

Daniel's Prayer

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Innes Macrae

[0 : 0 0] Let us turn now to the book of Daniel chapter 6 and to verse 10. Daniel chapter 6 verse 10.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before God as he did aforetime.

Darius the Mede has seized the Babylonian kingdom. This 62-year-old man has defeated Belshazzar and has himself become king.

Clearly, Darius lost no time at all in recognizing the worth of Daniel. Daniel was by now an old man.

He was probably in his 18th, but he was a distinguished, a trained, a efficient and experienced statesman and administrator.

[1 : 1 9] He had served under a succession of different Babylonian kings. Almost all the officials, those who held public office in those great heathen empires, were unscrupulous and corrupt men.

Gratts and dishonesty were the order of the day. But Darius, King Darius recognized that this Daniel, a worshiper of the God of Israel, Jehovah, was a man of the utmost integrity.

He therefore sought, or he intended, we are told in verse 3, to set him over the whole well. Darius appointed three presidents, three powerful presidents.

There were many other administrators as well, but there were three powerful presidents. And we're told here that Daniel was the first amongst them.

This Daniel was preferred above them. He had the greatest authority. To those three presidents, including Daniel, those other officials were accountable.

[2 : 3 5] They had to render their accounts to them. In this way, King Darius hoped to see to it that he should have no damage, as we are told in verse 2.

In other words, that he should suffer no loss, that he should suffer no financial loss. He knew that those officials were intent upon lining their own pockets.

And so he put Daniel in this position of great supremacy. He set him over the whole well. But it is upon Daniel's private devotional life that I want us to concentrate this morning.

Those two are certainly not divorced. Daniel was the trusted public servant that he was because of what he was in private.

Daniel's prayer life. And I want to notice with you, first of all, it's regularity. It's regularity. We read here in our text of Daniel going into his house and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem.

[3 : 5 6] He kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.

As he did aforetime. It was Daniel's custom to go into that room in his house three times a day.

There, go upon his knees and pray to his God. He had been doing that for the 60 or so years that he had been a public servant in the great empire of Babylon.

Three times a day, he went into that room and prayed to his God. The room was probably some upper room in his house that was set apart for prayer and for meditation.

To that room, Daniel retired at three stated hours each day. He went there to pray. We read in the 55th Psalm of David's resolution three times a day to go apart to pray to God.

[5 : 07] He says, evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud to God and he will hear my voice. David too have those three stated hours for prayer each day.

Now my friends, we have here a principle of very great importance indeed. If we are going to be strong, faithful Christians who are making progress in the Christian life, then we must have regular prayer time.

I'm not saying that we must follow the practice of David and Daniel in that we have three stated prayer times every day. But we do need to get into the habit of drawing apart regularly, daily, at stated hours for private prayer.

We do need to have a quiet place to which we go regularly, daily, a there to pray to our God.

Leaving the matter, this whole matter of prayer to sometime when we feel like it will mean that inevitably prayer will be crowded out from a busy life.

[6 : 30] The less we pray, the less we will want to pray. The more we pray, the more we will want to pray. Indeed, if we have those jealously guarded, stated times each day for prayer, then unquestionably the Holy Spirit himself will prompt us to pray at other times too.

It is vital for a Christian's spiritual health that he be disciplined in this matter. It may mean rising a little earlier, or it may mean spending less time before the television set.

but the reward in terms of spiritual growth and development and of answers given to our request will compensate a thousand times over for any self-denial.

Read the biography of any saint of God whose life and witness are counted for something in the kingdom of God and we will discover without exception that that person drew apart each day at stated times to wait upon God in prayer.

The great General Gordon of Cartoons, when he was out campaigning with his soldiers, used to put a flag in front of his tent that indicated to the people, to the other soldiers, that he was not to be disturbed for he was at prayer.

[8 : 04] And every other Christian who has had a telling influence for God upon his day or generation has been equally insistent about having those times of prayer day by day with God.

Such regularity is of the utmost importance. the fact that one is leading a busy life is no reason for not having those times of communion with God in prayer each day.

Daniel was an exceedingly busy man. He was one of the chief administrators, the chief administrator in fact, of the great Babylonian empire. There would have been constant demands upon his time.

