

Coronavirus and Prayer

Daniel 9:1-19

CRPC at Erskine: 21 March 2020

Introduction

I was originally planning to continue my sermon series in Mark,

- but when the Moderator of our Presbytery called us to fast and pray on Wednesday because of the coronavirus, I decided to shift gears and preach on prayer.
- It seems that the whole world is focused on the coronavirus, and when the world is focused on something, it is important for the ministers of the word to address it.

Last week we looked at “God and the Coronavirus,”

- I spoke to you about something that the world does not talk about—that God is the One who sent this virus.
 - We know that because, ultimately, He is the source of all affliction.
 - **Amos 3:6: If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?**
 - And when He sends affliction to a nation or to the whole world,
 - it is always that case that He sends it because of His wrath against our sin.
 - It is not always for this reason in the case of individuals (like Job), but it is always so in the case of nations.
- We looked at Amos 4-5 last week where God names five afflictions that He sent against His people, and after each one He says, “But you did not return to Me.”
 - We compared this with the affliction of the coronavirus. It too is something God sent that ought to cause nations like ours to return to Him.
 - The sin that especially brings on these judgments is rejecting God as our God
 - God warns His people that if they do not return to Him as the God who will save them from their sins, they will receive a much greater affliction that will not be reversible. This was a picture of eternal punishment.
 - The coronavirus is a very little thing compared to the judgment that will come if we reject God as our Saviour and refuse to turn back to Him.
 - Already we have had various judgments that ought awaken us—but still we have not returned to the LORD as our God who saves us by Jesus Christ.

I concluded the sermon by urging you to be sure that you have returned to God, and to do what you can, on your part, to urge our society and our world to return to Him.

- Returning to God should be our principle business in a crisis like this.

There are a lot of other things we can make our principal business at this time.

- We can become filled with anxiety and fretfulness...
- We can take all kinds of extreme measures to protect ourselves...
- We can deny the problem and become reckless...
- We can become angry and frustrated...
- We can become weary and bitter with the whole thing...
- We can quarrel with each other and become divided...
- Or we can turn to the LORD in humble repentance and prayer!

Whenever we do turn to God in times of crisis, we will pray.

- We have an example of such prayer in Daniel chapter 9.
- As we pray in response to the coronavirus, and as our Moderator has appointed this Wednesday as a day of fasting and prayer, we will do well to look at Daniel's prayer at a time when the church was under a much worse judgment than we are.
 - Some of you might be thinking, "But it is not just the church that is experiencing this—this is the whole world."
 - True enough, but so was the exile under which God's people suffered in Daniel's day.
 - If you read the prophets (for example, Jeremiah 46–49, you will see how not only Israel, but many other nations are mentioned that were also afflicted by the Babylonians—and then in chapter 49-50, God pronounces His judgement on Babylon itself.
 - Just as our nation and the surrounding nations share in the blessings that God sends to His church when the church serves Him, so also they share in the curses that God sends to His church when we reject Him.
 - Do you remember when Abraham prayed for Sodom and the LORD told him that if there were but ten righteous men there, He would spare the whole city.
 - There weren't, so God destroyed it.

Listen now to Daniel 9. This is the word of God. May He bless us as we hear it.

Daniel 9:1-19: In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² 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 through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. ³ Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. ⁴ And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. ⁶ Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. ⁷ O 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 have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. ⁸ O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹ To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. ¹⁰ We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. ¹¹ Yes, all Israel has trans-gressed 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. ¹² 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 such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. ¹³ 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, that we might turn from

our iniquities and understand Your truth. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as *it is* this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly! ¹⁶ O 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 for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and

Your people *are* a reproach to all *those* around us. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ O 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. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

And there we end the reading of God's holy and infallible word.

- May He give us help now as we consider how it applies to us that we may learn more about how to pray in connection with our present affliction with the coronavirus.
- We will look at two things:
 - First, that in times these, we should devote ourselves to earnest prayer like Daniel did.
 - Second, we will look at what we ought to include in our prayers at times like this.

So let's begin.

