As we continue with our series of messages from the Book of Daniel, please turn with me in your Bibles to today’s scripture text in Daniel chapter nine.

INTRODUCTION

The scripture we are looking at this morning is the part of Daniel 9 that always gets overlooked.

- The last part of Daniel 9 is the part that gets all the attention.
- The last part is the part of this chapter is where all the mystery and intrigue lies.
- The last part of this chapter is the part that has been the subject of numerous prophetic books.
- The last part of this chapter is the part preachers love to preach on.

Lord willing we will get to that “last part” of Daniel 9, next Lord’s Day. But before we do, I assure you it will be well worth our time this morning to study this first part of Daniel 9.

(P A U S E)

When it comes to our prayer life as Christians most all of us always feel guilty that we don’t pray enough. In fact, I have yet to meet a single Christian who is totally satisfied with his or her prayer life.

It seems like no matter how much one prays there is always more we could have prayed about. Prayer is like a never-ending growth process in our lives. We never reach a point where we pray too much.
We have already learned in our study that Daniel was a man of devout prayer. Remember in Daniel 6, we learned that Daniel had a regular habit of praying three times a day; likely 9:00 in the morning......NOON and 3:00 o’clock in the afternoon. In that scripture we learned that Daniel would rather “be thrown to the lions” than to give up his prayer life. How many of us could say the same?

But in our scripture text today we find an actual prayer Daniel prayed. In fact this prayer is sometimes called “The Model Prayer of The Old Testament.”

There is great value in reading the word of God in a public gathering such as this, so I would like to read Daniel’s Prayer For God’s People in its entirety.

Daniel 9:1-19 (NKJV)

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

4 And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.

6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.
8 “O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

10 We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

12 And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

13 “As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.

14 Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.

15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

16 “O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.
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 do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

PRAYER

As we go back and look at Daniel’s prayer more closely we find a simple pattern for prayer that will help you and me in our own prayer life.

First of all……..

I. Daniel’s Prayer Was Motivated By the WORD of GOD (vs.1-3)

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

1. Prayer and Bible Study go together like a hand in a glove. Prayer enhances our personal Bible Study and personal Bible Study enhances our prayer life.

   You see chances are if you spend little or no time in studying the word of God, you probably don’t spend a lot of time in prayer either. And if you don’t spend a lot of time in prayer, chances are real good you don’t spend much time studying the word of God either.

   Prayer and Bible Study are inseparable!
2. Notice Daniel’s prayer was motivated by something he had studied in the word of God, more specifically, something he had read from the Book of Jeremiah. (VERSE 2)

I would like for you to turn to that passage and let’s read exactly what Daniel read that motivated this prayer in Daniel chapter 9.

Jeremiah 25:11-13 (NKJV)

11 And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12 ‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

13 So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.

3. Jeremiah had written these prophetic words in the closing days just before the Jewish people were carried away into Babylonian captivity.

Now there’s an interesting side note regarding the scroll upon which Jeremiah recorded these prophetic words. In Jeremiah 36:23 we learn the first scroll or the first copy was cut up and burned, under the orders of King Jehoiakim of Judah. But five verses later, in verse 28, God instructed Jeremiah to take another scroll and write the exact words that he had written on the first scroll.

That second scroll was carried with the Jewish people into Babylonian captivity. That was the scroll of scripture Daniel read that motivated this beautiful prayer in chapter 9.
9. After reading Jeremiah’s prophecy that God would send His people into Babylonian captivity for seventy years then release them, Daniel believed the word of God.

At that point Daniel began to pray that GOD would do what He said He would do. Now, if God is already going to do something, then why do we need to pray?

10. Here is an important prayer principle, so listen carefully! God knows His plan, and even when He reveals His plan to us in the scriptures, He expects us to pray over His plan.

God wants you and me to “get on board” with His divine plan. And the way we “get on board” is by praying.

1 John 5:14,15 (NKJV) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

11. After reading God’s word from the prophet Jeremiah, Daniel realized the seventy years of captivity were nearly over and God would soon be releasing His people.

And so Daniel “set his face toward the Lord God” and began to pray.

Secondly we see.......

II. Daniel’s Prayer Was Measured By the WILL of GOD

1. The true measure of any prayer is when we pray “Not my will, but Yours’ be done!”

You see, it doesn't matter how long a prayer is. It doesn't matter how pretty a prayer is.

If my prayer is ME-CENTERED instead of GOD-CENTERED then my prayer is nothing more than empty, meaningless words.
2. Daniel clearly understood the will of God. He understood that it was GOD’S WILL that His people had been taken into captivity because of GROSS SIN. And Daniel clearly understood that it was God’s will that His people repent of their sins and conform to His will before releasing them from Babylonian captivity.

