

Confession

Living in a Foreign Land – Message 7
March 10, 2019

I. Introduction: We return again to our series, *Living in a Foreign Land*.

A. Daniel, who is now likely about 81, has lived as an exile in Babylon since his teens.

1. He shows us how to live in a culture that is growing ever-more resistant and antagonistic toward our faith, our values and our morals.
2. Theme verse: Daniel 9:20 (NLT)—*I went on praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people, pleading with the LORD my God... [for Jerusalem, His holy mountain].*
3. Daniel knew that the Jewish people were separated from God by their sin, so he confessed this rebellion, then asked for forgiveness, restoration and return to Israel.

B. **Background** (Daniel 9:1-3; C/R: Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

1. Daniel 9:1-2 (NLT)—¹*It was the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede [538 BC], the son of Ahasuerus, who became king of the Babylonians [general of Persian king Cyrus].*
²*During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of the LORD [Yahweh, used 7X, only in this chapter, emphasizing God's covenant relationship to His people] as revealed to Jeremiah the prophet, that Jerusalem must lie desolate for seventy years. [Jer 25:11–12; 29:10]*
2. While reading Jeremiah, Daniel realized that the seventy years of desolation (exile) were almost up (first Jews taken captive 67 years earlier, in 605 BC).
3. Daniel 9:3 (NLT)—³*So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with Him in prayer and fasting. I also wore rough burlap and sprinkled myself with ashes [Hebrew expression of humility, sorrow and mourning for his people's sin].*
4. Daniel prayed for God to restore Jerusalem and to return the exiles to their homeland.
5. APP.: When we feel separated from God, do we ask Him to reveal our rebellion, to display our disobedience, so we can confess our sin and be restored to Him?
6. From Daniel, we can learn how to pray to God so that He hears and responds.

II. Essentials of prayer:

A. **#1 - Adoration for God.** (Daniel 9:4; C/R: Matthew 6:9; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 10:23)

1. Daniel 9:4 (NLT)—⁴*I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, You are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill Your covenant and keep Your promises of unfailing love to those who love You and obey Your commands.*
2. Daniel's prayer began with praise for the character of God who faithfully kept His covenantal promises to bless and love those who loved Him and demonstrated it through their obedience. (Connection between love and obedience; Jn. 14:15)
3. Daniel's prayer reflected his relationship with God: how he viewed God, what he appreciated about his Lord.
4. When we pray, do we praise God's character of God or do we merely make requests?
5. APP.: What do your prayers reveal about your relationship with God, your awareness, your appreciation, the level of your intimacy? (Matt. 6:9; 2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 10:23)

Another essential of prayer is the...

B. **#2 - Admission of sin.** (Daniel 9:5-10; C/R: Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:8-9)

1. Daniel 9:5-6 (NLT)—⁵ *“But we have sinned and done wrong. We have rebelled against You and scorned Your commands and regulations. ⁶ We have refused to listen to Your servants the prophets, who spoke on Your authority to our kings and princes and ancestors and to all the people of the land. [2 Chron.36:15-16]*
2. Daniel confessed that he and the people (“we”) had sinned greatly by breaking God’s law, but also ignoring the warnings received from God’s prophets. (2 Peter 1:20-21)
3. Daniel 9:7-11a (NLT)—⁷ *“Lord, You are in the right; but as You see, our faces are covered with shame. This is true of all of us, including the people of Judah and Jerusalem and all Israel, scattered near and far [exiled], wherever You have driven us because of our disloyalty to You. ⁸ O LORD, we and our kings, princes, and ancestors are covered with shame because we have sinned against You. ⁹ But the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against Him. ...”*
4. Daniel did not offer excuses or assert ignorance, or declare that God’s covenant was too demanding; he admitted the shameful disobedience of God’s people.
5. The Jews had been chosen to be God’s beloved and blessed people, to live in the land He provided, but they rebelled, so He scattered them, which caused their shame.
6. APP.: When are sin, do we make excuses (“We’re only human”) and resist anyone (pastors, friends, small group members) who attempts to turn us back to God?

An additional essential of prayer is to...

C. #3 - Accept responsibility for discipline. (Daniel 9:11b-16; C/R: Leviticus 26:40-42;

1 Kings 8:33–34; Hebrews 12:5–6)

1. Daniel 9:11-14 (NLT)—¹¹ *“All Israel has disobeyed Your instruction and turned away, refusing to listen to Your voice. So now the solemn curses and judgments written in the Law of Moses [Lev.26:14-45; Dt.28:15-68], the servant of God, have been poured down on us because of our sin. ¹² You have kept Your word and done to us and our rulers exactly as You warned. Never has there been such a disaster as happened in Jerusalem. ¹³ Every curse written against us in the Law of Moses has come true. Yet we have refused to seek mercy from the LORD our God by turning from our sins and recognizing His truth. ¹⁴ Therefore, the LORD has brought upon us the disaster He prepared. The LORD our God was right to do all of these things, for we did not obey Him.*
2. Daniel declared to God that Israel violated His covenant, so they were rightfully punished through destruction of Jerusalem and their exile (Lev.26:14-15; Dt.28:15-68)
3. If Israel had obeyed their covenant with God, He would have blessed them (Psalm 81:11-16), but because they rebelled, He was faithful to His Word to discipline them.
4. Perhaps worse than the sins that brought God’s punishment, was their refusal to repent after being taken captive; instead, they prayed for judgment against Babylon (Ps.137).
5. Daniel knew that God was not through with Israel; His discipline proved His love for His people. (Heb.12:5-6; Prov.3:11-12)
6. Daniel reminded God of His past mercies, essentially saying that He had invested too much in them to abandon them in Babylon and let unbelievers ridicule them and Him!
7. Daniel 9:15-16 (NLT)—¹⁵ *“O Lord our God, You brought lasting honor to Your name by rescuing Your people from Egypt in a great display of power. But we have sinned and are full of wickedness. ¹⁶ In view of all Your faithful mercies, Lord, please turn Your furious anger away from your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain. All the neighboring nations mock Jerusalem and Your people because of our sins and the sins of our ancestors.”*

8. APP.: When God convicts us of sin, do we offer excuses or blame others for our actions?

An important essential of prayer is...

