



A PRAYER FOR AMERICA

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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A Prayer for America

SERMON REFERENCE: Daniel 9:1-19

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2311

America is at a crossroads of morality and spirituality and we cannot afford to take it lightly. Our nation has been taken captive by the world, the flesh, and the devil. In times of crisis, we remember that our greatest resource is prayer, and our only hope for this country is God.

We must commit to pray for America because only prayer can hold back the judgment of God. In the Book of Daniel, God's people had been taken captive by the Babylonians. In chapter 9, we find a very specific prayer from Daniel for his nation, asking God for deliverance.

It was a prayer with serious concentration.

Daniel 9:3 says, "And I set my face, unto the Lord God." It is not the length, eloquence, or frequency, but the faith and fervency of our prayers that reach the ears of the Lord. If you want to strengthen your prayer life, consider fasting. In the Bible, God always links fasting with spiritual activities. We should be careful to fast for the right reasons, not for our own glory.

If you feel called to fast, first examine your motivation and avoid extremism. Pray for God's guidance; be wise about when you fast and for how long.

Daniel also prayed with steadfast confidence.

Adrian Rogers tells us, "It is impossible to see the greatness of God and the mercies of God and not pray with confidence. Face your problem, but focus on your God."

Daniel also prayed with sincere confession. He confessed his personal sin, but also asked God for forgiveness on his nation's behalf. Likewise, we should confess the sins of America to God: our greed and materialism, our neglect of the poor, our racism. We should ask God's forgiveness for our nation's sexual immorality, for killing the unborn, for the humanism we've allowed to infiltrate our schools. We must identify ourselves with our nation, and confess on its behalf.

Lastly, Daniel prayed with spiritual concern.

In chapter 9, Daniel asked for the removal of guilt, and the restoration of glory. The concern of our prayers for America ought to be for a revival, not simply for America's sake, but for the glory of God.

LIFE APPLICATION

There's no time for finger-pointing; it's time for personal repentance and national confession; say a prayer for America.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Our nation is in crisis.
 - i) Prayer is our greatest resource.
 - ii) God is our sure defense and our hope.
- b) The prophet Daniel prayed in a time of national calamity, and God heard his prayer.
- c) Daniel 9:1-8
 - i) Daniel had been reading the prophet Jeremiah.
 - (1) Jeremiah told how God was going to bring the Babylonians against His ancient people.
 - (a) Babylon today is known as Iraq.
 - ii) But God had a plan for His people and would bring them back again into the land and restore them.
- d) God does bring judgment upon sin.
- e) God has a plan, though His plan may seem to take a long time to work out.
 - i) God may seem to let evil succeed, but it is only temporary.
- f) The hour in America is desperate.
 - i) It is time for the saints of our Lord Jesus Christ to wake up and be called to serious prayer.
 - (1) Only believing, repenting prayer can hold back the floodtides of judgment and sin and release the cleansing power of the Lord Jesus upon our personal lives and our nation.
- g) Today's message will help us learn to pray in a special way.
 - i) Not ordinary prayer but extraordinary prayer; prayer that can touch the heart of God.

2) WE ARE TO PRAY WITH SERIOUS CONCENTRATION (Daniel 9:3)

- a) Have you ever set your face in prayer?
 - i) Have you desperately sought the Lord?
 - (1) It's not the arithmetic of our prayers; how many prayers we pray.
 - (2) It's not the rhetoric of our prayer; how eloquent or beautiful it may be.
 - (3) It's not the geometry of our prayer; how long our prayer may be.
 - (4) It's not the emotion of our prayer; how sweet our prayer is.
 - (5) It's not the logic of our prayer; how argumentative our prayer is.
 - (6) It is the faith and fervency of our prayer that gets to God.
- b) Oftentimes we are simply playing church.
 - i) We witness without tears.
 - ii) We pray without fasting.
 - iii) Is it any wonder then that we sow without reaping and have so little power in our lives?
- c) Prayer and fasting are the order of the day.



