

THE EFFECTUAL PRAYERS OF DANIEL

TEXT: DANIEL 9:1-23

Introduction:

1. Daniel 9 presents a wonderful demonstration of effectual, intercessory prayer. Intercessory prayer is earnestly praying for others (Daniel 9:11).
2. Daniel maintained his godly testimony the whole time he was in Babylon. As we saw in Daniel chapter 1, Daniel was taken to Babylon as a young man (probably a teenager), and we see in chapter 10 that he lived at least until the third year of King Cyrus (10:1).
3. This meant he probably lived until he was about 100 years old.
4. Of all the Bible characters Daniel appears as the purest. (Joseph also comes to mind.) Yet Daniel speaks of the nation Israel's sins, their rebellion, their transgressions of the law and their wicked deeds as if they belonged to him.
5. The failures of Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David and others are recorded in Scripture, but Daniel appears with no flaw whatever in his character. As far as the record goes he was a perfect man.
6. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But Daniel had an excellent testimony, and nothing bad is on record in the Word of God.
7. And yet Daniel, the humble man of God, confesses all the people's sins and the curse and shame, which came upon them, as His own (Daniel 9:5-10).
8. The key to understanding Daniel's godly character is his prayer life. Daniel's prayer of intercession in Daniel 9 is a great lesson in effectual fervent prayer.
9. This is one of the truly great models for prayer in the Bible. In many ways, it sets the pattern for effectual, intercessory prayer.
10. Back in 1870, Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached a message from our text and he called it, "Daniel: A Pattern For Pleaders."

I. THE DISCIPLINE OF DANIEL'S EFFECTUAL PRAYING

1. Daniel 6:10 says, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

2. When it comes to prayer, discipline is very important. Psalm 55:17 says, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."
3. Surveys have revealed that many Christians spend less than five minutes a day praying! Even many pastors and deacons and Sunday School teachers are lazy and undisciplined when it comes to prayer.
4. Oftentimes Christians make excuses for their prayerlessness. They say they are too busy to pray. But Daniel was a very busy man. He was a high-ranking government official – like a prime minister.
5. Christians must cultivate the practice of regular systematic prayer. There must be a regular place of prayer – what our Lord referred to as the prayer "closet" (Matt. 6:6).
6. It is good to start the day with prayer.
7. It is good to have a prayer list.
8. There must be humble submission and dependence upon God in prayer. In Daniel 9:3, we are told that Daniel set his face unto the Lord God, "to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."
9. As brother Ledi pointed out, prayer and fasting indicate a desperate situation. Our Lord's disciples asked Him, "Why could not we cast him (devil) out?" and our Lord said, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).
10. There must be persistence in prayer. Daniel 10 tells us Daniel was praying and fasting for three full weeks. After the three weeks, the Lord answered his prayer.
11. There must be persistence in prayer. That is why Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9, 10).
12. George Muller said, "We should continue in prayer till the blessing is granted; without fixing to God a time when, or the circumstances under which, He should give the answer. Patience should be in exercise, in connection with our prayer."
13. Andrew Murray said, "Of all the mysteries of the prayer world, the need of persevering prayer is one of the greatest. That the Lord, who is so loving and longing to bless, should have to be asked, time after time, sometimes year after year, before the answer comes, we cannot easily understand. It is also one of the greatest

practical difficulties in the exercise of believing prayer. When, after persevering pleading, our prayer remains unanswered, it is often easiest for our lazy flesh, and it has all the appearance of pious submission, to think that we must now cease praying, because God may have His secret reason for withholding His answer to our request. It is by faith alone that the difficulty is overcome. When once faith has taken its stand on God's word and the Name of Jesus, and has yielded itself to the leading of the Spirit to seek God's will and honor alone in its prayer, it need not be discouraged by delay."

14. Persevering in prayer means not being discouraged by delay. In Daniel 10:2 and 3, we are told that Daniel persevered in prayer and fasting for "three full weeks." (I'll say more about these delays later.)
15. Oftentimes we must wait much longer than that, but we must not give up praying. If God has given you a burden, do not stop till your prayer is answered.
16. Another important part of Daniel's prayers was confession of sin (9:4-20). The variety of verbs used by Daniel (cf. 9:5, 6) indicates full confession -- all sin of every kind is covered.
17. Interestingly, the Bible does not mention any sins in Daniel's life. In all ways he appears blameless. However, it is a fact that the closer a Christian gets to God, the more aware he is of his own sinfulness.
18. Both experience and the Bible teach us that many Christians do not get convicted of certain sins until after they are saved. Jonathan Edwards was one of the godliest men our country ever produced. He wrote this twenty years after his conversion: "Often since I have lived in this town I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness, very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together, so that I have been often obliged to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness and the badness of my heart than ever I had before my conversion."
19. Another great preacher, A.J. Gordon, just before his death, desired to be left alone. He was then overheard confessing his sins in such seemingly extravagant terms that his family thought he was delirious.

