and something spoke to him and said, what? There's a number of years specified here. And this is worthy of my attention.

All right. Keep your finger here in the book of Daniel. Turn left to the book of Jeremiah first at Jeremiah chapter twenty five.

Jeremiah, chapter five, verse eleven, Jeremiah, chapter twenty five, verse eleven, Daniel's reading the book of Jeremiah, and so are we. Jeremiah, chapter twenty five, now at verse eleven, where we read. And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Now, this was written before Israel went into exile, God saying, I'm going to send you into exile under the king of Babylon for how long? Seventy years. Then it will come to pass when seventy years are completed that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, says the Lord, and I will make it a perpetual desolation. And so I will bring on that land all my words, which I pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied concerning all the nations.

In other words, Daniel's reading Jeremiah, chapter twenty five, verses one, eleven through thirteen. And he says, God says that the captivity in Babylon is going to last seventy years. Now, a very interesting thing happened when Daniel read that he said, God said seventy years.

God meant seventy years. Now, again, this may seem so elementary to you that you're frustrated with me right now. Come on, Pastor, move on to something more interesting.

But you need to understand that for many people, this is an extremely difficult concept for them to grab ahold of. That when God says seventy years, he you see, they want to say, well, no, what God really means here is seventy thousand years or or seven is just a number of perfection. And so seventy years just means when the time is complete or so forth and so on.

Anything but seventy years. Not so, Daniel. You read it goes.

Jeremiah said it would be seventy years. It's going to be seventy years. Now turn, if you will, to Jeremiah, chapter twenty nine, verse ten.

Here we'll see another place where Daniel may have been reading. And there's a very famous verse. I want you to catch the context of it.

Jeremiah, chapter twenty nine, verse ten. For thus says the Lord after seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you and cause you to return to this place. Should we just keep reading verse eleven? For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you a future and a hope.

Then you will call upon me and go and pray to me and I will listen to you and you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. How many have ever heard Jeremiah twenty nine eleven before about the future and hope? That's a precious verse. Isn't it exciting to read its original and most meaningful context? The real context, the core context of that great promise in Jeremiah twenty nine eleven is of God's delivering Israel from the captivity of Babylon.

And I'm not trying to imply for a moment that God doesn't have a future and a hope for you, that Jeremiah twenty nine eleven doesn't apply to you and to me, I believe it does. But let's see the most direct context. God's telling the nation of Israel, you're going to be in captivity in Babylon for seventy years, but I've got a future and a hope for you.

I'm going to set you free and you're going to pray to me and I'm going to set you free and you're going to find me once again. Again, what was the number given to us in verse ten, five years, ten years, seven thousand years, no, seventy years. Now, this is significant.

Back to Daniel chapter nine. Let's read verse two again. In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord given through Jeremiah, the prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Now, this is what I want you to notice. Daniel believed completely that the Lord would accomplish these 70 years, correct? I mean, hey, it says 70 years. God's going to accomplish these 70 years.

There's no doubt about it. So here's my question for you. Then why is Daniel and I'm going to jump the gun just a little bit.

Daniel is going to give us a powerful and dramatic prayer, pleading with God to fulfill this promise. Now, here's my question for you. If Daniel knew that God made the promise and if Daniel absolutely believed that God would accomplish the promise, why does Daniel pray and ask God to fulfill it? And the answer is simple.

Daniel knew something that oftentimes we don't fully realize. It's that God's promises invite our prayers and participation. They don't exclude our prayers and participation.

In other words, the exact wrong thing for Daniel to do would have been to say, hey, 70 years. Great. Well, it's coming up pretty soon.

Fine. Praise the Lord and go his way. No, Daniel read this and he said 70 years.

This is important. This is pivotal. God, your plan.

And I look around and I don't see how this is going to happen. So, Lord, I'm going to pray and I'm going to call upon you to fulfill your promise. Friends, I want you to know that God never gave us his great promises so that we would become passive.

He gave us his great promises so that we would seize them in prayer and come before God and say, Lord, God, fulfill your promise. You made this promise, Lord. Now, please fulfill it.

