

Daniel 9:7-19

7 To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. 8 To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him 10 and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. 12 He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 “O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

Praying prayers that get answered.

We had a Bible Study on Thursday Nov 9 about Ephesians. Jeremiah brought up some observations from his study of the prior Bible Study. One of his points was that in the Lord's prayer we see an **attitude** that the Lord **wanted us** to have.

Christ says- 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

Notice that Christ is teaching his disciples to think about more than just **themselves**. He does not say forgive **me**. He says forgive **us**. Jeremiah pointed out that Jesus wanted the **pray**-ers of this prayer to want EVERYONE to know the forgiveness that they receive. It reflects something of the heart of God when we want **others** to have **their** sins forgiven as well. We want to share in God's grace toward ourselves with others.

I cannot think of a better introduction to our text this morning. Daniel prays corporately for himself and his Jewish countrymen.

Now, can Daniel's prayer get their sins forgiven? Can his prayer get them saved? Can his prayer restore their fellowship with God?

No. There are other teachings in scripture that tell us that individuals must **repent for themselves**. They must exhibit faith. No one can do that for them.

But what Daniel prays may be a **precursor** to God initiating deep conviction of sin in the lives of Daniel's countrymen. While there are things that must happen in the **process** of Daniel's prayers, he is focused on the **end goal**. That the people of God would be forgiven for the sins they committed against God, both individually and corporately.

Every sin is committed **individually**. But many are carried out **corporately**. For example America is guilty of promoting the sin of murdering children in the womb. But the guilt of that is spread across a wide swath of involvement. Those who **vote for it** or those who **promote it** share some guilt. Those politicians who **promote laws allowing it** share guilt. Those **doctors** who carry out the procedure are even more directly guilty. And so are the women who **willingly choose** to do it.

We as believers can pray that God would **forgive our nation** for the sin of **promoting abortion**, even if we **share no guilt** in that process. But for God to forgive our nation of that sin He will do business with a mass of the individuals involved. He will cause repentance to happen across a broad swath of our population. We want everyone who is involved to experience **the same forgiveness** that **we** have experienced for the sins **we** have committed. I think that is what we are seeing in Daniel's prayer. He wants his countrymen to glorify God by turning from their sin and by receiving the **tremendously freeing** forgiveness offered by God. The only way that Daniel's prayer can be answered,

the only way the Jewish people, in this instance, can be forgiven of the mentioned sins, is if **God causes a mass repentance**.

James Montgomery Boyce points out that this prayer has three parts.

First, it contains a **confession** of Daniel's and the people's sin (Dan. 9:4–11).

Second, there is **acknowledgment** that it is **because of this sin** that the just judgments of God had come upon them (vv. 11–14).

Third, there is a shift in the prayer to **plead for God's mercy** (vv. 15–19).

These are the three necessary marks of effective praying:

1. acknowledgment of sin
2. acknowledgement of the fact that sin always brings judgment
3. a plea for God's mercy.

There is no other way we can approach God except as sinners seeking grace.

So let's take up from where we left off last week.

7 To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. 8 To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him 10 and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.

Let's look at this from God's column and man's column.

God's column. To God belongs:

Righteousness

Mercy

Forgiveness

God communicated His law by His prophets.

Humanity's side

Open shame

Treachery- violating an oath

Sin

Rebellion
Failure to obey
Transgression
Turning aside
Refusal to obey
Recipients of God's curse to unfaithful Israel.

One of the beauties of this prayer is that Daniel puts the **blame** fully where the **blame should fall**. All the stuff on God's side is **good** stuff. They are perfect virtues. We can never **blame God** for our sinful choices. Sometimes we try to blame God by saying "how could I possibly be faithful given the circumstances God placed me in?" But that is always the **wrong focus**. We sin because we are sinners. Daniel understood that. His prayer reflected that. Our sins are never the result of **God's failure** to be **every perfect thing** that He is. Our sins are always the result of **our** sinfulness, **our** selfishness, **our** foolishness, **our** apathy, and in rarer instances, **our** ignorance.

That places us in a position of shame.

Think about this. God had promised Israel that they were **his cherished people**, chosen from the midst of all other people. He placed **His name** on them. They were promised **military victories**. They were promised **respect** from all the surrounding countries. We find all that in Deut 7:6, 28:7, 28:10. Yet here they are in Babylon and several other surrounding countries. They were **cast out** of their own country. They have **no** military might. They have **no** respect from other nations. They are a **conquered** people with nothing to be proud about.

