CRYING OUT TO GOD
Daniel 9:1-19

When we cry out to God...

FIRST: We must cry out, “O Lord, ____________!”
Background of the Prayer
Date: _______ B.C.
Reason
Attitude
Basis of the Prayer: ______ _________

SECOND: We must cry out, “O Lord, ____________!”
Confess Our _________ (9:4-6)
Confess His ________________ (9:7-8)

THIRD: We must cry out, “O Lord, ____________!”

October 25, 2020

TOTAL GIVEN: $8,097
ATTENDANCE (10/18): 45 (in person)
READING

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14

Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon...  4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon,  5 “Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce.  6 Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease.  7 Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.”  8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream.  9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,” declares the LORD.  10 For thus says the LORD, “When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.  11 For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.  12 Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.  13 You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.  14 I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.”

WHEN WE CRY OUT TO GOD

In the book of Genesis, everything was perfect.

- That is, until chapter 3.
- In chapter 3, we meet a “crafty” creature—a serpent.

You know the story.

- The serpent tempted Eve.
- We’re not sure if Adam was tempted, or just dumb.
- But they both sinned... and brought doom on the entire human race.

That was chapter 3.

- Chapter 4 is filled with even more heartache.
- Two babies are born.
- First was Cain; second was Abel.
- The first child born in the world killed the second child born.

Cain was cast out of the presence of the Lord.

- He was forced to be a vagabond in the land of Nod.
- Cain finally found a wife, and had children, grandchildren and even g-grandchildren.

Cain’s G-G-grandson’s name was Lamech.

- Like his g-g-grandfather, Lamech was also a murderer.
- Listen to the last verse of Genesis 4...

Genesis 4:26b

Then people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

God’s desire is that His people, in faith call on Him.
Dr. Helen Roseveare, medical missionary to Zaire, told the following story.
A mother at our mission station died after giving birth to a premature baby. We tried to improvise an incubator to keep the infant alive, but the only hot water bottle we had was beyond repair. So we asked the children to pray for the baby and for her sister. One of the girls responded, “Dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late because by then the baby will be dead. And dear Lord, send a doll for the sister so she won't feel so lonely.”

That afternoon a large package arrived from England. The children watched eagerly as we opened it. Much to their surprise, under some clothing was a hot water bottle! Immediately the girl who had prayed so earnestly started to dig deeper, exclaiming, “If God sent that, I'm sure He also sent a doll!” And she was right! The heavenly Father knew in advance of that child's sincere requests, and 5 months earlier He had led a ladies' group to include both of those specific articles.

Little did Dr. Roseveare know what Heaven was up to.
Little did she know that little girl had laid hold of the power of God in that prayer.
Heaven was set in motion.

The message of Daniel 9:1-19 is this:
*Since we can lay hold of the power of God through prayer, we must cry out to him.*

Using Daniel's prayer as a model, we will see how we must cry out to God.

**FIRST:** We must cry out, “O Lord, LISTEN!”
Daniel 9:17
So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications...

In 1 Kings 8:28-30, King Solomon spoke to God...
Yet have regard to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to listen to the cry and to the prayer which Your servant prays before You today; 29 that Your eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward the place of which You have said, ‘My name shall be there,’ to listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place. 30 Listen to the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place; hear in heaven Your dwelling place; hear and forgive.

**Background of the Prayer**
The **date** of the prayer is found in verse 1:
In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—

The year would have been 538 B.C.
- It was the same year in which the events of Daniel 5 took place.
- ... when Belshazzar was having his party and the handwriting appeared on the wall.
- That very night, King Darius the Mede conquered Babylon and killed Belshazzar.

The **reason** for the prayer is found in verse 2:
In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.
Daniel was reading the words of the prophet Jeremiah.

- Now remember that Jeremiah was a contemporary of Daniel.
- Daniel knew that Jeremiah was a prophet.
- He believed that what Jeremiah wrote were the very words of God.
- They were accepted as Scripture the moment they were written.

Daniel read and understood that Israel’s captivity in Babylon would last seventy years.
- Daniel was taken captive in the first wave of the captivity (606 BC).

Seventy years would bring the end of captivity and would be followed by the restoration of the people to the city of Jerusalem around 536 B.C.