- i) Daniel 9:3
- d) In New Testament times, Jesus expects us to pray.
 - i) Matthew 6:5
- e) Matthew 6:16
 - i) In this passage, Jesus assumed that we would fast, just as He assumed that we would pray.
 - ii) We should not fast and pray to be seen of men; we should fast and pray with the right motivation.
- f) What is fasting?
 - i) Fasting is going without food and other pleasures for a spiritual purpose.
 - (1) Fasting is not merely going without food for health reasons.
 - ii) The Bible always links fasting with spiritual purposes.
 - (1) Watching and fasting.
 - (2) Prayer and fasting.
 - (3) Worshipping and fasting.
- g) It is possible to fast for the wrong motivations.
 - i) There are certain things we should avoid when fasting:
 - (1) Avoid exhibitionism.
 - (a) Matthew 6:16
 - (2) Avoid legalism.
 - (a) We shouldn't get the idea that we can buy a blessing from God or that somehow God is obligated to us if we fast.
 - (3) Avoid ritualism.
 - (a) Some people fast ritualistically.
 - (b) Jesus told about a tax collector who boasted to the Lord that he fasted twice a week, but Jesus indicated that this man did not understand what real spiritual religion is.
 - (i) Luke 18:11-14
 - (4) Avoid asceticism.
 - (a) The devil would like to make us a type of religious recluse, but Biblical New Testament Christianity does not make us some sort of a holy hermit.
 - (b) We do not have to go off somewhere to fast.
 - (5) Avoid egotism.
 - (a) Do not swell up with pride because you fast.
 - (i) Luke 18:11-12
 - (b) Fasting must be done unto the Lord.
 - (c) Zechariah 7:5
- h) What will fasting do?
 - i) Fasting will strengthen your prayer.
 - (1) Joel 2:12
 - (2) Turn to God with all of your heart.
 - (a) Fasting shows that we have put our heart into it.



- (3) Jeremiah 29:13
- (4) When we fast, we're giving Heaven notice that we mean business.
- ii) Fasting brings faith into focus.
 - (1) It is like having a spiritual string tied around our finger, and every hunger pain reminds us that we're to seek the face of God.
- iii) Fasting subdues self.
 - (1) We don't know how to say "no" to ourselves, and the Bible links pride with fullness of bread.
 - (a) Ezekiel 16:49
- iv) Fasting will stay the judgment of God.
 - (1) Sometimes the wrath of God, the anger of God and the righteous judgment of God comes against a nation; but if that nation will fast and pray, God will withhold His judgment.
 - (2) Jonah 3:5, 10
 - (a) Nineveh was the capital city of the ancient empire of Assyria, but God wanted to forgive.
 - (3) God is a God of righteousness, judgment and justice; but God had rather show mercy than to send judgment.
 - (4) Jeremiah 18:7-8
 - (a) God is not just talking about the nation of Israel in this passage, but He's talking about nations in general.
- v) Fasting stops the enemy of God.
 - (1) 2 Chronicles 20:3-4, 29
 - (2) We are in a cosmic battle; we're not in a battle against flesh and blood.
 - (a) We're in a battle against principalities and powers.
 - (b) Ephesians 6:12
 - (3) Prayer is like a missile that cannot be shot down, and it can go anywhere.
- vi) Fasting seeks guidance.
 - (1) If you want to know the will of God, then fast and pray.
 - (2) Acts 13:2
 - (3) One reason why the early church grew as rapidly as it did was because they were serious in prayer.
 - (a) They believed that God could do what they could not do.
- vii) Fasting shatters strongholds.
 - (1) People have strongholds of fear, bitterness, resentment and habits.
 - (2) Fasting can demolish the strongholds that the enemy has put into our lives.
 - (3) Isaiah 58:6
- i) How should we fast?
 - i) Examine your motivation.
 - (1) Ask God about it.
 - (2) Don't fast out of legalism.
 - (3) Prayerfully choose your own fast.



- (a) The Bible gives no rules about fasting.
 - (i) It doesn't say when to start or stop fasting.
 - ii) Avoid extremism.
 - (1) A one day fast is a good start.
 - (2) Choose your fast upon a day when you can give yourself to seeking the Lord.
 - (3) Fasting is to be linked with prayer, worship and spiritual exercise.
 - (4) A normal fast is doing without food but normally taking some water.
 - (5) When you break your fast, break it by eating lightly.
 - (6) Talk to your doctor before fasting if you take medication, are pregnant, or have other health concerns.
 - iii) Avoid bragging about fasting.
 - (1) We become like hypocrites if we brag about our fast.
- 3) WE ARE TO PRAY WITH STEADFAST CONFIDENCE (Daniel 9:4)
- a) In serious times, we need to learn to glance at our problem and gaze at our God.
 - b) Daniel's prayer was saturated in confidence in Almighty God.
 - i) Daniel 9:4
 - ii) Daniel 9:7
 - iii) Daniel 9:9
 - iv) Daniel 9:14
 - (1) In his prayer, Daniel is talking about God's greatness, God's awe, God's power, His righteousness, and His mercy.
 - c) It is impossible to see who our great God is in a time of crisis and not want to pray.
 - d) The basis of Daniel's prayer to our great God was the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
 - i) Daniel 9:20-21
 - (1) The evening oblation was the time when the sacrifices were made in the temple.
 - (2) The temple had been destroyed for almost seventy years when Daniel prayed this prayer, but he had it in his memory.
 - (3) The evening oblation was between 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM.
 - (a) The Bible calls this the "ninth hour."
 - (4) This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ upon the cross.
 - (a) Matthew 27:46
 - (5) Daniel was looking back to a bloody sacrifice.
 - (a) In New Testament times, we look back to an even greater sacrifice: the shed blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - e) We come to God, not with the brass of our emotions or the pewter of our self-worth, but with the gold of His glory and the incense of His mighty name.
- 4) WE ARE TO PRAY WITH SINCERE CONFESSION (Daniel 9:4-14)
- a) Daniel confessed both personal and national sins.
 - i) He confessed personal sins.
 - (1) The Bible does not mention any sin that Daniel ever committed.