3. So throughout this prayer Daniel confesses the many sins of God’s people.

v.5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.

v.6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name.

v.8 “O Lord, to us belongs shame of face because we have sinned against You.

v.10 We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws.

v.11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; ……we have sinned against Him.

v.13 “we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.

v.15 “we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

v.16 because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

4. Daniel offers no EXCUSES, no EXPLANATIONS and no RATIONALIZATION for the sins of Israel, just raw, transparent confession.

5. And did you notice throughout all that confession, Daniel said, “We” not “They.” “WE have sinned!” “WE have done wickedly!” “WE have not obeyed!”
6. Why did Daniel include himself in this confession? After all we have seen throughout this Book, Daniel was one of the most honorable, most righteous men who ever lived.

Remember in chapter six when the governors and satraps tried to find something to charge Daniel with, “they couldn’t find one solitary fault or error in Daniel’s life.” As we would say today, “Daniel was squeaky clean!”

7. But you see, in spite of Daniel’s sterling character, he wasn’t a perfect man. And every truly righteous man knows that about himself. This is why Daniel included himself in the confession of Israel’s sins, right along with the rest of the people.

8. There is a valuable lesson for all of us in this. All of us are sinners, from the man in the pulpit to the people sitting on the back row and everyone else in between. WE ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

This is why our prayers must be GOD-CENTERED not MAN-CENTERED. Prayer is NOT about getting OUR will done in heaven, but about us doing GOD’S will here on earth.

Daniel’s Prayer was MOTIVATED BY THE WORD OF GOD. And his prayer was MEASURED BY THE WILL OF GOD.

Now thirdly we see........

III. Daniel’s Prayer Magnified the WONDER of GOD

1. There are a number of “comparative” statements in Daniel’s prayer where he compares THE WONDER OF GOD with THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN.

Daniel speaks of THE WONDER OF GOD in verse 4:

“O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,
Now compare that with **THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN** in verse 5:

We have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.


Daniel speaks of **THE WONDER OF GOD** in the first part of verse 7 and **THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN** in the latter part of that same verse.

O LORD, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face.


Then in verses 8, 9 Daniel reverses it. In verse 8 Daniel speaks of **THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN**

8 “**O Lord, to us belongs shame of face**, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You

Now contrast that with what Daniel says about **THE WONDER OF GOD** in verse 9.

9 **To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness.**

2. Daniel’s prayer was full of PRAISE for GOD and PENITENCE for the wickedness of man.

3. Likewise our prayers should be filled with PRAISES for the WONDER OF GOD!

O LORD, YOU ARE STRONG.......I am weak.
O LORD, YOU ARE HOLY...........I am so unholy.
O LORD, YOU KNOW ALL.........I know so very little.
O LORD, YOU ARE PERFECT.......I am so imperfect.
O LORD, YOU ARE SINLESS........I am sinful.
O LORD, YOU ARE RIGHTEOUS....My righteousness is as filthy rags.
DANIEL’S PRAYER was MOTIVATED BY THE WORD OF GOD.

MEASURED BY THE WILL OF GOD.

AND MAGNIFIED THE WONDER OF GOD

Although Daniel was too old and infirmed to ever return to the land of Israel himself, God allowed Daniel to live long enough to see the first of three expeditions of Jewish people leave Babylon and return to Israel.

In answer to Daniel’s prayer, the people Israel left Babylon a “changed people” from what they had been before.

For one thing, the Jews never returned to idol worship after the captivity. This was a great “turning point” in Israel’s religious life, because from the day they worshiped the golden calf in the wilderness on, idolatry was a persistent problem in Israel. But after the captivity they forsook their idols.

Another thing the Babylonian captivity taught the Jewish people, is “God is truly a jealous God.” Jealous in a good way! God is passionate toward His people and He desires that His people be passionate toward Him. After 70 years in captivity the Jewish people came to realize what a special relationship they had with God.

(CONCLUSION ON NEXT PAGE)
CONCLUSION

Dwight L. Moody was one of the most powerful preachers of the late 1800’s. In 1872 as a young man, Dwight L. Moody attended an early morning prayer meeting in a hay mow in Ireland.

That day he heard a quiet, humble man say something he never forgot. The man said, “The world has yet to see what God can do with, and for, and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to God’s will.”

Years later, Moody was sitting high up in the balcony of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England when he heard Charles Spurgeon say those same words he had heard years earlier in that Irish barn. That day, Dwight L. Moody humbly bowed his head and prayed, “By the power of the Holy Spirit, I will be that man.”

God greatly honored Dwight L. Moody’s with a ministry that in spite of his human frailties and lack of a formal education, touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and still doing so today 113 years after his death.

As we close this morning let’s all ponder this great question:

What could GOD do WITH…..FOR…..THROUGH…..and IN me if I were fully and wholly consecrated to His will?

May that be our prayer today and every day!