

Daybreak Gathering, 1/25/24

Assignment:

[Daniel's Prayer](#), by Pastor Brett Meador

Before we get into this lesson, I want to remind us of something we considered last week: We don't have to use a formula. There's no exact "how to" when we pray. We talk to God—the end! This sermon, however, really digs deep into motivations and how we can prepare to come to God in prayer. I just don't want us to see Daniel's method and think we have to follow some formula. God wants us to come to Him no matter our condition in the moment. Still, I did recognize how often I kind of run into and out of the "throne room" with little thought. I can learn from this. I'm hoping we all can.

You won't likely have time to discuss all the questions below during your small group time. Make note of a few you would like to cover.

Prayer: "Not twisting the arm of God, but turning the heart of man." – Pastor Brett

### **Daniel's motivation for prayer**

Daniel was reading the writings of a contemporary prophet of his day, Jeremiah. He took the promise of God's Word and sought Him, and God met him as He said He would. Like Daniel, the door we open to pray is the Bible.

- 1) Do you ever pray God's Word back to Him, using terms, truths, and themes found in Scripture?
- 2) How can praying Scripture keep us in line with God's will?
- 3) Discuss examples of how praying Scripture helps you to seek the Lord's heart as you pray. Share one or two favorite passages you use for prayer with your group.

We won't cover this in small groups, but during your own time of study, read the passages Pastor Brett covered.

Dig into the Word:

- Read Jeremiah 25:11-13. What is significant about this passage that catches Daniel's attention?
- In Jeremiah 29:10-14, what does Daniel see it's time to do? (Interesting that Daniel recognized the fulfillment of prophecy. That certainly speaks to us prophecy watchers today!)

### **Daniel's preparation for prayer (v. 3)**

Daniel "set his face unto the Lord."

- 1) Read Ephesians 6:18. How might our recognition of the power of prayer and the power of the One to whom we pray impact our attitude as we come before the Lord?

- 2) Do you have experience with fasting in preparation for prayer? Share with your group as you're able.
  - What do Jesus' words in Matthew 6:16-18 tell us about fasting?
- 3) The wearing of sackcloth denotes grief, self-humiliation, and submission to authority. In essence, it's about not being comfortable. How does Daniel's preparation for prayer in this area differ from our modern-day preparation for prayer?
- 4) Pastor Brett explained how ashes can be a reminder of our "death" and sorrow for our sins. Why should sorrow for our sins be a major element of preparing to enter into prayer?

#### **Daniel's disposition before prayer (v. 4)**

- 1) Jesus is our friend, but still God. Do you ever find yourself talking to God in an unbecoming way, more casual than is due His holiness? How can Matthew 6:9 help us as we enter into prayer?
- 2) Conversely, are you so formal that you don't feel an intimate connection?
- 3) Do you often drift away into other thoughts during prayer, or are you pretty consistent in remaining focused?

#### **Daniel's confession by prayer (v. 5-15)**

In Daniel's case, he focused on the sins of his nation and their departure from God's Word. Pastor Brett said that Daniel took ownership, personally owning what his nation had done.

- 1) How easy is it for us to disconnect ourselves from the sins of our nation and forget that we are sinners too? (Luke 18:10-14, 1 John 1:5-10)
- 2) Do you often think to pray and confess the sins of our nation?
- 3) What are some passages in God's Word that warn of what happens to a nation that ignores Him and acts wickedly?

#### **Daniel's supplication through prayer (v. 16-19)**

This is what Daniel asks for, letting his requests be made known to God.

- 1) We tend to think of prayer as the things we ask for, but Daniel's example shows us how brief his supplication was in relation to his overall prayer. What percentage of your prayer time is spent asking for "things" versus time spent in worship and repentance?

- 2) Read Lamentations 3:22-26. We don't ask for God's mercy and intervention because we deserve it. We ask because of who God is. While we, like Israel, deserve judgment from our righteous and holy God, this passage sheds more light on the character and heart of God. Why is it that God doesn't always give us what we rightly deserve?
- 3) Though we may ask for what our heart desires, ultimately, we are to seek God's will in every matter (Matthew 6:10). As you have matured as a Christ follower, do you find it easier to believe and trust that God's will is the better plan?

**Daniel's perception from prayer (v. 20-23)**

The first part of Gabriel's message was that Daniel was heard and greatly beloved.

- 1) When you pray, do you ever consider that you have an audience with the King of the universe and that you are heard? How does Hebrews 4:15-16 support this truth?
- 2) As you approach the Lord in prayer, do you do so with the certainty that you are greatly beloved by Him? Is this a truth you have struggled with?
- 3) God gave Daniel more than he was praying for. Daniel was praying about the 70 years of captivity, yet God expanded his vision to include the prophecy of 70 weeks. Can you recall a time when you were asking God for one thing, and He unexpectedly gave you insight beyond what you were seeking?