II. THE METHOD OF DANIEL'S EFFECTUAL PRAYING

1. Daniel prayed effectively because Daniel knew the Word of God (Dan. 9:1, 2).
2. Jeremiah 25:11, 12 says Israel would serve the king of Babylon for seventy years, and when the seventy years were accomplished, that the LORD would punish the king of Babylon for their iniquity.
3. Daniel "understood by books the number of the years" (9:2).
4. In other words, Daniel knew the 70 years were just about up.
5. We need to saturate our minds and our hearts with the Word of God if we desire to pray effectively like Daniel.
6. Our Lord said in John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."
7. The Bible says we are to pray according to the will of God. First John 5:14 says, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us."
8. Here is where some Christians get confused. How are we to know the will of God? We understand the will of God by reading the Word of God. Just like Daniel.
9. God wants us to know His will. Our Lord said in John 15:15, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."
10. Ephesians 5:17 says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
11. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
12. We can understand the will of God. Therefore, we can pray according to the will of God, and we can have the assurance that our prayers will be answered (I John 5:14, 15).
13. Another example of effectual fervent prayer is Elijah the prophet's prayers recorded in I Kings 17 and 18 (cf. James 5:16-18).
14. Elijah's prayer was based upon faith in the Word of God. Under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, Israel had gone into apostasy and idolatry. They were worshipping Baal, the false god of the heathen.
15. Elijah knew the Word of God. Therefore, he was praying according to the will of God. Deuteronomy 11:13, 14 says, "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my

commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season.”

16. Deuteronomy 11:16, 17 says, “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD’s wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain.”
17. Therefore, Elijah’s pray was according to the Word of God. That is why Elijah could pray earnestly that it might not rain, “and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months” (James 5:17; cf. I Kings 17:1).
18. Elijah and Daniel (and many others in the Bible) prayed because God put the burden to pray in their heart.
19. Earnest prayer, believing prayer, effectual prayer, and fervent prayer is produced by the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
20. Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us...”
21. According to Romans 8:26 and 27, intercessory prayer starts with the Holy Spirit -- “because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:27).

III. THE RESULTS OF DANIEL’S EFFECTUAL PRAYER

1. Three times in the Gospel of John, our Lord referred to Satan as “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
2. In Ephesians 2:2, the apostle Paul refers to Satan as “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”
3. In II Corinthians 4:4, Paul refers to Satan as “the god of this world.”
4. In Ephesians 6:12, Paul says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”
5. In other words, Satan and his large number of demons are highly organized in their efforts to influence and control the governments of this world (cf. Daniel 10:11-14).
6. We read the newspapers and we try and keep up on world events, but this is the real background to what is happening

in the world. In Daniel 10 our Lord draws back the veil for a few moments and gives us a glimpse to the spiritual battle we are in.

7. The devil and his demons want to hinder the advance of the Gospel. The devil and his demons want to stop missions and soulwinning.
8. Therefore, Christians must break these satanic strongholds through fervent intercessory prayer – prayer that is motivated by the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
9. “World conditions today reveal how strategically the Devil is deploying his forcers in the conflict” (D. Edmond Hiebert).
10. Therefore, God’s people need to learn how to pray like Daniel.
11. Daniel’s praying set the unseen, supernatural world in motion (Daniel 9:20-23).
12. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
13. It is reasonable to conclude that if Daniel had given up praying, his prayer would not have been answered. So do not stop praying!
14. James 4:2 says, "Ye have not, because ye ask not."

CONCLUSION:

1. "Effectual prayers" are answered.
2. Daniel 9:23 says Daniel was "greatly beloved." If you are saved, you are a child of God and you too are greatly beloved.
3. First John 3:22 says, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
4. The great evangelist RA Torrey said, “There is no more blessed training in prayer than that that comes through being compelled to ask again and again and again even through a long period of years before one obtains that which he seeks from God.”
5. Dr. Torrey pointed out that many people call it submission to the will of God when God does not grant them their requests at the first or second asking. They give up praying and say, “Well, perhaps it is not God’s will.”

6. RA Torrey said this is not submission, but spiritual laziness. “We do not call it submission to the will of God when we give up after one or two efforts to obtain things by action; we call it lack of strength of character. When the strong man of action starts out to accomplish a thing, if he does not accomplish it the first, or second or one hundredth time, he keeps hammering away until he does accomplish it; and the strong man of prayer when he starts to pray for a thing keeps on praying until he prays it through, and obtains what he seeks. We should be careful about what we ask from God, but when we do begin to pray for a thing we should never give up praying for it until we get it, or until God makes it very clear and very definite to us that it is not His will to give it.”
7. Let us ask the Lord to teach us how to pray effectually and fervently.
8. In Luke 11:1, we are told that one of our Lord’s disciples came to Him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”