Jeremiah wrote: (Jeremiah 29:10-14)
For thus says the LORD, “When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.”

What Daniel read in the Scriptures set him to praying, pleading the promises of God.
“You said the desolation would only last seventy years. That is just two years away. Please listen to your servant’s prayer, and restore the city and the sanctuary that bear your name.”

We too need to plead the promises of Scripture.
- Most of our prayers ask God to give us more things, fix problems, or heal sickness.
- We do not always know God’s will in those circumstances.
- So we cannot say for sure how He will answer.

Paul writes to the Romans: (Romans 8:26-27)
... the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

This assures us of something...
- The Holy Spirit takes whatever we ask for and molds it into the will of God.
- So we know that His answer is what is best for us.
- But sometimes it isn’t what we ask for.

When we plead the promises of God, we know that what we are asking for is God’s will.
- He has recorded it for us in the pages of Scripture.

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
The attitude of prayer is found in Daniel 9:3
So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

The attitude of Daniel was one of earnestness and humility. His earnestness is seen in the words, “to seek Him by prayer.”

This was the attitude of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.
Luke 22:44
And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

This was the attitude of the church in Jerusalem as they prayed for Peter, who was in prison.
Acts 12:5
So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

This should be our attitude as we pray.
So often earnestness is missing from our prayers.
They seem so rote, so mechanical, without passion.

The writer of Hebrews gives us a hint that might help restore passion in our prayer life.
Hebrews 13:3
Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

The earnestness of prayer returns when we pray for people as though we were in their situation.

A young pastor was preparing a sermon in his study when there was a knock at his door, and someone told him that a child had been hit by a car in front of his church. He was informed that the ambulance was there, and the child was getting help. He looked up and said he would be right out after finishing his thought. Then his secretary came to the door and announced that it was his own daughter who had been hit by the car, and the pastor jumped up from his desk and ran to the street.

Our identity with the need makes all the difference in the world.

The attitude of Daniel shows us...
• We should come into the presence of the Lord with an earnestness that storms the gates of Heaven
• ... but a humility that realizes that He is sovereign and we are sinful.
• We do not even deserve to make these requests.
• Much less feel like our fasting can twist His arm or our prayer can command the Lord what to do.

Prayer is clearly the position of a beggar coming into the presence of a king.

Basis of the Prayer
The basis of prayer is a concern for God’s glory.
Daniel 9:17
So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary.

Daniel makes this request not for his own sake, but for the Lord’s.

Maturing in prayer is seen when we are more concerned about the Creator’s glory in our prayers than the creature’s comfort.
The basis of prayer is an understanding of God’s mercy.

**Daniel 9:18**

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 are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.

James says the prayers of the righteous avail much (5:16). But it is never on the basis of our righteousness that prayers are answered.

Daniel’s prayer makes it very clear that we do not deserve any answers to our prayers.

- If we deserved answers to our prayers, then Daniel would have made his plea because of God’s justice.
- Justice is getting what we deserve.
- Instead he made his plea according to God’s mercy.
- We can only plead the mercy of God.

**SECOND: We must cry out, “O Lord, FORGIVE!”**

**Daniel 9:15-16**

And now, O LORD our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked. 16 O LORD, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us.

When the Lord taught his disciples to pray, confession of sin was an important part of that prayer.

Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12).

- Most of the prayers of Scripture follow the pattern described in the acrostic ACTS:
  - Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving/Truth and Supplication.

This prayer of Daniel is no different.

- The adoration is found in verse 4
- Confession is seen in verses 5-11
- The truth is remembered in verses 11b-15
- And the supplication comes in verses 16-19.

**CONFESS OUR SINS**

**Daniel 9:4-6**

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, “Alas, O LORD, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.

That confession of sin could be ours.

- Like us, Daniel lived among a people who were wicked.
- They had rebelled against the great and awesome God.
- They had turned away from His commands—ignoring and defying them.
- They had shed innocent blood, distorted truth, and violated marriage covenants.
America was founded on the principles of right and wrong revealed in the Word of God.

- But many have done outrageous things just like Israel.
- America is filled with adultery, murder, lies, and wickedness.

But notice that Daniel does not just confess the people’s sins...
- He doesn’t make apologies for the sins of others.

That’s easy to do.

