

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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The Kingdom To End All Kingdoms
Daniel 9:1-19 Part 2

During the 1800s, God used a man named Dwight L. Moody to be part of a great awakening in our nation that extended throughout other parts of the world. Moody was raised on a farm in Massachusetts and only had a fifth-grade education. He butchered the English language when he spoke. As a matter of fact, his ministry began as a Sunday School teacher for children. One man who knew him recounts the first time he met D. L. Moody, just before the Civil War. Moody was in a little old shanty that had once been a saloon. He was teaching children the Bible by candlelight. In that particular instance, this man walked in and found Moody, standing up in front of the room, holding a little black child in his arms, trying to read the story of the Prodigal Son to the little boy. Moody's reading ability was so poor that there were several words in the Bible he couldn't pronounce and just had to skip over.

Listen to that man's first impression of Moody: I thought, 'If the Lord can ever use such an instrument as that for His honor and glory, it will astonish me.'

Yet, the Lord did use Moody. Moody became a traveling preacher, going from town to town holding meetings and preaching the gospel. In a time before microphones and loudspeakers, crowds of twenty to thirty thousand people would regularly gather to hear him preach.

It's estimated that, in his lifetime, Moody presented the gospel through his preaching or writing to at least 100 million people around the world. He went viral before going viral was considered a good thing. And countless people gave their hearts to Jesus in response. Wouldn't you love to be part of a movement of God like that?

Well, listen to what Moody had to say about the great movements of God in the world...“Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure.” — D.L. Moody

Moody attributed every powerful movement of God to a movement of prayer among a few followers of Jesus who persistently asked Jesus to do what only Jesus can do.

Here's my point: if we say we want to be part of a great movement of God, we are effectively saying we want to be a part of a great movement of prayer. God has ordained that His great work among the people of this world would be directly connected to the prayers of His people. So, the question isn't really do you want to be part of a great movement of God? The question is, “do you pray like you want to be part of a great movement of God?”

Last week, we continued our verse-by-verse study of Daniel and kicked off our week of prayer by looking at Daniel 9. We saw that Daniel is an 80-something-year-old man whose homeland lies in ruins because of the moral and spiritual collapse of his nation. But he picks up the word of God and reads the book of Jeremiah. He reads that God promises to restore the Jews to their homeland as they seek His face in prayer. So, believing the Word of God to be true, Daniel prays a powerful prayer.

That formed our big idea from last week that we will carry over to today...

Big Idea: In distressing times, turn your face to God in His Word and in prayer.

Like Daniel, we are living in the ruins of a moral and spiritual collapse. And, if we truly want to see a great movement of God in these dark and difficult times, then the call of God is clear – seek His face in His word and prayer. And God not only uses Daniel to teach us that we should pray, He uses Daniel to teach us how to pray.

And if you have been following along with our daily prayer guides for this week, you know there are at least six elements to powerful prayer that we learn from this prayer of Daniel.

Let me share them with you. Powerful prayer...

1. Has a Foundation (the Word of God);
2. Is the Expression of our Devotion;
3. Includes our Adoration;
4. Incorporates our Confession;
5. Requires our Submission; and
6. Presents our Petitions.

Last week, we walked through the first three. This morning, we will focus on the rest.

4. Powerful Prayer Incorporates Our Confession

Daniel 9:4–11

4 I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 5 we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 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.

You don't need a Ph.D. in theology to see that Daniel is making a prayer of confession of sin. And even though Daniel's life was marked by great faithfulness to God, his life was certainly not perfect. He is not just confessing the sin of his nation, he is owning his own contribution to it.

Daniel 9:20

20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God,

Daniel may not have been as sinful as most people, but he isn't hiding the fact that he has taken part in the sin of his culture. And he isn't shy about admitting it before God.

In verse 5, he says it 4 different ways...

- we have sinned and
- done wrong and
- acted wickedly and
- rebelled

And then he gets even more specific by identifying what sin is. He says, "turning aside from your commandments and rules."

