

Zakariya's Secret Prayer

by Paul Bramsen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of secret prayer and faith in God to address societal challenges and ensure the spiritual future of our descendants.

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:6, Luke 1:5

Topics: "Faith And Prayer", "Moral Decay"

Description

Paul Bramsen addresses the concerns and challenges faced by individuals in a society filled with moral decay, corruption, and various forms of prejudice. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining faith in God amidst a culture that promotes immorality and secularism, especially for the sake of future generations. Drawing inspiration from the story of the ancient prophet Zakariya in both the Bible and the Qur'an, Bramsen highlights the power of prayer in seeking God's intervention and guidance for preserving faith and righteousness in the midst of societal challenges.

Transcript

Do you sometimes feel sad about the situation in America? Are you shocked by the lack of moral standards, the crime and frequent corruption in high places? Are you sometimes the victim of racial, cultural or religious prejudice? Do you wonder what the future of this country will be, where homosexuals loudly proclaim their rights, where one of four children is born out of wedlock, where fifty percent of the marriages end in divorce and where abortions and AIDS increase year by year?

What will happen to your children and grandchildren in such an environment? Will they be able to keep their faith in God when taught by unbelievers in public schools? Will they lose their faith when they see sex, violence, greed and lust paraded across TV channels and movie theater screens? Will they be humbled and shamed when they refuse to eat foods that are not halal in school lunches or when they observe religious holidays? What about the cultural habits of dating and open free association and friendship between men and women? Will the spirit of secularism conquer their sensitive spirits turning them away from true religion and submission to God?

What happens in your own heart when you compromise what you believe in order to adjust to those around you? What happens to your traditional modesty? Does the high cost of living force you to become a workaholic and neglect your family responsibilities?

As long as you are alive, you can be a force for God in your home and among your comrades. But the time will come when you are no longer around. What will happen to your loved ones then? Will your descendants forget their language, their culture, and worst of all, their religion?

According to the Qur'an, the ancient prophet Zakariya had similar questions about the future of his relatives and colleagues. He did not let his personal needs and pleasures blind him to the needs of his people. He was concerned about what would happen to them when he died. You can read about this in the Qur'an, Sura nineteen, verses two through ten.

Is it possible that Zakariya's way of solving this dilemma would be helpful for us today? Zakariya thought he knew how to help his people preserve their future and maintain their faith. Zakariya thought he could do something to initiate that solution.

Zakariya believed that God would send a special person, a prophet like himself, to take up the work he was doing and thus provide a way for the people to remain faithful to God.

Zakariya believed in prayer. He believed prayer was more than humbly bowing in submission to honor God. Prayer could move God to take action on behalf of the people. Zakariya believed in prayer because as he looked back over his many years, he felt he had always been blessed when he prayed to God. God always heard and answered him.

Because of his belief in prayer, Zakariya decided to ask God to send the prophet his people would need. This prayer was in addition to the prayers he and the people offered publicly in the formal worship services. And to make this special prayer, Zakariya entered his own room, alone, and closed the door so he could secretly talk to God.

In this secret prayer, Zakariya opened his heart to God and shared his deepest fears and hopes with God. "I'm afraid of what my relatives and colleagues will do after I'm gone. Without me here to exhort them they may forget about God and become open sinners. God, you know I am old and my wife is barren. But send me an heir, a boy who will represent me and represent the continuance of my people. Make him into a man in whom you are well pleased."

God answered Zakariya, promising him he would have a son whose name should be called Yahya. Since Zakariya was so elderly and his wife was barren, he asked God for a sign so that he might be sure of God's word. God told him he would not be able to speak for three nights.

Then Zakariya was satisfied. He left his place of secret prayer and went out to his people. Since he could not talk, Zakariya made signs to them that they should continue to worship and praise God each morning and evening.

Wasn't that a marvelous way for God to answer Zakariya's prayer and take charge of the future of his people? According to the Bible, Zechariah's son, named John, was sent to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. You can read the Bible account of the story in Luke 1:5-25. You will note that the details of the story differ, but both the Bible and the Qur'an mention Zechariah's age, his wife's barrenness, Zechariah's prayer, God's answer and Zechariah's becoming unable to speak for a time.

Certainly in the present times, we feel the need for God to do something dramatic to keep the believers faithful and to bring unbelievers to faith. Just as Zakariya secretly prayed for God to intervene in human affairs, we can also secretly pray that God will act in our day to save our family and nation from unbelief

and destruction. According to the Bible, my authority, Jesus advised us: "When you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." This counsel of Jesus is found in the Bible, in Matthew 6:6.

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