The affairs of state would be making constant demands upon his time and attention. But Daniel knew that he needed those daily times of communion with his God in prayer.

He knew that he would not be able to do his work so well, that he would not be able to do his work so efficiently if he did not have those times of prayer day by day with his God.

[9 : 17] Martin Luther used to say, I have a specially busy day ahead of me. Therefore, I must give extra time today to prayer.

My Christian friends, make sure of this, that you have regular daily times of unhurried waiting upon God in secret prayer in private.

Have a room where you go apart each day and in which you go upon your knees to pray to your God.

Daniel's prayer life, it's regularity. Three times a day, he went into that room and knelt down and prayed to God.

It's regularity. But I want to notice with you secondly, the content of his prayers. The content of his prayers. I'm sure that Daniel reigned widely in prayer.

[10 : 19] I'm sure that there were many people for whom he prayed. But I want this morning to notice four elements in his prayers which are brought to our attention in this book.

First of all, thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. We're told that in our text. We're told that he went into his room, he went down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God.

He gave thanks. The giving of thanks to God is a very important element in prayer. we recall how the apostle Paul said that we should be anxious about nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God.

Daniel had so much for which to give God thanks. God had been with him all those years in the Babylonian empire, all those years of distinguished public service.

God had prospered him there in exile in Babylon. He had seen numerous deliverances wrought by God as for example when he saw his three friends so marvelously delivered from the burning fiery furnace.

[11 : 44] Every time that Daniel went into that room and went down upon his knees to pray to God he had many blessings for which to give God thanks.

You and I have so much for which to give God thanks also and we ought to be giving him thanks. We ought to be expressing our gratitude to him.

We should be giving him thanks and be praising him for what he is in himself the great almighty holy God of life. Then too he has given to us so many temporal blessings.

He has given to us our health our food our homes our families our loved ones. There are the gifts of his grace as well.

He has given to us this book the Bible an impalible revelation given to us from God himself. Above all else we should be giving him thanks for our saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

[12 : 48] We shall be thanking God for the shed blood that has purchased our redemption. We shall be giving God thanks for the Holy Spirit who is in us if we're Christians.

The Holy Spirit is in us and performing various ministries within, important ministries within. Are we giving God thanks for the answers that he has given to us to our prayers?

We have countless blessings for which to give God thanks. Every good and every perfect gift comes from God. The psalmist declared in the 34th psalm with which we opened the service this morning, God will I bless all times.

His praise my mouth shall still express. The word still there in 17th century English just means always. His praise my mouth shall always express.

That should be our resolution to thanksgiving. But then a second element in Daniel's prayer, in Daniel's praying, is petition.

[13 : 59] Petition. We're told in verse 11 that when these men assembled they found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God, making supplication.

That means he was making requests before his God. He was bringing petitions to God in prayer. He was asking God to help him. Daniel knew his needs and he was bringing those needs before God in those sessions of prayer that he had with him three times every day.

Normally, petition will feature very prominently in our praying. We all have needs. problems to face, personal problems, domestic problems, business problems, spiritual problems.

We all have particular weaknesses. Yours may be different from mine, but we have particular weaknesses, particular sins to which we are prone. Whatever our problems are, we should bring them to God in prayer.

We should not pray around them. We should mention them specifically in God's presence and ask him to meet those needs. There may be matters troubling us that we are unable to share with others.

[15 : 19] We can mention them in God's presence. He is always ready to listen to us when we come to him and tell him of our needs. And he has promised to answer the prayers of his people.

Whatsoever things we ask in prayer, believing Jesus said, you shall receive. Oh, what peace we often forfeit.

Oh, what needless pain we bear. Oh, because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Petition.

Thanksgiving. Petition. And then I know in this book how Daniel confessed before God in prayer. His own sin and indeed the sins of his people Israel.

We are told that there in chapter 9 at verse 20 he says, I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel.

[16 : 25] Daniel was fasting. He had clothed himself with sackcloth and ashes as he prayed to God. he was humbling himself before his God and pleading with him for his forgiveness.

There if you read chapter 9 you'll discover that Daniel is acknowledging that the destruction of the great city of Jerusalem and the destruction of his magnificent temple is the judgment of God upon his rebellious people.