There's an exciting way that this principle can be fulfilled for us right now. How many of you would be excited if Jesus came for his church? We were all taken up to heaven very, very soon. Well, some of you would.

I'm glad to hear that. Did anybody think that was a trick question or something? Now, here's the thing. Is there anything you can do about that? You know, most of the time, hey, well, you know, Jesus is going to come soon.

And man, I hope it's soon. I want it to be real soon. And he's going to do it, I know it's going to come sooner or later, I hope it's sooner.

Was there anything you can do to bring it closer? Absolutely. You know, second Peter three twelve indicates that there's a sense in which we can hasten. That's the word Peter uses, hasten the coming of the Lord through our holy conduct and godly lives.

In other words, it's just not this fatalistic thing. Oh, well, you know, he's going to come. Well, whatever.

No, I want you to come soon. I want to hasten your coming through my holy conduct and through my godly life. As well, the Bible says that Jesus is going to return and God's prophetic focus is going to shift once again upon Israel when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

And so there's a fullness of the Gentiles, when that fullness of the Gentiles comes to Christ, then God will take home his church and turn his redemptive focus once again upon Israel. Well, that's something you can do to hasten the coming of the Lord. And this is what I want you to grab a hold of.

God's promises, God's prophetic word, it's given to us, but not just for our interest, not just for our information, but so that we can actually partner with God in doing something about it. Now, let me give you a second important reason why Daniel prayed. Daniel was also asking God appealing to God's mercy.

You see, God said that it would be 70 years, right? Anybody doubt that? No, it's going to be 70 years. No doubt about it. Well, here's the question.

Seventy years starting from when? To say, well, starting from when Israel was taken captive. OK, well, when was the nation of Judah, the kingdom of Judah taken captive? Well, actually, there were three different phases of captivity. The first phase was six hundred and five years before Christ.

That was the phase in which Daniel was taken as a captive. The second phase came about eight years later, the year 597 B.C., 597 B.C., Jerusalem was attacked and Nebuchadnezzar took treasure from the temple. Then 10 years after that, 587, Jerusalem fell and the whole nation was carried away into exile.

So from the first possible starting point of captivity to the last possible starting point of captivity, you got 18 years in the middle. So when does the 70 years begin? That's part of what this prayer of Daniel is all about. God take the earliest starting point for this possible.

Not the latest one. Take the earliest possible starting point, God. And you know what? Because of Daniel's prayer, God did take the earliest possible starting point for this.

So you see, we can accomplish so much in our prayer. By the way, one other thing for you to consider at the time that Daniel prayed this prayer. It was still three or four years short of the 70 years being fulfilled from the earliest possible date.

I said, well, man, Daniel, you're kind of jumping the gun. You know, even if your prayer should fill it, it's three or four years. It wasn't too early for Daniel to begin praying.

Isn't that vision? Isn't that foresight? He goes, you know what? The clock runs out on this earliest possible starting point three or four years from now. I better start praying right now. Man, that's vision.

That's that's foresight. God. God bless Daniel.

I love how it says specified by the word of the Lord given through Jeremiah, you have God's great eternal decree. You could almost hear it echoing through the heavens when God speaks and he says that the nation of Judah will be held captive in Babylon for 70 years. But no person on Earth heard that voice echoing.

In the halls of heaven. They heard it when Jeremiah wrote it down. You see, what I want you to understand is that we have God's eternal decrees here, yet human agencies are still essential.

God declared a plan of the ages, but Jeremiah made a prophecy. Daniel made a prayer and a king named Cyrus made a proclamation to end the 70 year captivity. God's eternal decrees do not push out human participation.

I guess what I'm trying to do. It's to get us to the place where we understand that God's great sovereignty, God's great wise and and and spectacular plan of the ages, not once should we take it for an excuse for fatalism. There's no place for case or a in the Christian life, what will be will be.

No, no, it's God. You've made a promise. I want to pray it into coming.

By the way, you say, well, of course, Daniel could pray this. He was a great, great man of prayer. Well, I want you to understand that Daniel was not a professional prophet, was he? He wasn't a priest.

He wasn't a priestly lineage. He's not a Isaiah. You know, that's what it says on his business card.