I. In times like these, we should devote ourselves to earnest prayer like Daniel did.

A. You can see that Daniel's prayer is an earnest prayer.

1. In verse 3, he says: “**Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.**”
 - a. Setting his face toward the Lord speaks of a time of focused prayer.
 - We know very well that Daniel was a man who was regular in his prayers.
 - The story of the lions' den explains how it was his custom to pray three times a day. It tells us how he continued this custom even when the king issued a decree that no one was to pray to anyone but the king and Daniel was indeed cast into the lions' den.
 - So what Daniel describes here in Daniel 9 is not his customary prayers.
 - Setting his face toward the Lord means that he set aside time from his regular business to devote himself to an extended season of prayer.
 - Besides your daily prayers, you need to have times when you devote yourself to longer seasons of prayer—to seek the LORD for a whole day or even a longer season.
 - This is certainly a time to do that.

- b. Daniel also speaks of fasting, sackcloth, and ashes along with his prayer
- The idea of fasting is not that it is a work that we perform for God, but rather that it is an aid to our prayers in our weakness.
 - It is a way of humbling ourselves and of laying aside everything including our regular food to earnestly seek Him. We devote ourselves to prayer.
 - Usually, fasting involves abstaining from food and only drinking water, often for one or more twenty-four hour periods (from sunset to sunset).
 - Those who for health reasons cannot do this often eat very plain food, such as bread and water, so that the focus during this time is not on eating but on crying out the Lord.
 - Things like movies, social media, computer games, sports, sexual relations and the like are also set aside.
 - Sackcloth and ashes were symbols of mourning associated with sorrow for sin and the judgment that it had brought.
 - You can use this symbolism if you desire, but as it is not customary in our times, we usually only call for prayer and fasting.
 - As for fasting, it has sadly fallen into great disuse in our day.
 - In the early church, many believers fasted once or twice a week.
 - Paul speaks in 1 Cor 7:5 of “giving yourselves to fasting and prayer” as something that he expected believers to do,
 - and he mentions it as a time when couples should agree to abstain from sexual relations for a set time.
 - Likewise, we saw recently in Mark 9:29 how Jesus told His disciples that it was important for them to keep up prayer and fasting which they had apparently been neglecting.
 - But sadly, most Christians in our day do not think prayer is that important.
- Surely we can see from Daniel’s example that we should have special seasons when we set aside our normal activities and devote ourselves to earnest prayer.
2. We also see that the tone of his prayer is earnest.
- It is earnest all the way through, but this especially comes out at the end when he pleads to the Lord with a number of sharp pleas...
 - Look at verse 19: **O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.**
 - We need to pray with the realisation that if God does not act, we shall be utterly ruined as His people.
 - Truly, if God does not answer our prayers for mercy and forgiveness to the church, we are eternally ruined—far worse than Covid-19—far worse than death.
 - We are talking about eternal misery under His wrath.
 - People are so worried about a virus but so unconcerned about the state of their souls for all eternity.
 - This is way out of whack!

B. But I tell you, your prayers will never be earnest unless they are fuelled the way Daniel's prayers were.

1. Like Daniel's prayers, our prayers must be fired by God's promise of mercy.

- God's promise of mercy is what got Daniel going!

a. He was strong in God's word.

- In verses 1-2, he explains that he was reading Jeremiah the prophet, and from Jeremiah he learned the precious promise that the exile would end after 70 years.
- There were wonderful promises there that even though Jerusalem would be desolate and the temple destroyed, God was not done with His people.

b. If you read Jeremiah, you will find promises like this:

- **Jer 25:11-12:** "And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 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 this:

- **Jer 29:10:** 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."

- And of course Jeremiah even has promises of the new covenant that God will establish with His people after He brings them back to their land.

➤ Clearly, God was not done with His people at all!

c. How we need to see God's promises to us as His people today!

- If you don't read God's word, or if you don't remember the grace that He has promised to His church,

- you will not realise what the church ought to be like!
- You will think it's okay for it to be like it is today.

- Think about this. The gospel has been here in Canada for a long time.

- Eighty percent of the people who live in Nova Scotia are baptised and it used to be even higher than that.

- If we who believe had all been faithful to God's covenant, things would be a lot different in our nation.