Rather, he included himself among those who sinned against the Lord.

- This man was thrown into the lions’ den by King Darius for praying at his open window
  - because the other administrators could not find any wrongdoing in Daniel’s life, present or past.
- (By the way, Daniel 9 may have been one of his prayers from that open window.)

Yet this godly man says, “...we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.”

It is not only the unbelievers in America who have sinned. We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God.

We confess our sin. But also...

CONFESS HIS RIGHTBEAUTY

Daniel 9:7-8
Righteousness belongs to You, O LORD, but to us open shame, as it is this day— to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You.
8 Open shame belongs to us, O LORD, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

Today we are covered with shame.

- America, like Israel, is a pitiful place morally.
- In our shame we must confess that God is righteous in His judgments.

Daniel 9:11-14
Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. 12 Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

The Lord is righteous when he brings disaster upon us for our shameful sin.
Revelation 16:7 says, “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.”

Why should we be surprised by destructive hurricanes?
- Why should we be surprised by deadly twisters in the Midwest?
- Why should we be surprised by disastrous floods and devastating fires in the Southwest?
These are not quirks of nature.

- They are the judgments of God upon a nation covered with shame.

Does this mean that the people who experience this destruction are more wicked than others?

**NO.**

**Jesus encountered that question.**

**Luke 13:1-5**

... there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 

2 And Jesus said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? 

3 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

4 Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 

5 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

So the bad news is that God does punish sin with temporal judgments, and they are righteous judgments. But the good news is that He is also righteous in his forgiveness.

**Daniel 9:7, 9-10**

7 Righteousness belongs to You ... 

9 To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 

10 nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets.

The Lord is righteous even in His forgiveness.

- He does not just turn His head, wink at our sin, and pretend that it did not happen.
- The Lord says He “does not leave the guilty unpunished” (Exodus 34:7).

Because God is just, all sin will be punished.

- Either a person will pay the penalty for his own sin, or someone else must pay the penalty for him.
- But who would be gracious enough to pay the price of sin and bear the pain of Hell in our place?

The answer, of course, is Jesus Christ.

But how could Jesus pay for my sin and God still preserve His justice?

Paul answers that...

**Romans 3:25-26**

God presented Him [Jesus] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. 

26 He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time, so as to be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Do you believe that? Have you trusted in Jesus? God promises all sin will be punished.

But if you trust in Jesus Christ as the One who took all of God’s wrath, you can be justified before God.

So we can cry out, “O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive!”

Once we have His attention and know we are forgiven, then we can go further.

**THIRD: We musts cry out, “O Lord, ACT!”**

**Daniel 9:19**

“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

We need to boldly ask our Lord to act, but then we need to keep our eyes open looking for his answer.
The church in Jerusalem was earnestly praying for the release of Peter.
- As soon as they began to pray, an answer was given.
- They did not know it yet, but an angel had been sent to remove Peter’s chains and open the gates of the prison.
- But when Peter arrived at the prayer meeting, they didn’t believe it.
- They told the servant girl was out of her mind.
- Peter was in prison.
- They asked the Lord to act, but when He did, they did not believe it.

As soon as they began to pray, God began to answer.
The same was true for Daniel.

Daniel 9:23
... while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness...

That is what God does for His children all the time.
As soon as we pray, an answer is on the way.

Isaiah 30:19 says,
“How gracious He will be when you cry for help! As soon as He hears, He will answer you.”

Isaiah 58:9 says,
“Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: here am I.”
And Isaiah 65:24 says, “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.”

But if God immediately answers the prayers of his children all the time, why does our experience seem to tell us otherwise? Most of the time there seems to be a long delay between our prayer and the answer.

Think about this historical account.
- The angel came with the message of what would happen in the future.
- But the answer did not unfold completely for almost five hundred years.

When the answer to his prayer finally came in its fullness, it came with many twists and turns, challenges and discouragements. We’ll see it next week.

The only difference between us and Daniel...
- The angel Gabriel came immediately and told him when and how it would happen.

When you pray, realize that God hears, forgives, and formulates an answer immediately.
But though His answer is immediate, His action may take years to unfold.

“Lord, what are you doing? Why aren’t you hearing our prayers?”

Sandy and Bill Pelfrey story...