- (a) There is no sin listed against Joseph or Daniel in the Bible.
 - (b) Romans 3:23
 - (2) Daniel was a godly man, and he confessed his sin.
 - (3) Many of us sit in church and wonder if those old sinners in America will get right with God.
 - (a) The closer we get to God, the more we realize how insignificant and sinful we ourselves are.
 - (b) This is not a time for finger-pointing in America.
 - (i) This is a time for repentance of personal sin.
 - (4) 1 Peter 4:17
 - ii) He also confessed national sins.
 - (1) Daniel confessed the sin of his people Israel, and he realized that Israel was in difficulty because of national sin.
 - (2) God had brought the Babylonians against Israel, but that did not mean that He was on the side of the Babylonians.
 - (a) Isaiah 10:5
 - (b) God brought judgment against His ancient people because of their sin.
 - (i) This does not mean that God doesn't love His people.
 - (3) America has national sins that we need to confess:
 - (a) Our pride in materialism
 - (b) Our neglect of the poor and needy
 - (c) Racism
 - (d) Sexual immorality
 - (e) Abortion
 - (f) Godless humanism
 - b) We can confess our personal sin and be sure that God will forgive us.
 - i) 1 John 1:9
 - c) When we confess national sin, we can pray that others will do the same thing.
 - i) When Jesus was being nailed to the cross, He did not say, "I forgive you," but He prayed for their forgiveness.
 - (1) Luke 23:34
- 5) WE ARE TO PRAY WITH SPIRITUAL CONCERN (Daniel 9:17-19)
 - a) Many of our prayers are selfish prayers.
 - i) We often pray about inconveniences.
 - (1) We pray about long lines at the airport, etc.
 - b) Daniel 9:17-19
 - i) Daniel was not merely trying to get out of difficulty.
 - ii) Daniel was not trying to get everything healed so that the people could go back to their own careless and selfish lives.
 - c) Why do we want a revival?
 - i) Do we want it for our own sake?



- ii) Do we want it for our family's sake?
- iii) Do we want it for our church's sake?
- iv) Do we want it for our nation's sake?
- v) Or, do we want it for God's sake?
 - (1) Matthew 6:9-13
 - (a) It isn't that God is not concerned about our personal needs; we can surely prayer for our daily bread and pray about our trespasses.
 - (b) But, first of all, we should pray for the glory of God.
 - (c) When we begin to pray for the glory of God, then God moves in.
 - (i) God will not share His glory with another.

6) CONCLUSION

- a) It is prayer time in America.
 - i) It is time for people who know God to seek the face of God in prayer.
 - ii) These are desperate days in which we live.
- b) We need to set ourselves to pray.
 - i) This does not mean that we go around with a long face and that we take the joy out of life.
 - (1) Joy is part of our strength.
 - (a) Nehemiah 8:10
 - (2) Matthew 6:17
- c) James 5:16
 - i) Are you a righteous person?
 - ii) To pray without a heart given to God is a religious farce.
- d) The first thing you need to do is to get on praying ground, which is to be saved by God's power divine.
- e) Are you saved?
- f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- g) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Take your Bibles and find the book of Daniel chapter 9. And as you're turning, may I tell you that our nation is in crisis. Prayer is our greatest resource. God is our sure defense and our hope. The prophet Daniel is our guide today because Daniel prayed in a time of national calamity, and God heard his prayer. And we're going to be thinking, studying the prophet Daniel under the subject, "A Prayer for America."