- Our way of life would be beautiful and full of light.
- Our families would be strong and great would be our peace.
- The nations would be flooding to us to learn of Jesus Christ.
- We would be healthy and strong and prosperous.

- But this is not so.

- The city of God is, as Daniel says in verse 3, *desolate*. We have become a reproach.

- Those who do not fear God are running things and the voice of God's truth is regarded as irrelevant.

- Who even thinks about whether their actions will please Christ?
 - Yet, God’s promise is that Jesus Christ will rule the nations. We do not see that for the same reason that the house of David (representing Christ’s rule) was not ruling when Daniel prayed this prayer.
 - This deplorable state of things is not what God has promised, but we don’t even know what He has promised.
 - There is little hope for the church when she is brought under God’s hand of judgment if she does not know what He has promised.
 - You will just drift into the way of the world and God’s promises of blessing to the church will become shadowy and irrelevant.
 - And when you don’t remember what He has promised concerning the church, you won’t pray earnestly for it in faith.
 - You may even drift into apostasy—and if *you* don’t, your children in the next generation *will*, and you might not even hardly notice it.
 - That is what happened to many of Daniel’s contemporaries.
 - They saw the church of their day ruined and desolate and they figured that that was just the way it was.
 - They were oblivious to the deplorable condition into which the church had fallen because they did not see what God had promised that He would do for her if she looked to Him for His blessing!
 - They just settled down in the world—in Babylon—and were content to look for whatever the world had to offer them.
2. Let me tell you—God’s promises are received by the prayer of faith.
- Paul tells us in Romans 9 that most of his fellow Israelites perished because they did not have faith in God’s promise of salvation in Christ.
 - They weren’t looking for it.
 - And because they did not believe, they did not receive what was promised.
 - a. Let me give you some examples of promises you will respond to if you have faith!
 - When God’s word says, “Jesus will save His people from their sins,”
 - you will say, “Save me, Lord!”
 - When God says, “I will give them My Holy Spirit and cause them to walk in My ways,”
 - you will say, “Lord, give us Your Spirit that we might walk in Your way.”
 - When God says, “I will forgive all their iniquities,”
 - you will say, “Lord, forgive me for all my iniquities.”
 - When He says, “All nations will worship Me,”
 - you who believe will say, “Lord, let the nations come and worship You.”
 - When He says, “I will sanctify My church”
 - you will say, “Lord, sanctify us.”
 - When He says, “I will come again,”
 - you will say, “Even so come, Lord Jesus!”
 - When He says, “My righteousness is to children’s children,”

- you will say, “Lord, bless our children and make them righteous.”
- When He says, “I will build My church and make it a praise in the earth,”
 - you will say, “Lord, make us a praise in the earth.”
- b. This is the way of true faith!
 - Faith hears God’s promise and lays hold of it by prayer!
 - There is no faith where there is no prayer,
 - and where there is no faith, the promise is void.
 - You will pray if you believe.
 - That is precisely what Daniel does.
 - He learns from Jeremiah that God is going to restore Jerusalem—
 - So he sets himself to pray for what God has promised.
 - Christian, what has God promised about the church?
 - That it would be confined to one nation?
 - That it would be unholy and weak?
 - That it would be a reproach in the earth?
 - You know that He has not promised such things—
 - He has said that all nations will come and worship His Son.
 - Could it be that one of the reasons the church is such a reproach today is that we have not believed the promise and set ourselves to pray as Daniel did?

TRANS> It is your duty to care about the church and to pray for the church with faith fuelled by the promises of God.

- So having seen that our prayers ought to be earnest...

II. Let’s now look at three things that should be included in our prayers at times when God brings us low as He has in these days.

A. First, we ought to include a full confession of our sin.

- Daniel’s confession begins in verse 4, where he says, “**And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said...**”
 - And he continues his confession to verse 15, where he says, “**we have sinned and done wickedly.**”
- There are several things that are noteworthy about this confession.
 1. First of all, notice that even though Daniel was a very godly man who served the Lord blamelessly, throughout this confession he uses the first person plural.
 - He does not say “*they*” have sinned, but “*we*” have sinned.
 - He realises that the whole church is implicated together.
 - He surely thought of his own personal sins that had contributed to the whole mess that the nation was in.
 - You ought to do that too when you pray about our present distress with coronavirus.
 - Confess to God recognising how you have contributed to the deplorable condition of the church—how your sins have contributed to the ungodliness of the church and the nation that has brought God’s displeasure upon us.

