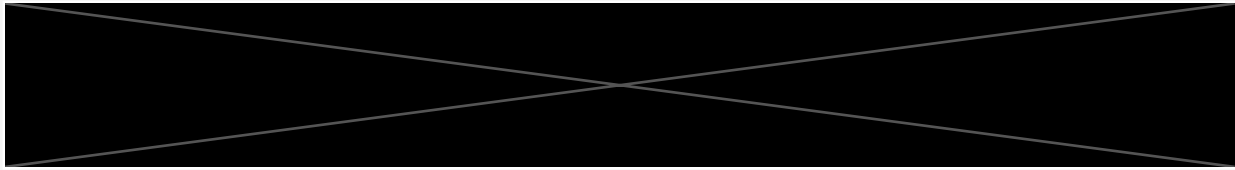


Daniel 9:1-19



Introduction

- Prayer is one of the greatest privileges of the Christian's life
 - Speaking to the Creator...
 - Throne room of heaven...
 - Heard and known by God...
- But prayer can also be a challenge:
 - It can be a struggle to pray
 - Other priorities
 - A real spiritual battle in prayer
- After a fascinating and at times bewildering few weeks of visions, Daniel takes a short rest here and he begins to pray – the prayer in question is about how long will this keep going on for; it is a prayer that is asking God how long, and that is seeking after God!
- One of the great things is that Scripture is full of prayer – and that helps us to see how we can pray
- Two kingdoms – when we pray we pray to the King who is over all!
- Jesus as intercessor...
- We can take today's chapter and see some principles of prayer – see what we can learn here from the prayer of Daniel –

1. A Plea to God - v3-4

- Prayer – by its very nature – is a recognising of the nature of the two kingdoms; it is an appeal to the greater kingdom to show its authority over the lesser.
- Prayer is acknowledging that we have no power over the situations of life
- This is prayer for forgiveness – it is accompanied with sackcloth and ashes, showing his heart – prayer must be genuine, God sees and knows!
- A prayer to YHWH, my Adonai – powerful & personal....
- The God who keeps covenant with those who love him – which is why we can pray!
- We must never be too caught up in the surrounding parts of prayer and lose track of what it truly is –
 - Standing, sitting, kneeling, lying face down...
 - The formality of language...
 - The exact wording...
- It is not a performance that we are doing – we are approaching the throne of the eternal King; we are in conversation with the King of kings who holds all reality in his hand!

2. A Confession to God – v5–15

- Daniel continues – this is not a prayer of joy or of thanksgiving, at least not in the positive sense; this is a prayer of repentance, this is a prayer from a broken man as he prays for his broken nation
- v5–15 is one long confession where Daniel again and again compares God to this rebellious people
- Remember we said last week – why had the nation of Israel in the first place been taken captive?
- The nation of Israel had begun to do the things the other kingdoms did – namely worship of false gods, and that by the means of child sacrifice. Interesting that Daniel is reading in the prophet Jeremiah, for it is he who warns about rebellion and the consequence of it –

“They have built the high places of Baal to burn their children in the fire as offerings to Baal—something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind.”

&

“...for me? ²⁸ Therefore this is what the Lord says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the Babylonians and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will capture it. ²⁹ The Babylonians who are attacking this city will come in and set it on fire; they will burn it down, along with the houses where the people aroused my anger by burning incense on the roofs to Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods.

³⁰ “The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but arouse my anger with what their hands have made, declares the Lord. ³¹ From the day it was built until now, this city has so aroused my anger and wrath that I must remove it from my sight. ³² The people of Israel and Judah have provoked me by all the evil they have done—they, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem. ³³ They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline. ³⁴ They set up their vile images in the house that bears my Name and defiled it. ³⁵ They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molek, though I never commanded—nor did it enter my mind—that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.”

- In the light of this, Daniel makes these contrasts:
 - God gave prophets – they ignored them...
 - God is righteous – theirs is shame...
 - God is merciful – they have spurned that mercy...
- v11–15 – the curses found in the law of Moses are clear, that God will make a covenant with his people, but should they go off after other gods he will withdraw from them his mercy and his keeping. Here is a taster, but the curses go on for many more verses –

“¹⁵ However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you:

¹⁶ You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.

¹⁷ Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed.

¹⁸ The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

¹⁹ You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.

²⁰ The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him. ²¹ The Lord will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. ²² The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. ²³ The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. ²⁴ The Lord will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed.

²⁵ The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth.”

- He concludes in v15 with the appeal to God's mercy in the past toward his people
- God is God and he is merciful even towards those who have gone against him!

3. An Appeal to God – v16-19

- Listen, for your sake...
- Not based on us, but based on you...
- Hear – forgive – pay attention – act – delay not!

- We are yours, and despite our sin we need you!
- His prayer is heard and answered... but we can leave the rest of this section until next week!

Conclusion

- God is holy and perfect
- God is good and just
- God is not mocked
- God is ready and willing to hear the prayers of his people
- We cry out knowing that God hears through the work of Jesus who makes intercession for us....etc
- Non-Christian – you do not have this hope.....