Notice in Daniel chapter 9 verses 1 to 8, "In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign, I Daniel, understood by books the number of years wherein the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Now here's the key verse, "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed unto the Lord my God and made my confession and I said, 'O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments; we have sinned and have committed iniquity and have done wickedly and have rebelled even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments. Neither have we hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets, which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers and all the people of the land. Oh, Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us, confusion of faces, as at this day, to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and unto all Israel that are near and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings and to our princes and to our fathers because we have sinned against Thee.'"

Now, we'll get into this later, but let me just set it up by telling you that Daniel had been reading the prophet Jeremiah and the prophet Jeremiah had told how God was going to bring against His ancient people the Babylonians. Babylon today is known as Iraq, and they would go through an ordeal, but God would have a plan for them and that God would bring them back again into the land and God would restore them.

Right away we learn that God does bring judgment upon sin. Right away we learn that God has a plan and His plan sometimes takes a long time to work out. As somebody said, "The mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine." And God may seem to let evil succeed, but it is only temporary.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, listen to me, the hour is desperate. It is time that the saints of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ wake up and be called to serious prayer because only believing, repenting prayer can hold back the floodtides of judgment and sin and release the cleansing power of the Lord Jesus Christ upon our personal lives and our nation.

Now, I want to help you today to pray. And, I am calling our church to prayer in a very special way, not ordinary prayer, but extraordinary prayer. And everything that I'm saying to you, I'm saying to



myself. And I've labored over this message, I've prayed over it, I've thought about what it means to me, and I'm not saying anything to you that I will not say to myself. I'm not asking of you anything that I'm not willing to do, but I want to help you to learn how to pray, not just ordinary prayer but prayer that can touch the heart of God.

Now I want to give you some principles. Principle number one is this; we are to pray; now listen, we are to pray with serious concentration. Now I've chosen my words carefully, so you might want to write them down. We are to pray with serious concentration. Look if you will in Daniel 9 verse 3. Daniel said, "And I set my face," now listen to that; don't let that slip by, "I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes."

Have you ever set your face in prayer? Have you ever desperately sought the Lord? Many of us could not even remember what we prayed for this morning or last night. We rattle off our little prayers, "Now I lay me down to sleep." But have you really set your face to prayer? You see, in prayer it's not the arithmetic of your prayers; how many prayers you pray. It's not the rhetoric of your prayer; how eloquent or beautiful it may be. It's not the geometry of your prayer; how long your prayer may be. It is not the emotion of your prayer; how sweet and juicy your prayer is. It's not the logic of your prayer, how argumentative your prayer; it is the faith and fervency of your prayer, prayer that gets to God. We're playing church. Friend, we witness without tears. We pray without fasting. Is it any wonder that we sow without reaping and we have so little power in our lives?

Prayer and fasting is the order of the day. Look again if you will in this passage of Scripture, verse 3, "I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting." Now if you don't mind writing in your Bible, just underscore that phrase, "with fasting."

Now that's Old Testament, you say, but Jesus expects us in New Testament times to pray. Put in your margin Matthew chapter 6 and verse 5, "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." In the time of Jesus the religious leaders would put on their long flowing robes and stand out on the street corners and pray so people could see them pray and say, "My, isn't he a holy man?" And Jesus said, "Don't be like that." But He said, "When you pray, enter into your closet and pray."

And then in Matthew chapter 6 verse 16, "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." Jesus in this passage of Scripture assumed that we would fast, just as He assumed that we would pray. But we would fast and pray; not to be seen of men. We would fast and pray with the right motivation.

Now the modern church knows very little about fasting. One man said, "We have gone from the upper room with its fire to the supper room with its smoke." Now I'm not against fellowship. I'm not against church suppers. Jesus had some of His sweetest times of fellowship around the table.

But what do we know about fasting? What is fasting? Let me tell you what fasting is. Fasting is going without food and or water and other pleasures for a spiritual purpose. Now fasting is not merely cutting down on food or going without food to lose weight or for health purposes. Now it



wouldn't hurt us to do that. Somebody said, "We live off of half of what we eat; the doctor lives off the other half." Now it wouldn't hurt us at all to do without some food for physical reasons, but that's not what fasting is. Fasting is not merely going hungry. The Bible always links fasting with spiritual purposes. For example: watching and fasting, prayer and fasting, worshipping and fasting.