He says there in the 15th verse of that chapter we have sinned. We have done wickedly. And this too my friends is an important part of prayer.

If we have sinned we should confess our sins in God's presence and ask for his forgiveness. Indeed every time we come before God in prayer there will be sins that we will have to confess.

We always will have confession to make but at times when we have been tolerating sin in the life it will be especially appropriate to humble ourselves particularly to humble ourselves before God in confession and in repentance pleading with him to forgive us to remove the chastisement the judgment that our sin has brought upon us.

[17 : 51] That will be the highway to blessing to joy and to greater usefulness. and at times it will be appropriate too as it was the case with Daniel in chapter 9 to confess not only personal but national sins.

If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and speak and pray and seek my faith and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven I will forgive their sins and will heal their land.

God loves to heal but there must come confession on the part of the sinner confession on the sinner's part must come first.

Confession thanksgiving petition confession and the fourth element I want us to notice is this intercession intercession read Daniel chapter 9 when you go home there you will discover that Daniel is interceding for Jerusalem he prays O Lord according to all thy righteousness I beseech thee let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem thy holy mountain because for our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us now therefore O our God hear the prayer of thy servant and his supplication and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's name O my God incline thine ear and hear open thine eyes and behold our desolation and the city which is called by thy name for we do not present thine applications before thee for our righteous mercies but for thy great mercies

O Lord hear O Lord forgive O Lord hearken and do act he is saying defer not don't delay for thine own sake O my God for thy city and thy people are called by thy name there's an urgency don't you notice a pleading and imploring there in Daniel praying for the city of Jerusalem he had been away from Jerusalem for some 60 years yet he never forgot that city or the temple there he prayed regularly for the rebuilding of that city and for the rebuilding of the sanctuary there the temple there where God had revealed himself he loved to pour over Jeremiah's prophecy of how the exile would end after 70 years and the people would return to Babylon indeed it was reading that prophecy as we learned from verse 2 of chapter 9 that prompted him to pray as he did in the words

[20 : 53] I've read to you for the city of Jerusalem Jerusalem and its temple there where God had revealed himself meant so much to Daniel that every time he went into that room in his house to pray to his God three times a day his window was open toward Jerusalem he never forgot Jerusalem if thee Jerusalem I forget skill part from my right hand my tongue to my roof's mouth let cleave if I do thee forget Jerusalem and thee above my chief joy do not set Daniel remembered Jerusalem and he prayed for the city he knew so well that God's great practices of salvation for men and women were associated and would arise not from that great city that

Nebuchadnezzar built the great city of Babylon but rather from the city that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem and he prayed for Jerusalem now in the Old Testament Jerusalem stands for the church of God Jerusalem Mount Zion points to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ God more than Jacob's dwelling door delights in Zion's gain we learn from Daniel's interceding for Jerusalem here that we should be praying for the church of Christ pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity let them that love thee and thy peace have still prosperity we should be praying for the church here for our own congregation

I trust I trust my friend that you are praying daily for the congregation here pray that we will be a united congregation pray that Christians here will be growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ pray that we will be a witnessing people pray that the word of the gospel will be declared with power pray that people will be converted under the preaching here pray that we will reach out to others who are not hearing the gospel message pray that we will grow as a congregation brethren pray for us and pray for other congregations too pray for the witness of our church throughout Scotland pray for all the faithful preachers of the gospel in our land whatever their denomination pray that this land of ours will no revival of the church of Christ in Scotland will be revived pray for the work of Christ the work of the church overseas pray for the missionary outreach of the church pray for

Jerusalem the church of the living God the content of Daniel's praying thanksgiving petition confession intercession his prayer life his regularity the content of his praying and I want us to notice thirdly the opposition he met the opposition he met every day Daniel went into that room in his house went down on his knees and prayed to his God three times a day at least he went into that room to pray he had done so for many years people although there was no ostentation about Daniel's devotion it was well known that he had those sessions of private prayer day by day the servants at any rate in the house would know about them but Daniel had enemies there in