Isaiah, you know, prophet of God. He's not a priestly lineage. You know what Daniel was? He was a government worker.

He was a high ranking bureaucrat, by the way, shouldn't that remind us as well? You think you are busy? How about if you were a chief of staff for the president of the United States, would you be busy? Too busy to pray, right? Well, Daniel had that kind of administrative position in the Empire of Babylon, and he had time to pray. You know, when you're in the middle of that, well, I'm too busy to pray business in your head. Once you go to heaven, when you get to heaven and talk to Daniel about that.

Isn't that significant? Oh, yeah, just no time. Oh, no, no, no time. Daniel, have a little sit down with you over a cup of coffee and a piece of angel food cake there in heaven and talk to you about it.

His calling and station in life made it less likely that he would be such a great man of prayer, but he took the time and energy to pray. I read something great from Charles Spurgeon. He has a couple of fantastic sermons, as you might imagine, on this first half of Daniel chapter nine.

He says, do not, I pray you, get into the habit of neglecting the assembling of yourselves together for prayer. How often I have said this is what Charles Spurgeon said. All our strength lies in prayer.

When we were very few, God multiplied us in answer to prayer. Well, let's take a look at Daniel's prayer beginning now, verse three, then I set my face toward the Lord God to make requests by prayer and supplications with fasting sackcloth and ashes. Don't you love that? I love that verse.

Look at what it says. Daniel did. First of all, he set his face.

That implies determination and prayer. You know, Daniel had an objective to achieve, and he approached God as a man who would not be denied. Now, he did this because he was rightly convinced that his prayer was within the will of God.

Daniel knew that his prayer was not motivated by any selfish desire. He was going there to see the glory of God advanced. And so he approached God.

God, I'm coming to you as a man who will not be denied. I'm going to set my face towards the Lord God in prayer. Secondly, he makes a request by prayer and supplications.

He is catch the intensity of you say, well, what's the difference between a prayer and a supplication? They're the same. It's two words describing the same thing. It's like saying prayer and more prayer, prayer and extra prayer.

You see, Daniel wasn't passive as God's prophetic plan unfolded before him in his approach to God. He made a request asking God to perform his promise in a way that Daniel thought would bring God the most glory. God, I'm going to come before you and I'm going to ask you to do something.

God, I'm going to make requests by prayer and supplications. Now, friends, there's a glorious, glorious place. Perhaps it's the most glorious place.

Perhaps it's the better place and pray in prayer to just praise and give thanks and honor and glory to God. I'm not suggesting to you for a moment that all of our prayer should be asking. But friends, there is certainly a place and a great place in prayer for asking, I don't know about you, but I want to see God do a lot.

I want to see the mighty works of God in our midst. And the question for me and for you is, are we asking for them? I mean, are we just kind of wishing for them in our heart and pray that God reads the silent wishes of our minds? Or are we like Daniel and are we going to set our face toward the Lord God to make requests by prayer and supplications? You're going to get a lot of Spurgeon here this evening. And there is one little sentence in one of his sermons that man, it struck me.

It was like an arrow right in my heart. Listen carefully to this one. Spurgeon said, we ask, but little and God gives it.

Isn't that often? That's oftentimes the case. Yes, for practically nothing. And God gives you that.

Well, listen, if we want to see a great work of God, are we setting our face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplication? Then if you notice, Daniel's pulling out all the stops. Did you see that in verse three with fasting sackcloth and ashes? In other words, he's coming in the posture of mourning. He's coming in the posture of humiliation before God.

He was going to do whatever it took to get this job done in prayer. I'm not going to leave anything undone. God, I'm pulling out all the stops.

God honors that kind of prayer. So here comes the first part of the prayer. Really, we're going to consider this great prayer that stretches from verse four to verse 19.

Surely one of the great prayers of the Bible. We're going to consider this prayer really in two sections because there's two sections. The first section of verse four through the end of verse 15, where Daniel basically is just confessing the sin of his people.

Himself and his people, and then in verses 16 through 19, he gets down to the business of making the request. So notice verse four through 15. I'm going to read it all together now.

