

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG135 – Daniel, Teach Us to Pray

Hi, and welcome to the podcast. I am so glad you are joining us today. I am going to talk a little bit more about Daniel. I have been into the book of Daniel, and it has been really meeting my own heart. I feel there is so much practical impartation that we get for our personal walk with God today, that I wanted to at least bring one more podcast dealing with the figure of Daniel. I am calling this, *Daniel, Teach Us to Pray*. His prayer life was something that I think is amazing. I know I brought a podcast about how his prayer triggered spiritual warfare, and I believe that it is, again, a lesson for us today.

I want to begin with Second Chronicles chapter 7, beginning at verse 11. I know we have read this on different podcasts and I have taught about it before, but I believe very much in my heart that these verses apply to us today, and to how we need to enter into prayer in our relationship to God by virtue of what we see transpiring around us in this timeframe. God gives very clear instructions here which we need to be able to follow, and I do not believe this can be reiterated too many times for us right now in the day in which we live. Second Chronicles starting at chapter 7, verses 11-14: “Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king’s palace, and successfully completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the Lord and in his palace. Then the Lord appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, ‘I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.’”

Now, in my mind, these are very clear instructions for us today of how we should respond to what we do see around us. I do feel like we are seeing drought. I think we are seeing the lack of both heavenly rain of God’s Presence as well as natural rain. I feel like we are seeing our land being devoured by many things. I think we are seeing pestilence; certainly, we have just been living in the days of COVID-19, which is obviously a pestilence that has reached around the world, and it has touched every nation and every people in the world. And so, it is something that we should call our attention to, and realize that God is speaking about these very things. He is saying, “When you see these things, then if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves” – which is a good place to start, because we are humble before Him. And, “If we will pray and seek His face” – I think that we need to be seeking God as never before. That was one thing that Daniel was so driven in – his seeking God. Remember, Daniel lived in the days of the captivity of Israel, having been alive during the time when Israel was being destroyed. Eventually the Temple was destroyed, and the people were brought into Babylon into a captivity that was to last for seventy years. So Daniel was right in the center of these happenings. And God is saying, “Seek My face, and turn from your wicked ways.” There is a level of repentance, I think, that we all need to enter into in this day. I think we need to seek His face about our wicked ways – “What is the wickedness that you are pointing to, God, that you want us to get rid of?” But He said that if we do these things, He would forgive the sin and heal the land. He would bring a change and a deliverance, and that is what I believe we need today.

We see a part of this story in Second Chronicles 36, which I am pointing out for the chronology's sake. Solomon was building the Temple, and God was speaking to him. Then we go on through the book of Chronicles; we go from chapter 7 to chapter 36, and already we find that the people have rebelled against God, they are not listening to Him, and He is bringing them into this captivity. Let's just read a few verses of this out of Second Chronicles 36. I will start with verses 11-14: "Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the Lord his God; he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the Lord. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear allegiance by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel. Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the Lord which He had sanctified in Jerusalem." So here we go from this beautiful picture of how Solomon dedicated the Temple – the Presence of God came and filled the Temple to the place where the priests were not even able to stand and minister, they were slain on their faces before the Presence of God because of the weight of the glory of God that dwelt within that Temple. And God said, "I have chosen this place for My dwelling on the earth." Yet here we are just this handful of chapters later, and not only is the king in rebellion, and the officials of the priests, but the people were unfaithful in following after all the abominations of the nations. They defiled the house of God, which God Himself had sanctified in Jerusalem.

Going to verses 15-18, it says, "The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there was no remedy." And I feel like, in all honesty, we are living in similar days. We are living in days when people are mocking the Word of God, mocking those who are messengers sent by God, true men and women who are in this age as pastors, as rabbis, as even government officials, who are given to the will of God. And today, they are mocked and they are despised; the Word of God is scoffed at; it is rejected; it is refused out of our court rooms, out of our classrooms, out of our medical practices. It is refused out of society in general – at least speaking myself for America, I would have to say that these things are true; and I know there are other countries where this also is true. And it said that His prophets were scoffed at "until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there was no remedy. Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon."