2. In a similar vein, notice how Daniel does not point his finger at all the unbelievers around Israel as the cause of God's judgment either.
 - The Babylonians had attacked Israel as well as the nations around them, but Daniel does not talk about 'those wicked Philistines and Moabites and Edomites and Syrians.'
 - He says, (verse 10-11): **"We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. ¹¹ 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."**
 - If we are going to blame someone for the coronavirus, we don't need to point at the world with all their sins...
 - We need to point at the church.
 - If we were serving God as we should, there wouldn't be all the abortion and adultery and blasphemy in our society.
 - We are God's people!
 - We are the priests of the world who pray for the world, and the evangelists of the world, and the salt and light of the world, but we have been unfaithful.
3. Look at some of the ways that we have been unfaithful that Daniel mentions.
 - a. In verse 5, he says that we have not kept God's commandments:
 - **"we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments."**
 - This is so true—you hear Christians cursing, lying, gossiping, cheating on our taxes, breaking the Sabbath, having eyes full of adultery, slacking off at work when we are being paid, neglecting our wives or our husbands, complaining, full of pride or fear or anger.
 - We who serve the living God who promises to save us from our sins!
 - b. In verse 6, he shows how our sin is made all the worse because God has graciously pled with us to turn back to Him, and we have not done it.
 - Verse 6 says: **"Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land."**
 - How wicked is that—God warmly pleads with us to come to Him, to return to Him, promising to pardon us and restore us and we won't do it.
 - Verse 9 says: **"To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him."**
 - Here is a gracious God ready to forgive, and here we are continuing to go on in our own sinful, selfish, ungodly ways.
 - c. Perhaps the worst thing of all about us is that even when all this disaster has come upon us, we still have not turned back to Him.
 - Daniel confesses this in 9:13: **"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, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth."**
 - Is this not true of us with Coronavirus?
 - God has sent it to us and we have not repented?

- Is this not something we need to confess when we pray to God this week?

TRANS> Be sure that you include real confession in your prayers.

- Take some time when you fast and pray to read in God's word—meditate on how we have all come short of the glory of God, and especially how *you* have and confess your sin to God.

- That is the first thing that should make up your prayers.

B. The second thing you should include in your prayers is a full declaration of the goodness and perfection of God!

1. It is so wrong to in any way charge God with wrong doing for sending us this virus and all of our other troubles.

- This is a huge problem in the church today, and it has set a terrible example for the world.
- Too often, we, as Christians, speak as if God has done something wrong in afflicting us—or we deny that He is the One who brought the affliction on us as if someone else was in control of these things!
 - This is so disrespectful and insulting to our most kind, gracious, and loving Father in heaven. There is no wrong in Him. None at all!

2. We truly need to learn to think and pray like Daniel does here.

a. He notes that it is God's way to save those who simply come to Him to be saved... verse 4 (from the middle of the verse): **“O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments...”**

- Keeping covenant is not talking about perfection—just that we come to Him as our Lord and Saviour to follow Him to live as His people by His grace—
 - He knows that we sin and He has made provision for that in Christ—as revealed in the sacrifices of the old covenant.
 - He welcomes all who simply come to live in His grace...
 - We are all sinners... but He receives us if we simply come to Him.
 - His default position toward His creatures is kindness and mercy.

b. But since we have sinned and departed from Him, He is perfectly just in afflicting us.

- In fact, it would unjust if He didn't afflict us for our sin!
- Daniel vindicates Him repeatedly in his prayer and so should we:
 - In verse 7, He says: **“O 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 have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.”**
 - And in verse 11 and 12, Daniel testifies, as we must learn to testify, that God has done exactly what He said He would do to us if we, as His people, walk away from Him as our gracious redeemer.
 - The wrong is all ours, the righteousness is all His!
 - The malice is in us, the kindness and grace is in Him.

c. We need to come up to this confession.