Why do you fast? The why is as important as the what. You know, it's possible, as Jesus taught, to fast for the wrong motivations. I'm going to call you to fast; to fast for America. But let's check up on our motivation. Here's some things to avoid. Avoid exhibitionism. Jesus said there were, "Some who fasted to be seen of men." Now don't be ashamed of the fact that you fast, but don't fast for exhibitionism, to tell everybody how wonderful you are that you fast. Avoid exhibitionism.

Number two; avoid legalism. Don't get the idea that you can buy a blessing from God. Don't get the idea if you fast that somehow God is obligated to you and you become a legalist and you have sort of a slot-machine religion.

Number three; avoid ritualism. Don't fast as a ritual. Some people fast ritualistically. Jesus told about a tax collector in the Bible who boasted to the Lord that he fasted twice a week. But Jesus indicated this man has not the foggiest notion about what real spiritual religion is.

Avoid asceticism. Now the devil would like to make you some sort of a religious recluse or some sort of a person who constantly goes away off in caves and mountains to fast. That's not biblical, New Testament Christianity, to make you some sort of a holy hermit somewhere in a monastery.

Avoid egotism. Don't get all swelled up with pride because you fast. Again, that Pharisee said, "Lord, what a great guy I am. I fast twice a week." Fasting must be done unto the Lord. Here's a verse, write it down in your margin. You can look these up later; I'm going to read them to you. Zechariah chapter 7 and verse 5, "Speak unto all the people of the land and to the priests, saying, 'When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even unto Me?'" God said, "Now look, priests and people, you fasted, but did you fast unto Me? Were you really seeking Me?" Get your motive right. Your fast must be unto the Lord.

What will fasting do? I want to mention six things that fasting will do and I want you to jot them down. We're still under the first point of the message, but we're to seek the Lord with spiritual concentration; we're to set ourselves to prayer with fasting.

Here's some things that fasting will do. Number one; fasting will strengthen your prayer. Put down these verses, Joel 2 verse 12, "Therefore also now saith the Lord, 'Turn ye even to Me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning.'" Now, turn to God with all of your heart. You see, fasting shows that we have put our heart into it. Jeremiah 29 verse 13, "And ye shall seek Me and find Me when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." There's something about fasting that strengthens our prayer. Heaven seems to bend its ear down when we pray with fasting. When we fast, we're giving Heaven notice that we mean business. Fasting brings faith into focus. It's like having a spiritual string tied around your finger and every hunger pain reminds you that you're to seek the face of God.

Secondly; fasting subdues self. Many of us would be amazed at how selfish we are, and how filled with self we are, and what a slave to the refrigerator we are. We don't know how to say no



to ourselves, and the Bible links pride with fullness of bread. Ezekiel chapter 16 verse 49, "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness. Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness." Do we know how to say no to self? Do we know how to say no to our bodies, to our appetite? Do we know anything about discipline?

Thirdly; fasting will stay the judgment of God; fasting stays judgment. Sometimes the wrath of God and the anger of God and the righteous judgment of God is coming against a nation, but if that nation will fast and pray, God will withhold His judgment. Judgment will be stayed. Here are the Scriptures; Jonah chapter 3 verse 5, "So the people of Nineveh believed God and proclaimed a fast and put sackcloth from the greatest of them even to the least of them." Now you know the story. God had said to Jonah, "I am going to destroy Nineveh." The Ninevites were living in such a way it was a stench in the nostrils of God. They were ripe for judgment. Jonah, after having that escapade in the belly of the whale, went and preached unto Nineveh, and the entire city-state of Nineveh repented with fasting, and the Bible says in Jonah chapter 3 and verse 10, "And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way and God repented of the evil that He said He would do unto them and He did it not." Why? Because they fasted and they prayed. Nineveh was the capital city of the ancient empire of Assyria, but God wanted to forgive.

Let me tell you something about the great heart of our God. God is a God of righteousness, judgment, and justice, but God had rather show mercy than to send judgment. Put this verse down, Jeremiah 18 verses 7 and 8. God says, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up and pull down and destroy it. If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

Now He's not just talking about the nation Israel, He's talking about nations in general. God says, "When I get ready to judge a nation, if that nation will repent, then I will turn from the judgment that I had determined to send upon that nation." America is ripe for judgment. We are in the eleventh hour, the clock is about to strike midnight, and we need to say, "Oh God, hold back Your hand of judgment upon America."

Next, not only does it stay the judgment of God, but it stops the enemies of God. There's a king in the Bible whose name was Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat had some ungodly enemies that came against him, and he was filled with fear. Second Chronicles chapter 20, verses 3 and 4, "And Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaim a fast throughout all Judah and Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord, even out all of those cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord." Did it do any good? Second Chronicles chapter 20 verse 29, "And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries," talking of those countries that came against Jehoshaphat, "when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel."

