

Daniel's Prayer of Humility

By Kent Heaton

“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. 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. 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” (Dan. 9:17-19).

The prayer of Daniel is one of the most powerful statements of faith in scripture. Daniel had grown old in the captivity, as nearly seventy years have passed since he first came to Babylon. Reflecting on the words of Jeremiah, Daniel knows the purpose of God's punishment was from the sin of the people. The Law of Moses declared the penalty for rebellion and God kept His word. It would be fair to say Daniel was one of the few righteous in Judah along with his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem. He and his friends overcame great tests of faith seeing the Babylonian empire dissolve before the might of the Persians. A new king sat on the throne but Daniel was undeterred. His faith in God was stronger than ever.

Reading the text of Daniel's prayer (beginning in verse 4) a sense of shame comes from the heart of Daniel as he pours out a penitent spirit for the sins of the people. Their rebellion is his rebellion. The unfaithfulness of the people is his unfaithfulness. Humility flows through the confession of Daniel to his God. This man of God knows that presenting supplications before God cannot come from an arrogant heart. It is not because of the righteous deeds of Daniel prayer will be answered but because of the great mercy of a loving Father. Prayer is not defined by the pride of the petitioner but the compassion of a merciful God. Jesus defined the model of prayer by wrapping all the petitions of prayer with the understanding it was only according to the will of the Father. “Thy will be done” is the wing that bears the plea to the ear of the Lord God. What is man that he can demand anything from Jehovah?

Daniel's prayer is a model of action. He implores God to hear, forgive, listen, act and not delay. The reason for prayer is so that God will be glorified. Answering the supplications of a humble man will bring the mercies of the Lord to bless those who seek him with a humble heart. Failed prayers come from hearts that demand things from God expecting the answer to be according to man's will. Insincere prayer has ‘sin’ at its core. The prayer of Daniel exemplifies the powerful message of sorrow for sin, repentance, pleading for mercy and granting of God's will. True prayer can be nothing less.

For Life

I heard of one preacher, who in the course of an otherwise normal marriage ceremony, had arrived at the point of saying, “Will you take this woman for better or for worse, in sickness or in health, for richer or for poorer?” The nervous groom, having decided it must be a matter of multiple choice, shot back, “I'll take better, healthy, and richer!”

It seems that many of our day have come to think of marriage as did this addled groom: fine so long as things go well. And yet, when problems arise, when the “new” wears off and the honeymoon is over, when there are dirty dishes to be done and crying babies to be changed, then the back door seems the best way out.

God intends marriage to be celebrated by one man and one woman for a lifetime. While discussing marriage and divorce, Jesus pointed back to Eden's garden where *“He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause shall a man leave*

father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.” Upon that ground the Lord continued, *“Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder”* (Matt. 19:4-6).

Husbands and wives, the vows we’ve made before God and to each other, we’ve made for life. (Dalton Key)

Assembling Together

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh” (Heb. 10:23-25).

“Our assembly every week prepares us for the great assembly that will take place on the day of the Lord...To paraphrase the author of Hebrews, don’t forsake the assembly on the Lord’s Day, or you will miss the great assembly on the day of the Lord.” (Michael Whitworth, *Living & Longing for the Lord*, p 157).

What is Maturity?

- 1) Facing the truth honestly; being a person of your word.
- 2) Looking beyond personal comfort and gratification to the greater good.
- 3) Dealing with change without falling apart; keeping the stresses and worries of life from taking control.
- 4) Working hard and completing a job, whether supervised or not.
- 5) Doing the right thing regardless of what others say and do.
- 6) Finding more joy in giving than in receiving.
- 7) Bearing with an injustice without having to get even.
- 8) Relating to others in a consistently positive and helpful manner.
- 9) Showing love and respect for others in both word and deed.
- 10) Learning contentment based on internal attitudes rather than external circumstances. (Dr. Steve Stephens)

A Moments Wisdom

- About the time one learns to make the most of life, most of life is gone.
- Do not handicap your children by making their lives too easy.
- He does not believe who does not live according to his belief.
- Less advice and more hands.
- Patience is accepting a difficult situation without giving God a deadline to remove it.
- If you cannot catch a fish, do not blame the sea.
- Right is right, even if all others are against it; wrong is wrong, even if all others are for it.
- Idle folks lack no excuses.
- Failure is the path of least persistence.
- No single snowflake in an avalanche ever feels responsible for the havoc.
- He who forgets the language of gratitude will never be on speaking terms with happiness.
- Ever notice how many people are mistaken at the top of their lungs.
- People with nothing to do quickly tire of their own company.