Verses 14, 15. Notice in this, he's really not asking for anything. He's just making his request.

No, excuse me. Not making his request. No, that's reverse 16.

He's confessing the sin and laying out the problem, so to speak before God in verse four. And I prayed to the Lord, my God, and made confession and said, Oh, Lord, great and awesome God who keeps his covenant and mercy with those who love him and with those who keep his commandments. We've sinned and committed iniquity.

We've done wickedly and rebelled even by departing from your precepts and your judgments. Neither have we heeded your servants, the prophets who spoke in your name to our kings and our princes and to our fathers and all the people of the land. Oh, Lord, righteousness belongs to you, but to us, shame of face as it is this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which you've driven them because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against you.

Oh, Lord, to us belongs shame of face to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord, our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him. We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, our God, to walk in his ways, which he set before us by his servants, the prophets.

Yes, all Israel has transgressed your law and has departed so as not to obey your voice. Therefore, the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us because we have sinned against him and he has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our judges who judged us by bringing upon us a great disaster. For under the whole heaven has there never been done such as what has been done to Jerusalem and as is written in the law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us.

Yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord, our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand your truth. Therefore, the Lord has kept the disaster in mind and brought it upon us. For the Lord, our God, is righteous in all the works which he does, though we have not obeyed his voice.

And now, oh, Lord, our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and made yourself it is this day. We have sinned. We have done wickedly.

That's prayer, folks. Begins by recognizing the greatness of God. Did you notice that in verse four? Oh, Lord, great and awesome God.

Daniel began his prayer where every one of us should by recognizing the greatness and the goodness of God. You know, sometimes we approach God as if he were a stingy person who has to be persuaded to give us something. But Daniel knew that the problem wasn't with God.

He knew that God keeps his covenant of mercy with those who love him. God, the problem is not with you. I'm not going to blame you for any of this.

I think one of the remarkable things that we can see in the prayer of Daniel. One of the genuinely remarkable things about the prayer life of Daniel is that it had both understanding and earnestness. You know, many people pray with understanding, but no earnestness.

You know, they can quote the Bible very well when they pray. Matter of fact, they're preaching sermons when they pray and there's just so much understanding. You know, you want to interrupt them and say, bro, lift up your head, open your eyes, you're preaching for heaven's sakes.

You're not praying. But Daniel knew how to pray with understanding, but also with earnestness. Now, the people in their prayers, they're all earnestness, but no understanding.

You put the two of those things together, right? Earnestness and understanding. You have powerful prayer. And that's how Daniel prays.

He cries out before God. He says, we have sinned and committed iniquity. Did you notice that it's we verse five, we have sinned and committed iniquity.

Would you almost expect Daniel to be praying? They prayers. Daniel is a very righteous man. Do you think Israel would have ever gone into captivity if everybody was as godly as Daniel was? No way.

Daniel almost had every right to say, Lord, help them to get their act together. Lord, won't you please forgive them, Lord, if you'll only lift them up to where I am with you. Not at all.

And I want you to know Daniel's confession of sin might seem phony. You ever heard phony confession of sin? I have. I'm sure I've prayed that way sometimes.

Well, you know, you you say, oh, Lord, I know I'm so worthless before you when all the time you're patting yourself on your back for being so humble before God. It's not phony for Daniel, though. You see, he's he's passionately and completely focused on God and compared to God.

Even the most righteous among us fall short. That's an amazing thing about drawing close to Jesus. The closer you draw to Jesus.

You don't feel how great you are. You feel how small you are and how great Jesus is. Spurgeon said this.

He said, I firmly believe that the better a man's own character becomes and the more joy in the Lord he has in his own heart, the more capable he is of sympathetic sorrow and probably the more of it he will have. If you have room in your heart for sacred joy, you have equal room for holy grief. And that's what Daniel had was a holy grief over the state of the people of God.

And he cries out to God, he says, oh, Lord, verse seven, righteousness belongs to you, but to us, shame of face. Daniel knew that Israel's sin was not God's fault. God was utterly righteous and blameless.

Any shame of face belonged to Israel. You know, would it be easy for Daniel to complain to God about Israel's problems? Oh, Lord, aren't you being kind of hard on us? Come on, God, give me a break. Come on, God, that kind of thing.