They are living in shame. This is the **same shame** that comes to us when we refuse to submit to the Lordship of Christ. We will find ourselves looking nothing like the Christians that Paul describes in His epistles. We will wonder where the fruit of the Spirit is. We will wonder where the attributes we have by nature of being in Christ are. We experience **shame**. **Shame** is always the result of Treachery against God, Sin, Rebellion, Failure to obey, Transgression, Turning aside from God, Refusal to obey. Shame is the natural result. And that shame is a blessing. It leaves us wanting to **restore our fellowship** with God.

What are you most ashamed of? I bet if you are a believer it is related to something sinful.

Now who was Daniel laying the blame on?

the men of Judah

the inhabitants of Jerusalem

**all Israel,
those who are near and those who are far away,
in all the lands to which you have driven them,
our kings
our princes
our fathers**

Well that pretty much covers everyone. That is where the blame lies. The sin of the people of God. The sin of those who bear His name.

Let's look at the second part of the prayer.

Acknowledgement of the fact that **sin always brings** judgment:

11b And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.

12 He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice.

We see that God already told Israel what would happen when they turned from Him. But they turned anyway. There is not one of us here that can **throw the first stone** at the nation of Israel. You and I have all been guilty of **presumptuous sin**, sins we knew we were committing before we did them.

But these sins that Israel sinned crossed a line that God had drawn. And God brought upon His people great calamity. He moved upon unbelieving kings in unbelieving nations to attack His people. He used people who had no idea they were being used by the God of the Jews. They thought they were serving their own interests.

Don't ever believe that **your perceptions of reality** portray the **full reality**. There is a lot more going on in your life than you are aware of.

Now, we like to blame those in authority for our sins. But if we have the desire to see the whole truth, we will see that we are **culpable** for **far more sin** than we want to take credit for. Both the **rulers** and the people who **followed** the rulers were guilty.

And Daniel tells us that the punishment that fell on the Jews for their sins surpassed what happened to other people groups. We need to understand that

there is a special responsibility that comes with being people whom God has chosen. To whom much is given, much will be required. The Jews suffered **more severely from God's hand when they rebelled** because they were **given more blessings from God** as His chosen people. Rather than express gratitude for their **blessings**, they showed **contempt** from their familiarity with God. That is a huge mistake. And they paid dearly.

under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem.

Evidently each time Jerusalem is captured by foreign invaders the Jews are treated horribly. According to scripture and history they actually tend to be treated worse than any other people.

And once this happened they deeply repented? No. not at all.

yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.

Now obviously this is not totally true of Daniel. Daniel was faithful to God at the expense of his life. It was not true of the 3 Hebrew children either. But Daniel is the one praying. And he **identifies** with his people. While Daniel was faithful, I am sure Daniel was also aware of his own **failures**. God saw fit **never to show us** what they were. I think Daniel was particularly faithful and God rewarded him richly for his service. But Daniel was human and he would have been aware of his **own** sins. He would have been aware that, even though his sins may not have been to the **same degree**, they were of the **same kind** as his fellow countrymen. Isn't that the frustration? We are **all** in the same boat. We can **all** pray this same prayer. We are **all** slow to tell the "heart of heart" truths **about** ourselves **to** ourselves and **be moved** by our insights into what **God's word** says. This is a problem with churches. This is a problem with marriages. This is a problem with families. We are not quick enough to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth about ourselves, and repent based on the truth of God's word.

We can see that God laid out for His people **a way out**. They **could have** repented and returned to God. That is all it would have taken. But they **would** not, and they **did** not. And Daniel says that the penalty the Israelites received was nothing more than they deserved. God was being righteous when He dished out the penalty. There was never anything wrong with God.

Now let's move to the last section of the prayer.

A plea for God's mercy:

15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have

sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 “O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

If you want to pray powerfully... If you want to pray confidently... If you want to pray prayers that God will answer... pray prayers with God’s highest interest in mind. This would be similar in the New Testament to praying in Jesus name, in Jesus’s stead, in Jesus’s best interest.

Notice how Daniel prays here.

He starts with God’s deliverance of God’s people **from Egypt**. What was the result of that miraculous event? Daniel says, **You have made a name for yourself**. Essentially, even though the Jews delivered from Egypt did not **deserve** their deliverance, their deliverance was useful for God in making a name for Himself. Daniel focuses on that event as the **template** that **God works from** and one of the **purposes** that he performs deliverances.

God **delivers**, along with other purposes, to **draw attention to Himself**.

Then Daniel prays, Lord you have righteously judged us. Now please turn your anger aside from us in your justice. We have been **punished**. You glorified yourself in **that** act. Now **restore us** and glorify yourself in **that** act.

Look what Daniel says.

17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy

Daniel is asking God to listen to his requests and to respond to them positively.

Why. Why should God answer? Daniel gives the reasoning. If there is a secret in praying in a way that grips God, Daniel gives it. Hear my prayers. Consider my prayers. Answer my prayers.