Babylon there were those other public officials servants of King Darius who were so jealous of Daniel we're told in verse 3 that Daniel was preferred above the other presidents and noblemen and as a result they were jealous of him they saw Daniel as a person who was standing in the way of their enriching themselves dishonestly and they hated Daniel they tried to find fault with his work they mutually scrutinized all his public life and we can be quite sure all his private life as well but as we're told in verse 4 they could find none occasion nor fault for as much as he was faithful neither was there any error or fault found in him it became so plain to those enemies of his to those other officials there in Babylon that if they were going to find any fault in him if they were going to get at him at all it could only be in respect to his religion with regard to the law of his god and so they flattered king

[26 : 27] Darius they went to him and they got him to sign the decree saying that for 30 days nobody could nobody was to be allowed to ask any request of any god or any man but of king Darius himself so that's not at all far fetched it was a common thing in those heathen empires in the east long ago for the people to deify the king or the emperor not at all far fetched and Darius fell for their flattery he signed the decree the punishment for anyone who did not obey that law was that he would be thrown into the den of lions Daniel knew for all that was taking place but he carried on as usual three times each day he went into his room went on his knees and prayed to his gods the window of his room was open toward

Jerusalem and it was obviously through that open window that the spies saw what Daniel was doing they insisted that the law should be observed the law for Medes and Persians could never be broken and Daniel was cast into the lion's den the opposition he met it came from important people there in Babylon in the running of the affairs of the Babylonian empire but the important point for us to notice is this there was another force at work opposing Daniel those poor Babylonian officials were about the dupes of this other force that was at work anybody who reads through the book of Daniel from beginning to end will notice that there's a very great difference between chapters 1-6 and chapters 7-12 in chapters 1-6 we meet with the human adversaries of the people of God there in

Babylon but when you come to chapters 7-12 much more difficult chapters we enter a different dimension of thought altogether we're being taken behind the scenes as it were and we are seeing the real adversary Satan himself he it is who was behind the plot formed by those Babylonian noblemen to get at Daniel now my friends I believe that Satan was not particularly interested in having Daniel thrown into the lion's den that was just the threat that he was using to try and intimidate Daniel what Satan was interested in was the spoiling of Daniel's testimony he wanted to get Daniel to stop praying even for those 30 days if Daniel remained faithful and was eventually thrown into the lion's den as a result that would be no victory for Satan the victory for Satan would be if Daniel were shown to be not the faithful man to his

God that he had appeared to be all along those poor dupes of Babylonian noblemen they wanted Daniel thrown into the lion's den Satan wanted Daniel to stop praying it was the opposition of Satan that was behind the activity of those Babylonians he was a real adversary Satan will be doing his utmost is doing his utmost my Christian friends to get you and me to stop praying he will work through human beings and all kinds of circumstances to get his way but if you or I are not regularly day by day drawing apart as Christian believers to wait upon God in prayer then that is because of the activity because of the opposition of

Satan we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual hosts of wickedness and high places Satan and his battalions of demons there is nothing that Satan detests more than a praying Christian if a person is regularly drawing apart a Christian is regularly drawing apart to wait upon God in prayer day by day then that Christian will be making progress in the Christian life but if he stops praying or if his praying becomes merely formal and mechanical then he will certainly backslide if he is not faithful in the secret place before long his public testimony will be ruined too it is quite inevitable Satan's great concern is to mar the

[32 : 07] Christian prayer life and he knows also that in the purpose of God the prayers of God's people are of tremendous significance in the world and in the church at large so he attacks the Christian prayer life my Christian friend will you examine yourself this morning are you praying little are you irregular in your praying do you let a day pass in which you fail to go apart at stated times to wait upon God in prayer do days go by in which you fail to draw apart to wait upon God in prayer can it be said of you today that you're not the man of prayer you're not the woman of prayer that you used to be if so that is because Satan has scored a striking victory in your life if that's our condition then we must repent we must become praying people again it's a matter of the utmost urgency and having put right what is wrong with regard to our prayer life we must be strong in the

Lord and in the power of his might and put on the whole armor of God that we may resist the wiles of the devil is God speaking to you here this morning if so what are you going to do about what God is saying to you concerning this matter of prayer let us pray we pray O God that thou would write thy word upon our hearts and we pray that we will truly respond to what thou art saying to us we pray that as Christian believers we will truly be men and women of prayer who regularly day by day will draw apart to wait upon our God in the secret place hear us and answer we pray for Jesus sake

Amen