No, no, no. Daniel knows the Lord's completely righteous. Any failure, any failure, it's on Israel's side, not on God's.

You see, instead of complaining, Daniel confessed. He confesses so sincerely, so truly, so brokenly. And then he says, oh, Lord, this is praying from a low place, and it's very effective.

You guys play football in high school? I did, not that I was ever any good. You know, my greatest danger wasn't injury on the field. It was splinters from the bench.

Oh, but I remember the practices and such, and I remember the the pleadings and the exhortations of the coaches. And, you know, they would always tell you that when you're ready to deliver a block or put a hit on somebody, it was absolutely essential to get low. It was usually the person who had their center of gravity lower in delivering the hit that prevailed because it was just a matter of center of gravity and being low when you delivered the blow or the hit.

That's where you gained leverage in delivering the block or the hit was in coming in low. You know, our prayers are leveraged when we come to God humble and lowly. You got to get down low, and that's what Daniel was doing.

He said, listen, we we have not obeyed verse 10, the voice of the Lord, our God. Don't you love it? How there's not the slightest hint of an excuse in Daniel's prayer. It's one of the prayers in my personal walk with the Lord and my prayers for the lives of our congregation.

God, make us sick of excuses. You know, sometimes what they'll do with somebody who's an alcoholic was a very severe drinking problem and it can't be dealt with in any other way is they'll give them a certain medicine, they'll give them a certain drug and they'll take it. And if that person drinks alcohol, they'll become violently ill.

I wish there was something that we could give us that when we start making excuses before God, we would become violently ill. We just couldn't bear it. We couldn't stand it to stand before God and make excuses.

Well, Daniel won't make any. And then he goes on, you know, to me, one of the most significant verses is verse 13 in this confession. Look at this carefully, says, as it is written in the law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord, our God.

You know, as Daniel's confessing the sin of his own life and the sin of Israel, he comes to the sin of prayerlessness. I mean, there they are in the presence of this great sin, this great calamity, and Israel still did not make their prayer before the Lord. They still didn't pray.

You know, when we sense our trial, when we sense our difficulty, it should drive us immediately to prayer, immediately to passionate prayer. And when we're not driven this way, it should wake us up to the coldness of our heart. Oh, wait a minute, man, I'm prayerless.

And when we recognize prayerlessness in our life, it's not just something to throw on the to do list. Oh, you know, got to pray more. I think it's time to get down on your knees before God and repent.

God, forgive me for being prayerless. Forgive me. I've been in this trial.

I've seen this calamity. And how much have I really prayed? Prayerlessness was a sin that Daniel felt had to be confessed before the Lord. Well, verse 16, now Daniel's going to get down and start asking God to do something.

Oh, Lord. According to all your righteousness, I pray. Let your anger and your fury be turned away from your city, Jerusalem, your holy mountain, because for our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a reproach to all who are around us.

Now, therefore, our God, hear the prayer of your servant and his supplications. And for the Lord's sake, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary, which is desolate. Oh, my God, incline your ear and hear.

Open your eyes and see our desolations and the city, which is called by your name. For we do not present our supplications before you because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies. Oh, Lord, hear.

Oh, Lord, forgive. Oh, Lord, listen and act. Do not delay for your own sake, my God, for your city and your people are called by your name.

You see, after Daniel confesses his sin and Israel's sin and after he makes full and eloquent acknowledgement of the righteousness of God. Daniel simply asks God to mercifully turn his kind attention towards Jerusalem and the sanctuary. Look at it in verse 17.

I think this is the heart of his plea. He says, and for the Lord's sake, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary, which is desolate. I think Daniel should be thought of as a great patriot.

Now, he was a patriot for Israel. Lord, we're not a nation anymore. Our nation was swallowed up by the mighty empire of Babylon, and not just was it swallowed up, it was spit out in another land.

We don't even live in our own land. We're refugees, God. Our beloved city lies in ruins and the temple is destroyed.

Now, merely a patriotic heart would say, you know, let's restore Israel. Let's rebuild Jerusalem. But Daniel was more more than just a patriot for Israel.