We're in a cosmic battle. We're not in a battle against flesh and blood. We're in a battle against principalities and powers. But prayer is a missile, an inter-continental missile that travels at the speed of light. There is no anti-missile that can shoot it down and it can go anywhere. We can pray with fasting and send that missile against the enemies of righteousness.

Next; fasting seeks guidance. Do you want to know the will of God? Not just for America, for your



marriage, for your business. Before I came to Bellevue Baptist Church, Joyce and I, wanting to know the will of God, were fasting and praying.

Acts chapter 13 and verse 2, the early church, “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, ‘Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.’” The great missionary movement of the early church began with fasting and prayer.

Have you ever wondered why the early church grew as rapidly as it did? One of the reasons is they were serious in prayer. They believed that God could do what they could not do, and when they fasted and prayed, iron gates began to yield and the Gospel went across that Roman Empire.

Next; fasting shatters strongholds. People have strongholds in their lives of fear and bitterness and resentment and habits. Fasting can demolish the stronghold that the enemy has put into our lives. Listen to Isaiah chapter 58 and verse 6, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free? And that ye break every yoke.” Would you like to have every yoke that the devil’s put upon you broken? Well, fasting and prayer.

How should we fast? Examine your motivation, ask God about it. Not because Adrian asks you to do it, not out of legalism. Prayerfully choose your own fast. It’s an interesting thing, as you study the Bible about fasting; the Bible gives no rules. It doesn’t say when to start, when to stop, what to do, and what not to do. So prayer, about it.

Avoid extremism. A one day fast is a good start. Don’t say, “Well I’m going to fast for forty days and forty nights.” Why don’t you just try one day? One day. And choose your fast upon a day when you can give yourself to seeking the Lord. Remember the fasting is more than going hungry, it is to be linked with prayer and worship and spiritual exercise. A normal fast is doing without food but normally taking some water; for a short time you may fast without food or water. I would suggest to you that when you break your fast, break it by eating lightly, don’t just go out and gorge, perhaps a salad or something to break your fast. And, I can’t find this in the Bible, but I’ll give you a little common sense. If you’re on medication, if you’re pregnant, if you have particular problems, talk to your doctor about this and get his advice and permission.

And then when you fast, avoid bragging about fasting. Then you become like a hypocrite if you do that.

Now what I’m trying to say is this, friend, listen to me, all of this is under the heading we are to pray, listen, with serious concentration. Daniel said, “I set my face.”

Now number two, not only are we to pray with serious concentration, but number two, we are to pray with steadfast confidence. Now, if you don’t pray with confidence, forget it. What we need to learn to do in serious times is to glance at our problem, to gaze at our God. Glance at your problem, gaze at your God.

As you listen to the prayer of Daniel the prophet, it is saturated with confidence in Almighty God. I’m going to race through a few of these verses, just scroll down with me. Look in Daniel 9 verse 4, “And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession and said, ‘O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping covenant and mercy to them that love Him and to them that keep



His commandments.” What a mighty God we serve. Look in Daniel chapter 9 verse 7, “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces.” Look in Daniel chapter 9 and verse 9, “To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.” Oh, He’s a God of mercy and forgiveness. Isn’t that wonderful? Isn’t it great that we can have that confidence that God does not hold a grudge? Notice in Daniel chapter 9 and verse 14, “Therefore hath the Lord watched upon evil and brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth, for we obeyed not His voice.”

In all of this, Daniel is talking about God: God’s greatness, God’s awe, God’s power, God’s righteousness, God’s mercy. It is impossible to see who our great God is in a time of crisis and not want to pray. Aren’t you glad that we have a God that we can pray to?

Friend, we have a great, great God, say Amen. We do. Now, do you know what Daniel’s prayer was, on the basis of his prayer to this great God? On the basis of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. You say, “Well I don’t see that in there.” Well go down to chapter 9 and verse 20 and 21. Look at it if you will. Daniel says, “And while I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, before the holy mountain of my God, yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning being caused to fly swiftly,” now watch this, “touched me about the time of the evening oblation.”

