

PRAYING WHEN YOU LIVE WITH LIONS

Listening to Daniel - Learning from Jesus

A Study through Daniel

Fall Series, 2023

Texts: Daniel 9:1-23; Matthew 6:9-13; John 17; Luke 22:31-34

There are numbers of reasons I believe the book of Daniel will help us live more effectively as gospel ambassadors to modern Babylon.

1. We live in uncertain times much like those in which Daniel and his friends lived, and like them, we must learn to live confidently for God in the face of an uncertain future.
2. We live in a secular and immoral culture that has invaded the church and infected our lives, and like Daniel, we must speak truth boldly and stand for righteousness courageously.
3. We live in spiritually dark times and as the darkness deepens, like Daniel, we must display the beauty of the gospel by living graciously and faithfully.
4. We live in desperate and confusing times, and like Daniel, we must strive to live humble, prayerful, and Bible-shaped lives.

Daniel had courageous faith. He was willing to say bold words and take hard stands for the sake of truth and righteousness. He was willing to pay the price for faithfulness. And we will see all of this and more as we make our way through the book that bears his name and recounts his life.

Daniel was able to live confidently because he was convinced that God rules (Daniel 1-7) and His kingdom matters more (Daniel 7-12)!

The evidence that Daniel really believed that God ruled and that His kingdom mattered more was his life-long dependance on God to hear and answer his prayers!

So as a prelude to our study through the book Daniel wrote, I want us to **listen** to one of his prayers and **learn** how that prayer conforms to the prayer that Jesus taught His ambassadors to pray and that He himself prayed for them as they were scattered throughout the kingdoms of the world like Daniel was relocated to a foreign culture in a pagan city that stood against everything he valued and believed.

When we listen to Daniel and we learn from Jesus, we are taught how to pray when we are called to live among the Babylonian lions of our day and time.

I. **Pray for Mercy and Understanding about God's Kingdom (*Daniel's Prayer – 9:1-19; 20-23*)**

What does the prayer of a man who is convinced that God rules and His kingdom matters more sound like when His rule appears thwarted, and His kingdom purposes continue to remain hidden?

A. *Shaped by Scripture (9:1-2; 11-13)*

A. *Based on God's Character and Past Faithfulness (9:4-9)*

A. *Marked by Humility and Confession (9:4a, 5-6, 7-15)*

A. *Desiring Forgiveness and Desperate for Mercy (9:17-19)*

A. *Longing for Deliverance for the sake of God's Name (9:19)*

This kind of praying is only possible when the person praying is convinced that God rules and that His kingdom matters more! But such praying is not instinctive . . . it must be learned. And the person who teaches us to pray this way, someone even more loved by God than Daniel and whose prayers are always heard and answered – Jesus!

I. Pray for the Establishment and Advancement of God’s Kingdom (*Disciples’ Prayer – Matthew 6:9-13*)

A. *Person to Whom Our Praying Is Directed (6:9)*

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

A. *Priorities That Must Govern Our Praying (6:10)*

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

1. The Exaltation of God’s Person
2. The Establishment of God’s Authority
3. The Execution of God’s Purposes and Plans

A. *Petitions That Should Shape Our Praying (Matthew 6:11-13)*

Give us this day our daily bread,¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

1. Daily Provision
2. Daily Pardon
3. Daily Protection/Preservation

And we can pray for these things confidently because we know that God rules and His kingdom matters more!

I. Pray for the Protection and Preservation of the Ambassadors of the Kingdom (Messiah’s Prayer for His Own in John 17:1-26)

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. (John 17:9)

A. *The People for Whom He Prays – His Own (17:6-9)*

A. *The Reason He Prays for Them (17:10-14)*

A. *The Things He Prays For About Them (17:13-24)*

A. *The Objective for Which He Prays (17:23b)*

Conclusion:

There is a specific example of Jesus praying this way for one of His own:

Luke 22:31–34 “Simon, Simon, behold, **Satan demanded to have you**, that he might sift you like wheat,³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”³³ Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”³⁴ Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”

So, as we start our journey through Daniel, we have found solid ground upon which to stand – God rules and His kingdom matters more! And we have found wonderful truth to strengthen us when the way grows hard and to encourage us when we grow weary and feel forsaken – God loves us, and He hears us when we pray! And perhaps the most amazing reality of all is that Jesus Himself is praying for you and for me, and we know that because God always hears and answers His prayers, we can come boldly to “our Father in heaven” with our own prayers!

So . . . let’s pray humble, bold, Bible-shaped prayers like Daniel. And when we do, let’s make sure our requests are governed and shaped by God’s kingdom priorities and not our own. And when the way gets hard and we fail, let’s take heart and gain strength from the knowledge that Jesus is praying for us without ceasing!

We can rejoice no matter what comes into our lives over the next seven days because:

- God rules and His kingdom matters more!
- God loves us and He hears us when we pray!
- Jesus Himself is praying for us constantly and efficaciously!