He was a patriot for the kingdom of God. I think we need more Christian patriotism. Now, national patriotism is a glorious virtue.

I think that's an honorable thing before God. But I think that there's an even greater patriotism, Christian patriotism to the love of the church of God. God, further your work, further your kingdom.

And Daniel says, Lord, do it all. Do it according to all your righteousness. As he brings out in verse 16, he says, according to all your righteousness, God, I'm not asking you to fudge any of your righteousness.

Do it all according to this. But cause your face to shine, as he says in verse 17, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary, which is desolate, desolate. You know, that's the heart of his plea.

He knows that Israel needs so much. I mean, think about it. God, you got to move on on the king's heart.

So he lets us go out of the captivity and then you need to make it to where we can travel there. And then, Lord, so many resources we're going to need to rebuild the temple. God, there's timber and there's things in the special hinges for the front gates.

And, you know, you can go on and on and on about what the specific needs are. Right. But Daniel knows that all of those needs are encompassed in one thing.

God, if you will shine your face upon us, that's what we need. We need God. Oh, yes, you know, we look around at the work of the Lord among us and we say, oh, Lord, Lord, we want to see more people saved.

Oh, God, we want to see more people brought to your kingdom. And God, we want to see this area, you know, transformed and we want to see this marriage rescued and we want to see this man delivered from this and and all over the place. You can go on and on and on.

I'm not saying it's wrong to pray in the specifics, but when friends, when the church of God needs a thousand things, you can put them all into one basket and say we need our God. We need him to come and shine his face down upon us. You know, the little boy, he's crying and he's you know, he's skinned his knee and he dropped his lollipop.

And, you know, there's thorns all over in his socks and he has all these needs, but, you know, he only has one need, right? Mommy. Every every need is satisfied in that one answer. That's how it is for us, God.

God, shine your face upon us. But why? Did you notice it there? He says it in verse 16 and 17. He says, for the Lord's sake, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary, which is desolate.

Do not delay for your own sake. He says it's for God's sake. Daniel's prayers consumed with the glory of God, not primarily the benefit of man.

His purpose in prayer was to see God's work accomplished and God's cause glorified. Now, friends, please, please understand me on this point. It is not wrong to pray for our needs.

Jesus told us to pray, give us this day our daily bread. It is not wrong one bit to pray for our needs. Jesus told you to do so.

But at the same time, we need to have an even greater passion for the glory and benefit of God. You know, if if you're you're home. Let's say the financial life of your home was on the brink of ruin.

You're crying out to God for him to rescue in that. And, you know, a lot of times it's circumcised, like the circumstances that that really drive us to prayer, right? You never knew you were so passionate in prayer, you know, until the wolf at the door and, you know, it's just crying out to God and friends. There's nothing wrong with that.

God bless you for that. But how about when you see the work of God in a low place? When you see the work of God bankrupt, as it were, well, does that stir your heart? Does that wound your soul? I said, Lord God, you must do something. We call upon you.

Do you see the distinction? It's not wrong to plead before God for your personal needs. But notice the pattern of Daniel. He cried out to God with passion.

His kingdom and his work would be advanced. You know, we should pray with the same passion and the same concern for the work of God in our congregations and in our communities. We can pray the prayer of Psalm eighty five six.

Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you alone and in groups? We can call out to God to pour out his holy spirit to bring repentance and revival among his people to awaken the unconverted. God, please do this. You know, this kind of prayer really speaks to the purity of motive in Daniel's prayer.

Listen, friends, let's be honest. Sometimes sometimes we pray for a great work of God. Oh, yes, we pray for a great work of God, but it's so that we can be known as great workers.

Forget that. Put it out of your mind. Lord, what we want is a great work.

Glorify no worker in it, God, only yourself. We need to pray for the sake of the Lord's cause, both in our words and in our heart. And notice what he says there.

Verse eighteen at the end of it. He says, we do not present our supplications before you because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies. You know, you never knew Daniel was such a great New Testament prayer, but he's on solid New Covenant ground here.