“Pastor, what is the evening oblation?” Well, the evening oblation is the time when the sacrifices were made in the temple. Now I want to remind you that the temple had been destroyed for almost seventy years when Daniel made this prayer, but he had it in his memory. He remembered that the priests would go there with shed blood upon the altar, the evening oblation. When was the evening oblation? It was between three and four p.m. in the afternoon. It’s what the Bible calls the ninth hour. Well, what is all of this about? It is a prophecy of Jesus Christ upon the cross, when Jesus Christ died upon the cross. Matthew 27 verse 46, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani,’” that is to say, “‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’” Daniel was looking back to a bloody sacrifice.

As we pray in the New Testament time, we look back to even a greater sacrifice, the shed blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and we pray with confidence. I don’t have to come to God with my hands filled with the brass of my emotions or the pewter of my worth, but with the gold of His glory and the incense of His mighty name. Oh, the confidence that we have when we pray. What a mighty God we have.

Thirdly; we are to pray with sincere confession, sincere confession. Look in chapter 9. I’m going to read an extended verse. And I think this really needs to be read, so I’m going to read verses 4 through 14. Don’t check me out, but I want you to listen to the confession that he made. “And I prayed unto the Lord my God and made my confession and said, ‘O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him and to them that keep His commandments, we have sinned.’” Now listen, “‘And have committed iniquity and have done wickedly and have rebelled even by departing from Thy precepts and Thy judgments. Neither have we hearkened unto Thy



servants the prophets which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes and our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces as it is this day. The men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel that are near and that are far off throughout all the countries wither Thou hast driven them because of their trespass that they've trespassed against Thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings and our princes and to our fathers because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness though we have rebelled against Him, neither have we hearkened unto the voice of the Lord our God to walk in His ways which He set before us by His servants, the prophets. Yea, all Israel hath transgressed Thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey Thy voice. Therefore the curse is poured upon us and the oath that is written in the law of Moses, the servant of God because we have sinned against Him and He hath confirmed His words which He spake against us and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil. For unto the whole Heaven hath not been done as hath been done unto Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil and brought it upon us for the Lord our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth. For we obeyed not His voice."

Now ladies and gentlemen, people in America need to read the passage I just read. We get all bent out of shape if somebody says that God is judging us because of our sin. Friend, there're several kinds of judgment. One judgment is just a general judgment where God backs off and lets evil that we seem to embrace come upon us. Oh yes, there's coming another day of judgment with far more precision.

But here's what I want you to see about the prayer of Daniel. We're talking about a prayer that was sincere confession. Daniel confessed both personal and national sins. Now, as you study the life of Daniel, you cannot find any sin mentioned that Daniel ever committed. Two men in the Bible, I cannot find any sin. I know they sinned, for the Bible says in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But you won't find any sin listed that I can find against Joseph nor against Daniel. Daniel was a godly man and yet he confessed his sin.

Now, many of you, many of us may sit in our church and think, "Well, I wonder if those old sinners in America are going to get right with God?" And we look around at the abortionists and the liquor dealer, and we look around at the sexual pervert, and we say, "I wonder if they're going to get right with God?" You know what a church steeple is? A church steeple is something supposed to point us to God. Have you ever noticed that the closer the steeple gets to the top, the smaller it gets? The closer we get to God, the more we realize how insignificant and how sinful we are. This is not a time for finger-pointing in America. This is a time for repentance of personal sin. I'm talking about the people in the pew. The Bible says in First Peter 4 verse 17, "The time has come that judgment begin at the house of God."

Personal confession; but secondly, also national confession. Daniel confessed the sin of his people Israel and he realized that Israel was in difficulty because of national sin. God had brought the Babylonians against them. Does that mean that God was on the side of the Babylonians? Of course



not. God said in Isaiah 10 verse 5 that, “The Babylonians were the rod of His anger.”

When I was a kid, my dad sometime would get a rod, not a stick, but a rod, a limber limb off the tree. Did any of you ever have a dad did that? Yeah, we used to call it peach tree tea; and get one of those limbs. Well, when he was finished with that limb, what did he want to do with it? He just took it and broke it. God said, “The Babylonian is the rod of my anger, not that I’m on his side. When I’ve finished, I’ll break the rod,” but God brought judgment against His ancient people because of their sin. It does not mean that a holy God doesn’t love His people. My dad used to say, “I do this because I love you.”

Now, what are some of the national sins of America that we need to confess? Well, for example, our pride in materialism. Our neglect of the poor and the needy. Our racism. Our sexual immorality. The merciless killing of the unborn. Godless humanism that blushes to mention the name of God in public square.

Now I can confess my personal sin and be sure that God will forgive me. First John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I cannot get forgiveness for national sin, but I can pray that others will do the same thing when I confess national sin.