- The default thought of our sinful heart when we are afflicted is that God is the one who has done wrong—as wicked as that thought is!
 - In our prayer and fasting, we need to come up to the right way of looking at God as full of righteousness and mercy.
 - I tell you that this will take some effort.
 - You see that you have a lot to do in your prayers this week!
- And now there is one more thing that we must include in our prayer to God in this time of our affliction.

C. Pray that the LORD will return to us.

- That is what Daniel prays for from verse 16 to verse 19.
1. First, he prays, as we should, that God’s anger would be turned away.
 - Verse 16: **“O 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 for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.”**
 - He has already repeatedly said that God was just and right to be angry and furious with us.
 - How is it that now he says, **according to Your righteousness... let Your anger and Your fury be turned away?**
 - How can he appeal to God’s righteousness when we have sinned?
 - It is in this—because now Daniel, and others in his day, were crying out to God for mercy on the basis of God’s covenant promise!
 - If God did not turn away His anger and His fury, it would mean that God’s provision for sin was not adequate.
 - It would mean that the offering of His Son on the cross, which He was going to provide, was not good enough to atone for our sin!
 - This truth gives us great confidence in asking for forgiveness.
 - It is the same confidence that John gives us in 1 John 1:9 when he says: **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**
 - With a Saviour like Christ, it would be unrighteous of God if He did not forgive us when we come to Him.
 - He has made our forgiveness that strong and that sure!
- So pray with confidence that His anger and fury would be turned away...
2. Then, Daniel prays, as we should, that God’s favour would be restored.
 - God’s anger out—God’s favour in.
 - Look at Daniel 9:17: **“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.”**
 - When God makes His face shine on something, it means that He looks with favour and delight upon it.
 - A shining face is a smiling face—a face that is pleased.
 - And what was that sanctuary that God would smile upon and delight in?

- It is that sanctuary which represents Christ—Christ is the holy dwelling place of God where God is reconciled to sinners.
 - When God’s face shines upon the sanctuary, it means that all His worshippers are His delight—who are joined to Him at the sanctuary, that is, they are joined to Him by Jesus Christ.
 - Indeed, you see how Daniel says to God, “for the Lord’s sake.”
 - You might think it was New Testament, asking the Father to cause His face to shine on us for the Lord’s sake—for Christ’s sake.
 - There are two here—the Father and the Son... and Daniel is asking that we might have God’s favour because of Christ.
 - If God approves of Him, it means that He approves of all of us who have found refuge in Him.
 - We are part of the sanctuary... the temple that is made without hands... established upon Jesus Christ.
 - Forever God is pleased with us.
3. See how Daniel prays that all this restoring would be done for God’s own glory.
- Verse 18 says: **“O 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.”**
 - The point here is that if His people are seen to be cast off (as they were indeed cast off when Daniel prayed this), it brings dishonour to God.
 - People look at them and say, “These are God’s people and He could not defend them from Babylon.”
 - Of course the truth is that they are cast off because they had rejected Him as their gracious Saviour.
 - Why would He save them if they had turned from Him as their Saviour?
 - But now if they have come back to Him, as Daniel has done, then it is entirely unacceptable if God does not bless them and restore them.
 - Not because of their righteous deeds, but because they have come to Him for His mercy—His mercy in Christ to sinners.
 - It magnifies God’s mercy and grace to save sinners that come to Him!
 - It shows the depths of His love in giving His Son to save them.
 - It shows the power of His Spirit to draw them and His mercy to accept them.
 - It is done to the praise of the glory of His grace so everyone can see His marvellous grace—to the angst of Satan and to the joy of the godly.

Conclusion:

Daniel’s earnest prayer is summed up beautifully in verse 19.

- **“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”**

This is the kind of prayer that honours God!

- It may not be so eloquent, it may even seem repetitious—
 - But it is not vain repetition, because it is the repetition of earnestness.

- It is the repetition that comes when we know that our words are inadequate to pray all that we need to pray...
 - but when our hearts are enlarged at the prospect of Christ being glorified by restoring His church.
 - **O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.**