His confidence is not in his goodness, but in God's goodness. Do you know that this is what it means to pray in the name of Jesus? To pray in the name of Jesus doesn't mean that you have a handy way to conclude your prayer in Jesus name. Amen.

Prayer in the name of Jesus means that in your heart and in your soul, you are praying in the merits of Jesus Christ. In your heart, in your soul, you're coming to God because of how great and how good Jesus is, not because of how great and how good you are. I want you to understand something.

Please don't think I'm contradicting so much of what I've said before tonight when I say this. Daniel was not great because he prayed, he was great because his prayer was the necessary expression of great trust and dependence upon God. Do you realize that many religious people spend countless hours in

prayer? There's somebody praying with beads in their hand.

And they spend hour after hour praying with beads in their hand. But it's just rote. You know, it's just chanting.

There's the Buddhist spinning the prayer wheel for hours and hours, spinning the prayer wheel. There's the Muslim down on his knees three times pointing towards Mecca every day. It accomplishes nothing before God.

Because it's not rooted in the righteousness and goodness of God, self-righteous prayer, self-trusting prayer is of no power before God. You know, it's one of Satan's most subtle deceptions in succeeding to get hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people to trust in prayer apart from trusting in God. And this is something for us to remember.

We feel I feel that God is stirring up a great and profound call to prayer in our congregation, both to pray in our individual time with God in the secret place and in the closet where we do our business one-on-one before God, but then also to pray collectively in groups. But friends, don't think for a moment that it's prayer in and of itself that accomplishes anything. It's prayer as it expresses, as it has to express our heart that's full of trust and reliance on God.

You saw how Daniel ended his prayer in verse 19. It was very striking, wasn't it? Oh, Lord, hear. Oh, Lord, forgive.

Oh, Lord, listen and act. Do not delay for your own sake, my God, for your city and your people are called by your name. Now, sometimes we talk about wrestling in prayer and hear Daniel praise like a great wrestler.

You know, when you're wrestling with somebody, the moment you gain an advantage. You know, you put your hand on a strategic place, perhaps an elbow or a shoulder, and it's a good position for you. What do you do as a wrestler? Well, you don't put your hand there and then back off.

When you gain one advantage, you immediately follow it up with another move. You've got to press it home. You've got to drive it home.

And that's how Daniel feels. He feels like, oh, man, I got God to hear me. Well, then God now forgive me.

Oh, I got him to forgive me. OK, now, God, now listen and act. He follows up one sense of answered prayer, one blessing received with another request.

God, you've heard me once. I'm going to ask again. And that's how he approaches God with this kind of mentality.

You see the great passion in his prayer. Let me sort of conclude with a with a quote again from Charles Spurgeon. This is cold prayers.

Ask God to deny them. Only aggressive prayers will be replied to when the Church of God cannot take no for an answer, then she shall not have no for an answer when a pleading soul must have it, when the spirit of God works mightily in him so that he cannot let the angel go without a blessing, then the angel shall not go till he's given the blessing to such a pleading one. Brethren, if there be only one among us that can pray as Daniel did with intensity, the blessing will come.

I want you to think about that just for a moment. Let's fast forward beyond the time of the end of Daniel chapter nine. In three or four years, Israel, the people of God, the Jewish people will be released from their Babylonian captivity.

Seventy years after the earliest possible date, Daniel prevailed in prayer. One man's prayer affected the direction of a whole nation. That's awesome, isn't it? Friends, you don't need a lot of people to make for effective prayer.

Now, I think that a lot of people, in fact, is an answer to prayer. I long to see crowded prayer meetings. Oh, I have read of such things, I must say.

I've never seen it with my own eyes. But I have read of incredibly glorious things done among the people of God in prayer meetings, of morning prayer meetings with three or four hundred people coming every morning at five o'clock in the morning to pray. That's an outpouring of the spirit of God.

But what I want you to see is you don't have to have a lot of people praying to have such an outpouring. No, the lot of people coming to pray is the result. No, the cause is you and I as just as individuals and then collectively as we're saying we're going to be those people of prayer.

We're going to come and pray and see God do a great thing among us. Well, how shameful it would be if we concluded this evening without spending some time in prayer.

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