Sin is falling short of all that God has commanded us to be and do. Something isn't a sin just because you or I call it a sin. As a matter of fact, it's a sin to tell someone something is a sin that isn't actually a sin. *(Many of us grew up in a church culture that maximized sins that weren't actually sin and completely neglected to address the wickedness in our hearts...going to movie theatres, dancing, wearing shorts, listening to contemporary Christian music, having drums in church, having a pastor who didn't wear a suit, women wearing pants instead of dresses, and reading from any Bible that wasn't the King James Version were all clearly presented as ungodly compromise and sin in the greater Christian culture where I grew up. While gluttony was considered a church fellowship, racism was a quaint southern tradition, and self-righteousness was a prerequisite for leaders who wouldn't hang out with actual sinners.)* There is only one standard for what is sin and what is not, and it is God's Holy Word, the Bible. And I realize the vast majority of people in our world have an allergic reaction when someone starts talking about sin. But, if we want to see a movement of God in our lives and our nation, it's time we agree with God and begin calling sin sin.

Failing to love God with all our heart, soul and might is sin. Failing to love our neighbors as ourselves is sin. Failing to live according to God's design for personal integrity is sin. Failing to live according to God's standard for sexual purity is sin. Pride is sin. Greed is sin. Racism is sin. Self-righteousness is sin.

Sin is sin. It's not just a mistake. It's not just poor judgment. It's not simply a lifestyle choice or a genetic predisposition (even though all those things are real things and not all of them are sin). Sin is sin and rightly brings the judgment of God. And one of the reasons our nation is in the mess it is in is because at some point we began to think we are smarter than God's word and decided to redefine sin. To the extent that in the day and age in which we live, the only sin left is to say there is such a thing as sin. We are losing our ever-loving minds...even worse, we are losing our never-dying souls. Our nation doesn't need self-help and practical pointers on how to be better citizens and we definitely don't need those things masquerading as gospel preaching. We need a call to confess our sins in repentance and faith.

Powerful prayer that brings the blessing of God requires us to get honest before the Lord and confess our sin and seek His forgiveness and restoration through Jesus.

And there are two characteristics of Daniel's confession I think we would do well to take notice of.

First, his confession makes no excuses.

In verses 6 and 8, Daniel mentions the kings and princes and forefathers of his people. And, if you know anything about the people he is referencing, you know they were generally awful people who cultivate a culture that made it really difficult to do what was right. People were literally punished for being faithful to God. He could have easily pointed his finger at the wicked leaders and social influencers of his time and said, "Lord, I tried but they made it almost impossible to live faithfully to you. They provoked me to sin...My family of origin was so messed up that I didn't stand a chance. They are the reason I am what I am."

But Daniel makes no excuses. He doesn't blame shift or justify his sin.

This is a great word for us today. We have become masters at justifying our sin.

- We wouldn't be angry drivers if the snowbirds from up north knew how to drive.
- We wouldn't be filled with lust if the women in our community started wearing modest clothes.
- We wouldn't be angry parents if our kids would just do what we say.
- We wouldn't be unloving spouses if our husbands or wives would just get their acts together.

Listen to me friend, there is never a good reason to do what is wrong, so confession makes no excuses.

Second, his confession makes no comparisons.

As Daniel is referencing the wicked people who were part of his culture, he doesn't use them as excuses and he doesn't make them his comparison. Notice the first two words he uses in verse 8: to us. He lumps himself into the category of sinners. He doesn't say, "Lord, I know I'm not perfect, but I'm not nearly as bad as the really wicked people."

And, brothers and sisters, this is something we desperately need to learn. The standard for our comparison isn't the most wicked person we know, it's the perfect person of Jesus. And all of us have fallen short of His glory.

When my children were little, there was a tactic they all employed. Emily and I would correct their behavior and they would inevitably begin a doctoral dissertation on how their siblings had done something worse. "Dad, I know I shouldn't have hit her. But did you see what she did to me first? What I did was nothing compared to what she did to me." You know where they got that move? From their dad. It's ingrained in our fallen nature to compare ourselves to someone worse as a justification for our sin.

Let me give you a quick diagnostic test...as your pastor is hammering home the need for confession of sin and repentance, are you thinking of someone else who needs to repent or are you asking God to search your own heart?

What would it look like if you stopped comparing your life to the sinners around you and started comparing your life to the standard of God's word? And there's such good news here for us when we are willing to confess our sin. Look at verse 9: To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness...

God has mercy and forgiveness for those who confess their sin and turn to Jesus. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross as a payment for all our sin. And He is faithful to forgive. The reason confession is so important is not because God is unaware of our sin, He sees it more clearly than we do. It's because we cannot enjoy the fullness of God's forgiveness for sins that we have buried and denied. What use is there in saying you enjoy God's forgiveness if you claim you haven't sinned?