Why?

for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.

Do this thing I ask because it is for **your own glory**. Glorify **yourself** in this way. Daniel knows from **God's word** that it is **God's will** that the temple be restored. He knows that God **wants the worship to Him** restored in the temple. So Daniel **asks for what God wants**. That is a **prayer of faith**. Daniel is joining with God in accomplishing God's will. Sometimes God calls people to pray so that **when He does what He is going to do** everyone knows who did it. His people get **encouraged** when prayers asked in **God's stead** get **answered** by God, when we **pray** for a thing and God **does** the thing.

Right now, in Daniel's period of history, there are no sacrifices being offered to God. There is no incense being offered. There is no one going into the Holy of Holies to represent man to God. God wants this again. And Daniel knows it.

Then again Daniel prays-

see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name

Again Daniel mentions to God that we as a people **have desolations** and **the city** that has your name all over **it in the eyes of all the gentiles** is desolate as well. The word for desolated means destroyed, ruined, wasted. The world looking on would see Jerusalem like Chernobyl after the nuclear plant meltdown or Nagasaki after the atomic bomb exploded. The world would look at it and all they would remember is **devastation**. The **city** was that way. The **temple** was that way. And even **God's people** are that way. It is time for God to honor himself by restoring them.

But we see another thing to include in prayers if we want them to be answered. First pray according to **what God wants**. Second **fully understand the position** you are praying **from**.

For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.

Never appeal to God to answer your prayer because of any of **your own** attributes. We never appeal to God by saying, "answer my prayer because I am a Baptist, or I read the whole Bible this year, or I have been nice to my spouse for at least three days now". No. We appeal to **God's** attributes. God, answer my prayer because it is **like you** to show mercy. It is **like you** to be forgiving. It is **like you** to be gracious. As for me- no- I am not righteous. I do not deserve you to do what I am asking. But none the less I know it is **like you** to answer this prayer.

Do you ever hesitate going to God because you are not worthy? Do you sometimes feel that **even praying** to God would be hypocritical after what you have done? Are you tempted to allow your sin to **keep you** from God? Daniel gives us great encouragement here. **Run** to God. Prayer depends upon **God's**

attributes and performance. **Not yours.** Rest in his mercy and grace. **Of course** you don't deserve God's kindness. That is always the truth. God is quick to forgive. He is abounding in grace and love. We count upon **His** attributes when we come to Him.

Daniel then prays

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive.

This is the heart cry of every true Christian every day. Oh Lord God, forgive me and glorify yourself. The two are connected. We see both elements in the Lord's prayer. **Hallowed be thy name.** Forgive **us our** trespasses. Deliver us from evil. This attitude is core to any genuine prayer we offer to God. Lord hear me. Lord forgive me.

Then Daniel closes the prayer by appealing to the same motivation of **God's** that he appealed to all through the prayer.

O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God,

Why should God do that? What does Daniel appeal to?

because your city and your people are called by your name."

The city of Jerusalem is desolate. When people look at it they think all kinds of wrong thoughts **about God.** Because that city is **associated** with God's name. So Daniel prays, Lord, **fix your reputation. Exalt yourself.** Show off the truth about yourself. Do what you **must** to get the glory you **so deserve.**

And your people are desolate. They are nobodies in strange lands. They cannot even **worship you** as you **deserve** to be worshipped. And everyone knows they are **your** people. Fix that. So **your name** gets glorified.

We have a wonderful example of prayer for us to follow in the prayer of Daniel. We see that his prayer is very honest in accepting his responsibility for his own sin. He identifies with all his countrymen and their sin. He recognizes that none of it is **God's** fault. All of it is **their** fault.

But Daniel also knows the **character of God.** God is merciful. God is gracious. God is quick to forgive. And Daniel appeals to the **nature of God** in His prayer. He never appeals to human virtues as the reason God should answer his prayers. No, we pray because **it is like God** to show off His wonderful attributes.

But at the heart of the prayer is for **God to show himself great.** For God to **lift up His name** among the nations. For God to **restore** those things that previously **gave Him honor** in the earth. God's **Name** is the focus. God's **reputation.** God's **character.** This should be displayed. It is in God's **own interest to lift up His name** in all the nations. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven.

A wonderful application for us would be to copy Daniel's example in prayer this week.

We confess our sin and our churches sin and our nation's sin.

We appeal to God for forgiveness because we want **everyone** to experience that forgiveness. And we know that it is like God to **want** to forgive people when they repent.

And then we ask God for those things that **God reveals in His word** that **He** wants. We know He wants us to be **more like Christ**, that we **know Him better**, that we **submit to Him** more wholeheartedly. So we pray, trusting that God **surely will do these things** because by doing so **He will glorify His holy name**.