

Introduction

Last sermon of 2018

- It's hard to believe that we're here at the end of December
- Asking the Lord - what should our final message for 2018 be!

Burden for prayer

- Effective praying
- Missy's newsletter article urging us to pray
- My own heart in 2019

Text

- This morning I want to look at the prayer Daniel prayed as recorded in chapter 9
- Not the prayer per se, but the entire process - there is much to learn for us
- **Dan 9:1-3 (ESV)** *(1) In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans-- (2) in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. (3) Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes
- Please find this passage as I'll refer to it thru the message

Message

Position

- Before we look at the prayer - I want to remind you of the position God's people were in
- There were captives in Babylon

- Read the story in 2 Kings 24-25
- Under siege for 2 years - until the people are starving
- Breach the walls, and capture everyone who escapes
- Burn the temple
- Destroy the walls
- Carry away anything of value
- Now for 70 years they've been captives in a foreign land
- That's a lifetime - it's all most have ever known
- Feels like God has forgotten them
- Daniel himself was a young man when he was carried away into captivity - one of the first groups of people to be captured (2 Ki 24). Now 70 years have gone by.
- That's a long time to wait!
- **Point:** God has promised something different, and He is ready to act. It may feel like He's forgotten you but He always keeps His word

Promise

- Saw from Jeremiah's prophecy
- See **Dan 9:2 (ESV)** *(2) in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.*
- He was studying the Word of God thru the prophet Jeremiah and came across Jeremiah's letter to the captives prophesying the captivity will last 70 years
- See * **Jer 25:11-12 (ESV)** *(11) This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (12) Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste.*
- and **Jer 29:10 (ESV)** *(10) "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.*
- **Point:** Effective prayer flows from a promise God has made
- **Note:** That means effective praying begins in the Word - studying and knowing what God has said he would do.

- In James 5:16 we're reminded that "the effectual fervent prayer for a righteous man availeth much" - then James cites Elijah as an example. Elijah prayed for rain after a 3 year drought - because God had said he would send the rain.
- **Second note:** He had to believe the prophecy applied
- **Third note:** He had to believe that by prayer he could receive

Posture

- I want to take a minute and talk about the posture of Daniel before the Lord
- Not his physical posture, but the attitude of His heart. He was humble before the Lord
- This Daniel was a man of God, and had been used mightily by God in the past years
- **Dan 9:3 (ESV)** *(3) Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. - See the sack cloth and ashes. See the fasting*
- He spent time confessing the sins of the people (see **Dan 9:4-7 (ESV)** *(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.)*)
- God doesn't owe us - we're in no position to argue/negotiate!
- **Point:** Daniel humbled himself and justified/glorified God
- **Observe** See however, the audacity of prayer - we don't deserve it, but in boldness we approach the Lord
- See Jesus' teaching on this **Luke 11:5-8 (ESV)** *(5) And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, (6) for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; (7) and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and*

give you anything'? (8) I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

Plea

- Daniel sought the Lord (see **Dan 9:3 (ESV)** (3) *Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.*
- Yes the 70 years were up - but what Daniel sought was the presence of the Lord
- He humbled himself, confessing the sins of the people but what he prayed for was reconciliation with God
- **Point #1:** Daniel sought the Lord (not just what he could do)
- Before asking for anything - Daniel wanted the Lord
- Yes ultimately he's asking for God to remove the judgment that's been on them for 70 years - according to His own promise, but that flows from reconciliation back to the Lord
- **Truth:** We need Jesus - more than what He can do for us
- Scripture is filled with examples:
- **Deut 4:29 (ESV)** (29) *But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.*
- **Jer 29:13 (ESV)** (13) *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*
- **Truth:** We have a God who allows u-turns!
- **Point #2:** Daniel's plea was based on God's nature and name.
- He didn't expect God to answer because he deserved it, but because of the nature and name of the Lord
- See **Dan 9:16 (ESV)** (16) *"O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem..."*
- See **Dan 9:17 (ESV)** (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.*
- **Dan 9:18 (ESV)** (18) *... For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.*
- See **Dan 9:19 (ESV)** (19) *... Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."*

Persistence

- In v20 *"While I was still speaking and praying..."*
- The Lord answered him immediately - sending an angel to explain the time frame when they would be delivered (and giving him a glimpse into the ultimate deliverance through the coming of the Savior)
- But Daniel knew how to pray until...
- In the next chapter Daniel fasted for three weeks - the Lord sent an answer but it was delayed (see Daniel 10:12-14)
- **Point:** Pray until the answer comes!
- Ask, Seek, Knock - continuous!
- Elijah's prayer - repeated until the cloud rose!
- Keep praying church!

Application

Ready to move

- It may feel like a desperate time - but I believe God is ready to move
- In 2019 I want us to lock into the power of prayer, seeking God and returning in humility to Him

Get in the world

- We cannot pray effectively until we know His promises
- I want you to be in the Word so the Spirit can speak to you about what God is ready to do!

Pray

- I believe we are living in the last days
- There will be a great falling away - a rebellion that precedes the coming of the Lord

- We want to hold on and pray - taking what God has said and acting on it in prayer!
- No Wednesday service on the 2nd
- Next week 1/9 - devote that time to prayer