

Lesson # 4 -- The Prayer of Daniel - the Prayer for Restoration.

Introduction

- A. The believer has many profound rights and privileges. The greatest of these is prayer. The Christian is one who can talk with God.
- B. To emphasize the importance of prayer and to encourage the believer in his personal prayer life, many examples are given in the Bible to illustrate this honor and privilege. Daniel is one of those examples.
- C. The prophet Daniel was born about 620 B. C. and died about 535 B. C. He was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 605 B. C. and taken into Babylon along with a number of other Jews.
- D. The Book of Daniel explains the prophet's trust in God and the many years he served in the government. His purpose, plan and priorities of life are readily seen in his prayer life.

I. Daniel's Prayer was Based on Scripture, Daniel 9:1-3.

- A. Explanation: The Jewish people, in Exile, had their sacred writings with them. In reading the prophet Jeremiah, Daniel came to the conclusion that the time of the Exile was about up. Jeremiah 25:11,12 and 29:10 both state the Exile would be 70 years in duration. From the reference to Darius in VI we know it was in 538 B. C. Therefore 67 or 68 years of the Captivity had expired. Upon reading this Daniel gave himself to pray for the restoration of his people to the land of Palestine.
- B. Principle: One important facet of prayer is praying the will of God into actuality. Daniel's prayer is a good illustration of this.
- C. Illustration:
 - 1. Elijah: having read in Deut. 11:16,17; 28:23 that God would withhold rain when Israel would become wayward, Elijah prayed that God's will would be done so Israel would turn back to God (James 5:17,18). Convinced of the will of God he announces this truth to Ahab (I Kings 17:1).
 - 2. Nehemiah, Nehemiah 1:4-11.
 - 3. Epaphras, Colossians 4:12.
- D. Application:
 - 1. The general principle: I John 5:14.
 - 2. The specific principle:

- a. Galatians 1:4 - deliverance from the world.
- b. I Thess. 4:3 - personal sanctification.
- c. I Thess. 5:16-18 - being a person who will rejoice, pray and give thanks.
- d. I Peter 2:15 - being a good testimony

II. Daniel's Prayer was One of Utmost Concern, Sincerity and Humility, Daniel 9:3.

- A. Explanation: Daniel recognized how the return from Exile would fit into the plan and purpose of God. His great desire was that God would be glorified. His prayer indicated how meaningful this was to him, even though he would not be able to return to Palestine himself.
- B. Principle: True prayer goes beyond our selfish desires to find its goal and purpose in the glory of God.
- C. Illustration: The terms in V3 all indicate Daniel's spiritual commitment to God and His glory. He prepared his heart, chose to seek God, he fasted, and he expressed his deep humility and concern in dressing in sackcloth and sprinkling ashes on his body.
- D. Application: Our prayerlessness is often due to a lack of concern. We must reject our natural tendency for self-centeredness and ease. We are prone to criticize and not to pray.

III. Daniel's Prayer was One of Worship, Daniel 9:4.

- A. Explanation: True prayer is inseparably related to the recognition of God's greatness in the activity of worship.
- B. Principle: God is worthy to be praised. We were created to worship Him in the fellowship of love. Our deepest fulfillment is found in living a life whereby all our attitudes and actions serve to worship Him.
- C. Illustration: Daniel used the three basic names for God. "LORD" is the name designating "Covenant Keeper" - one Who becomes all the believer needs to do God's will. "God" is the name emphasizing His greatness and power. "Lord" is the name depicting God as "Master" or "Lord of All". Daniel recognized and worshipped God in His greatness and faithfulness.
- D. Application: Worship is one of those necessary ingredients needed for true prayer. When we choose to honor God in this way all the other facets of prayer become more meaningful. Make a list of God's attributes and use them to adore Him. Read the Psalms to God in an attitude of praise.

IV. Daniel's Prayer was One of Confession, Daniel 9:5-16.

- A. Explanation: The Exile was a demonstration of God's righteous judgment upon Israel for their sin, (Deut. 28:45-68; Jer. 17:1-4). Daniel confesses these sins.
- B. Principle: The Word of God cannot be broken (John 10:35). What God has stated in His Word - He will do, (Jer. 35:17; 36:31; Zecharian 1:1-6). All failure to believe God and practice His Word must be confessed and forsaken as the horrible sin that it is.
- C. Illustration:
1. Daniel described Israel's failure, V5.
 - a. "We have sinned" - to miss the mark.
 - b. "We have committed iniquity" - to act perversly.
 - c. "We have done wickedly" - to practice known wrong.
 - d. "We have rebelled" - to defy authority.
 2. Daniel gives the reasons for such sinfulness, Vs 5,6.
 - a. "We have departed from Thy precepts and judgments".
 - b. "We have not hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets".
 3. Daniel enlarges on Israel's sin and its result, Vs 7-16.
 - a. Result: "Confusion of face", Vs 7,8.
 - b. Cause: "We have not obeyed Thy voice", Vs 10, 11.
 - c. Result: "You have confirmed Your Word in our judgment", V12.
 - d. Cause: "We did not pray", V13.
 - e. Result: "You have brought this evil upon us", V14.
 - f. Cause: "We have sinned", V15.
 - g. Result: "Jerusalem and Thy people have become a reproach", V16.
 4. Daniel stated what Israel should have done.
 - a. "We should have obeyed", Vs 5,6,10,11,14.
 - b. "We should have prayed", V13.

D. Application:

1. Sin must be confessed,
2. Truth must be acknowledged.
3. Guilt must be acknowledged.
4. God must be vindicated,

" . . . I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest and be clear when Thou judgest". Psalm 51:3,4

V. Daniel's Prayer was One of Supplication, Daniel 9:17-19.

A. Explanation:

1. The goal of his supplication: ". . . for the Lord's sake", V17.
2. The basis of his supplication: ". . . for Thy great mercies", V18.
3. The content of his supplication: ". . . forgive . . . defer not . . . ", V19.

By this request Daniel asked God to terminate the Captivity. He is asking Him to begin reckoning the Exile with his own captivity in 605 B. C. and not the later deportations of 597 or 586 B. C.

- B. Principle: God is merciful and has exhorted us to pray for His will to be done.

C. Illustration:

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. I John 5:14

D. Application:

. . . ye have not, because ye ask not. James 4:2

Conclusion

- A. Daniel's prayer was not finished. He was interrupted by the Angel Gabriel who gave him a revelation regarding the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Daniel 9:20-27.
- B. The answer to Daniel's prayer is now history. God moved upon the heart of Cyrus to allow the Jews to return home and rebuild their temple. II Chronicles 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-5