Ask the Holy Spirit to clearly show you any parts of God's word that you are living in unrepentant sin against, bring them to the Father in confession and leave them there, forgiven by His grace and mercy.

5. Powerful Prayer Requires Our Submission

Daniel 9:13–15

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.

There are several ways you see the submission of Daniel here. But, let me just point out something in verse 14. Daniel says that the Lord has brought judgment on Jerusalem and the people of Judah and that He is right to have done so. That's an incredible picture of submission. Daniel is yielding to the discipline of God because He believes God knows best and only does what is right. Powerful prayer requires submission.

Church, God is our God, not our cosmic butler. One of the great guardrails to God-honoring prayer is the little phrase, "Thy will be done!" All of us have things we are praying for God to do. But, let me ask you something, "what if God wants to do something in your life in a way you would never ask Him to do it?"

I've told you this before, but when my daughter, Mia, was small, she had a princess dress she used to wear over her pajamas every morning as soon as she woke up. On more than one occasion, she would go to put that dress on and it would be twisted up from when she had taken it off the night before. And there were times when I would offer to help and she would say, "No, Dad, I do it myself."

And that's a picture of how many of us live our lives. Our Father in heaven is ready to use His power to do something glorious with our lives, but we fail to look to Him. In effect, we live prayerless lives and say, "No, Dad, I do it myself."

But there was another dynamic that was also at play with Mia. Sometimes, she would work and work and finally realize that she needed my help. And she would look to me. "Dad, will you help me with this?" And that was great. But often I could see things she couldn't see or figure out...like the reason she couldn't get that dress on was because the sleeve was turned inside out. She was never going to get that dress on with the sleeve twisted like that. That meant she had to take the princess costume off and let me get it straightened out so she could start all over again. She hated that because, in her mind, it seemed like she was heading in the opposite direction from where I said I was helping her go.

You see, she wanted my help *her way*...and she couldn't see that I couldn't help her *her way* because *her way* wasn't going to help!

And that's what happens when we pray without a heart of submission. There are times when we want God to fix the situations of our lives, but we only want His help our way and God won't help us our way when our way won't help. He's too good and kind for that. It's called submission. It's called, not my will but yours be done.

So, what things in your life are you asking God to fix? What would it look like for you to lay it down before the Lord and say, "Dad, I need your help. And I want it Your way, not mine."

Powerful prayer requires submission.

6. Powerful Prayer Presents Our Petitions

One of the most basic definitions of the word *pray* in the original language of the bible is "to ask." In prayer, we are asking God. And I think that's largely the most basic understanding people have about prayer. People ask God for things. And Daniel is no different. But I want you to see what Daniel asks from God. It may be different than most people's requests...

Daniel 9:17-19

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."

Daniel ends his prayer by asking God for at least three things. Each one of them could be a sermon on its own, but I'll move through them quickly for the sake of time.

1. **Mercy** from God. In verses 17 and 18, Daniel asks God for mercy. The basis of his requests isn't anything good about him or his family or his country. So, Daniel makes no demands. I love

how he says it in verse 18 - ***For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.*** He says, “Lord, My hope is not that I think I deserve what is good. My hope is that you are merciful and kind.” He isn’t entitled. He isn’t demanding. He is simply humble, asking for mercy.

2. **Glory** to God. In verses 17 and 19, Daniel prays for God to be glorified in the world. Specifically, Daniel asks God to work for His “own sake.” Simply put, Daniel’s requests were motivated by the glory of God. His deepest desire was to advance God’s agenda and no other. Just think about the outcomes you want for the things you are praying about. Are you asking for a new job because your highest goal is more money or God’s glory? Are you asking for a new relationship because your highest goal is companionship or God’s glory. What would change about the way you pray if your deepest desire was that your life would show this world just how amazing God is and you want Him to work so you can have a front-row seat to see His glory for yourself?
3. **Action** by God. In verse 19, Daniel says, “O Lord, pay attention and act.” He looks to God to do what only God can do. In other words, his prayer is an acknowledgement that if God doesn’t do what only God can do then nothing good will be done.

And I can’t think of a better way to end this week of prayer. Church, one of the reasons we have lived prayerless lives is because we are depending on anything and everything to do what only God can do in our lives and in our nation. It’s time we realize that leaders and presidents are no hope for our nation. It’s time we realize that programs and activities and facilities are no hope for the church. It’s time we realize that all our effort and work offer no hope for our families. It’s time we pray like only God can do what only God can do!