D. #4 - Ask for assistance. (Daniel 9:17-19; C/R: Micah 7:18; John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15)

1. Daniel 9:17-19 (NLT)—¹⁷ *“O our God, hear Your servant’s prayer! Listen as I plead. For Your own sake, Lord, smile again on Your desolate sanctuary.*
¹⁸ *“O my God, lean down and listen to me. Open Your eyes and see our despair. See how Your city—the city that bears Your name—lies in ruins. We make this plea, not because we deserve help, but because of Your mercy.*
¹⁹ *“O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, listen and act! For Your own sake, do not delay, O my God, for Your people and Your city bear Your name.”*
2. Daniel asked God for mercy to end the exile and return his people to their homeland for *His own sake*, to glorify His own name, because His people did not deserve His help!
3. God’s mercy is *not* giving us what we deserve; His grace is giving us what we *don’t* deserve. (Mic.7:18-20; Jn.15:7; 1 Jn.5:14-15)
4. From reading Jeremiah, Daniel knew there was hope for Israel: Jeremiah 29:10–14 (NLT)—¹⁰ *This is what the LORD says: “You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² In those days when you pray, I will listen. ¹³ If you look for Me wholeheartedly, you will find Me. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” says the LORD. “I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land.”* [Memory verse: Jer.29:11.]
5. APP.: Daniel pleaded the character of God in his prayer for mercy, do we pray that way?
6. The next year, Persian King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jewish people to return to Judea (Ezra 1:1-4), rebuild a new temple (Isa.44:28) and restore worship.

A crucial essential of prayer is...

5. Anticipate God’s answer. (Daniel 9:20-27; C/R: Matthew 24:15-22; John 19:15; 1 John 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:3) [God will answer our prayers!]

1. Daniel 9:20-23 (NLT)—²⁰ *I went on praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people [affirming God’s character], pleading with the LORD my God for Jerusalem, His holy mountain. ²¹ As I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision [ch.8], came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice [3 pm]. ²² He explained to me, “Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding. ²³ The moment you began praying, a command was given. And now I am here to tell you what it was, for you are very precious to God. [God will always tell us what we mean to Him!] Listen carefully so that you can understand the meaning of your vision.*
2. There is much debate about the following section which deals with the timing of significant events in the future.
3. One important difference in interpreting these numbers is whether they are actual or symbolic; another discussion is what specific historic events are being referred to.
4. Daniel 9:24-226a (NLT)—²⁴ *“A period of seventy sets of seven [years, 490 years or a perfect number] has been decreed for your people and your holy city to finish their rebellion, to put an end to their sin, to atone for their guilt, to bring in everlasting*

righteousness [Jer.23:5–6; 1Jn.2:2], to confirm the prophetic vision, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. [Or the Most Holy One, temple or Jesus] ²⁵ Now listen and understand! Seven sets of seven [49 years] plus sixty-two sets of seven [483 years] will pass from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem [Cyrus in 538 BC, 2 Chron.36:23; Ezra1:2-4; Isa.44:28 or later Persian king, Artaxerxes, in 458 BC; Ezra 7:12-26] until a ruler—the Anointed One [Heb. messiah, Jesus]—comes. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, despite the perilous times.

²⁶ *“After this period of sixty-two sets of seven [134 years], the Anointed One will be killed [33 AD; Is.53:8], appearing to have accomplished nothing, and a ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple [Roman general Titus in 70 AD] because of the people’s rejection of the Messiah. (Lk.19:41-44; Jn.19:15)*

5. The next section refers to the Antichrist (man of lawlessness; 2 Thes.2:3) who is compared to Greek ruler, Antiochus Epiphanies. (Two fulfillments of prophecy.)
6. Daniel 9:26b-27 (NLT)—^{26b} *The end will come with a flood, and war and its miseries are decreed from that time to the very end. ²⁷ The ruler [Antichrist] will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. [great tribulation; Rev.7:14] And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration [Heb. abomination of desolation], until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him.” [Destruction of the Antichrist.]*
7. The *abomination of desolation* occurred in 167 BC when Antiochus set up an altar to Zeus and sacrificed a pig (unclean animal) on the altar of burnt offerings in the temple.
8. In the end times, the Antichrist will establish a covenant with Israel, then break it by forcing worship of a statue in the temple (an abomination; Rev.13:14-15), beginning the worst persecution of believers (great tribulation), but also preceding the imminent return of Jesus! (Matt.24:15-22; Mk.13:14-20; Lk.21:36)
9. APP.: What should we do? Pray like Daniel and prepare for the Lord’s return by spreading His Word while there is still time! Rest in the truth that God will prevail!
 - Counselors
 - **Memory verse:** Jeremiah 29:11