When Jesus Christ was on the cross, when they were nailing Him up, He didn’t say, “I forgive you,” but He prayed for their forgiveness. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Luke chapter 23 and verse 34. We are to pray with confession. Personal sin and national sin.

Number four; we are to pray with spiritual concern, we are to pray with spiritual concern. So many of us pray, but our prayer is a selfish prayer. Most of us just don’t like the difficulty, we don’t like the inconvenience. We don’t like the way that we have been slowed down or perhaps our bank accounts have gone down or because we have long lines at the airport or because we’re afraid for our lives and we say, “Now Lord, that’s not the way it’s supposed to be in America. We’re supposed to have it easy,” and so forth.

But what is our concern? What was Daniel’s concern? Look in Daniel chapter 9, verses 17 through 19, “Now therefore our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant and his supplications and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord’s sake.” Would you underscore that? “For the Lord’s sake. Oh, my God, incline Thine ear and hear, open Thine eyes and behold our desolations and the city which is called by Thy name, for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies. Oh, Lord, hear, oh, Lord, forgive, oh, Lord, hearken and do. Defer not for Thine own sake, oh, my God, for Thy city and Thy people called by Thy name.” It’s obvious that Daniel is not merely trying to get out of difficulty. It is obvious that he’s just not trying to get everything healed so he can go back or his, the people can go back to their own careless and selfish lives.

Why do you want a revival? Do you want it for your sake? Do you want it for your family’s sake? Do you want it for your denomination’s sake? Do you want it for your church’s sake? Do you want it for your nation’s sake or do you want it for God’s sake? I mean, is our prayer as Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6 verses 9 through 13, “Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy



kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth.” It’s not that God is not concerned about our personal needs. We can pray for our bread, our daily bread. We can pray about our trespasses. But first of all, for the glory of God. When you get your prayers to be a spiritual concern, for the glory of God, and very frankly, most of us are not praying for the glory of God. But when we begin to pray for the glory of God, God moves in. God has said in His Bible, “He will not share His glory with another.”

Now I want to tell you something, friend. It is prayer time in America. It is time for Adrian and for deacons and for teachers and for Baptists and for Methodists and for Presbyterians and Episcopalians and people who know our God, whomever they may be, to seek the face of God in prayer. Do you agree? I believe that with all of my heart. And I believe we need to set ourselves in prayer.

Now you might be back in your rocking chair watching something, but I would suggest that you get up and come to the house of God and that we seek God in prayer and we pray for America. Because I’m telling you, these are desperate days in which we live. Don’t get the idea because we sit here in an air-conditioned upholstered auditorium that everything is just fine. It is not, it is not. We need to set ourselves to pray, we’re to seek the face of God.

Now I’m not talking about going around with a long face. I’m not talking about taking the joy out of life because joy is a part of our strength. Jesus said in Matthew 6 verse 17, “When you fast, wash your face and anoint it,” but it is prayer time in America.

Now, the apostle James says in James 5:16, “The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Are you a righteous person? For you to pray without a heart given to God is a religious farce. The first thing you need to do is to get on praying ground, to be saved by God’s power divine.

Are you saved? I didn’t ask if you’re a Baptist or Methodist or Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim. Are you saved? Has that burden of sin been lifted? Does God’s Holy Spirit live in you? Have you been born again? Have you? If not, you can be saved today. I mean today, I mean now and I mean instantaneously and I mean eternally because Jesus paid for your sin with His blood on the cross. And the Bible says clearly, plainly, sublimely, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” Acts 16:31. Every sin forgiven, Christ in your heart, Heaven your home if you’ll believe on Jesus.

Oh, you say, “Well I believe in Jesus, I’ve always believed that.” No, no, no. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; trust Him. The word believe doesn’t mean intellectual belief, it means commitment and trust. Turn your life over to Jesus Christ. The moment you do it, you become a new person. Oh, you won’t be full-grown, you’re not going to sprout wings and get a halo. There’ll be old habits that want to cling on, there’ll be an old vocabulary that has to go, there will be many things you’ll have to learn; but friend, there will be a change. God is not finished with me yet, and I’m so glad, but when I asked Him to come into my heart, He changed me many years ago. He’s still working on me. But I’m Heaven born and Heaven bound.

You need Jesus, you need to be saved. Let’s pray together. If you’re not sure that you’re saved, would you say, “Lord Jesus, come into my heart right now. I invite You in, I trust You. Thank You for dying for me. Now help me to live for You. In Your name I pray, Amen.”



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