So Jerusalem was destroyed, the Temple was burned. It says, in verses 19-20, "Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles. Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia." And this is part of Daniel's history. He was one of these as a young man who was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar and dragged out of Jerusalem into Babylon to live his life, to serve the king of Babylon; and that is what he did. These things happened; and it grieves me as I read it, because I feel like it really does have so many likenesses to the day that we are living in. I just pray that we, as God's people, are able to come into the place of really following after the prayer that we find in Second Chronicles 7:11-14, that we find a way to walk in this and turn this thing around.

So they were all taken off and served in Babylon, verse 21 says, “to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.” And of course, it is these seventy years that at some point Daniel begins to seek God about, and to ask the Lord to show him, to give him understanding about the seventy years – where he was in that process, and what would take place for Israel following those days. In this timeframe, I just want to connect with Daniel and with his heart, because he really was a man – I know we think of him as a prophet – but he was a man of prayer. He was a man who sought the Lord. He followed after these verses in Second Chronicles the seventh chapter; and actually, he probably read them, because, don’t forget that he was living in the day of the First Temple. He had read, I am sure, the writings that were in the books about the Presence of the Lord that had come, and read what God had spoken – or, at least, heard orally the stories and the traditions of how God had appeared to Solomon after the building of the Temple, and He had spoken these things to him about how, “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, that I will heal the land.” This is what we are reading about that was taking place, where the land was being devastated and ravaged; and Daniel was broken in his own heart and spirit, and longed to see the end of this time of disaster and the turning into a restoration and a release.

So I want to go to Daniel the ninth chapter, because in this chapter we find Daniel’s prayer. This is where I am calling this podcast, *Daniel, Teach Us to Pray*, because he knew how to pray. He had in his prayer and in his positioning before God all the elements that God had taught Solomon of how to pray, and what God was teaching the people of how to pray – not in wonderful times; God taught them how to pray after they had failed. And they were in a time of failure, they were in a time of His judgment and His wrath against them for the way that they had refused Him and refused His Word. We, likewise, as I keep saying, I believe we are in times such as these; and therefore, I think this prayer is so appropriate for us. I am hoping that if we read the words of Daniel, we will not just see God’s instructions according to Second Chronicles 7; but we will also receive the heart and the learning of how do we pray this type of prayer, and intercede in this way before God.

We are in Daniel, the ninth chapter, starting with verses 1-2. It says, “In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—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.” We just read about how that was prophesied, and how it came to pass in the lifetime of Daniel. Verses 3-8, “So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. 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.’” They were all guilty. “‘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. Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.’” God, I pray this becomes the prayer of America, and of the Church.

Verses 9-12, “To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 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. 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. 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.” And it’s interesting, as you go to Jerusalem today, even after the building of the Second Temple, you see the same results, and the same destruction. You see today the Jewish people continuing in the Diaspora. All these things because of actions that were warned against, and lessons that were given to prevent such a fate. And I believe we in the United States have had similar lessons and similar warnings. And I believe that if we are not already experiencing these results, we are certainly close. I am hoping, even in this podcast, that we can learn to pray this prayer of Daniel. We can cry out to God with it, and see it effect the changes that we need in our lifetime.

Going back to verses 12-19, “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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.”

I bless this prayer today. I voice it with a force in my own heart and spirit, believing for it to work today in Jerusalem, in Israel, for His chosen people. I speak it today, believing for it to apply to us in the Church, the body of Christ, in America and the nations around the world. I believe that if we cry unto Him, He is a God of great compassion; and we cry to Him to hear, to forgive, to listen and to take action, for His own name’s sake. And we ask that He not delay, because of the need of the people called by His name, and of those who are believers in Christ His Son.

So Lord, I ask that You grant the prayer of your servant Daniel. And I ask that it be to us a teaching, that we learn ourselves how to pray in this same manner, to bring about Your grace and Your compassion into our lives and into our nations.

Just to emphasize a few points: I believe that we find ourselves today in Second Chronicles 7:11-14 circumstances in our lives. So I believe that our answers are found in the instructions that the Lord gave to Solomon, telling him how to pray. Lastly, I would say, I also believe that this prayer from Daniel, in

Daniel 9:1-19, teaches us exactly how to follow God's instructions to pray for our release and our deliverance by His grace and compassion. We ask today, Lord, that You grant it in Your great name. Amen.