

Sermon Series: "Teach Us To Pray"—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN----3/17/2002

Title: "Pray for our forgiveness"

Text: Daniel 9: 1-19

Intro: *Ills.: Connections in High Places*---descriptor of the role of an intercessor/advocate

Theme: Praying for personal forgiveness or being called upon to pray for another's forgiveness both find their power and purpose through Jesus who has opened up the throne of grace through His name.

***The setting (Print And Read Daniel 9: 1-3)***

- A set of changing circumstances gave rise to hope and fear in Daniel
  1. Daniel, now 80+, battle tested prayer warrior, saw ruin of Jerusalem, deportation, personal trials, wavering remnant
  2. ***His hope*** for God's people after 70 year captivity---reminder of Jeremiah's promise (70 years and out-2Chr36:21)(2)
  3. ***His fear***--- the assimilation of the "*faithful remnant*" into the pagan Babylonian/Persian culture
- Believers, set squarely in the midst of today's pagan culture, find themselves wondering with Jesus, "*However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*" *Luke 18:8*
  1. World events which have driven people to their knees—maybe for the first time
  2. A pluralistic society in which Jesus is one of many choices on the religious smorgasbord for unbeliever **AND** believer
- The dual role of a praying believer in a pagan world
  1. Depending on the Lord as one needing ***grace*** for personal fallenness and ***mercy*** for overwhelming circumstances
  2. Interceding for your world as one redeemed by Christ Jesus to be part of the "*priesthood of all believers*"
  3. "*However, you are chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, people who belong to God. You were chosen to tell about the excellent qualities of God, who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not God's people, but now you are. Once you were not shown mercy, but now you have been shown mercy.*"  
*1 Peter 2:9-10*

***How to go about your role as an intercessor/prayer warrior***

- Come with humbleness of heart (**Print and read Daniel 9: 3-4**)
  1. There is no room for self-righteousness in the hallways of God's throne of grace
  2. ***Ills.: Perspective on humility***
  3. Daniel not only acted humbled, he also spoke and thought humbly before the Lord
  4. Taking on ***a heart of spiritual fasting*** before the Lord
  5. **PRINT AND READ ISAIAH 58: 3-9**
- Call sin---a sin---and then ask for mercy (**Print and read Daniel 9: 5-14**)
  1. In our ***politically correct world*** we excuse rebellious, evil behavior with such innocuous labels
  2. Daniel called it what it was ***twisted*** (iniquity), ***evil*** (wicked), ***treasonous*** (rebellion), ***a broken vertical relationship, disobedience*** (have not listened), ***unfaithfulness*** (contrasted to God's faithfulness)
  3. "*Although they know God's judgment that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do these things but also approve of others who do them.*" *Romans 1:32*
  4. When we get serious about sin and asking for forgiveness, God is earnest about forgiving and delivering us from it
  5. ***Ills.: Serious repentance***
- Plead your case not on the ***merits of the case*** but on the ***mercy of the court*** (**Print and read Daniel 9: 15-19**)
  1. Based on God's past and present deliverance
    - Old Testament believers saw their relationship with God thru the frame of reference of the deliverance from Egypt
    - New Testament believers see their relationship with God thru the frame of reference of Jesus and the

cross/tomb

2. For His name sake not ours (vs.17,18 “For your own sake,” “called by your name”)
  - What is the motive for asking for another’s forgiveness—is it for God’s glory or something else?
  - “*Everything you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*” Col. 3:17
3. Be specific—in your confession and in your request
  - Daniel asked for God to listen, pardon, pay attention (never leave), and act
  - Are you being “honest to God” about what your request is for the other for whom you are praying?

### **Connections in High Places**

In April 2001, in the midst of Israeli/Arab conflict, a motorcade carrying the Security Service Chief of Gaza came under bullet fire from Israeli troops. The frightened security official called Yasir Arafat from his car for help. Arafat, in turn called the U.S. Ambassador, who then called the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Colin Powell then phoned Ariel Sharon, the Israeli prime minister, who ordered the shooting to stop immediately. And it did. The Security Chief’s connections eventually saved his life. In a similar way, Christians have a divine connection to the ultimate power of the universe that can make a world of difference.

### **Perspective on Humility**

Winston Churchill was once asked, "Doesn't it thrill you to know that every time you make a speech, the hall is packed to overflowing?" "It's quite flattering," replied Sir Winston. "But whenever I feel that way, I always remember that if instead of making a political speech I was being hanged, the crowd would be twice as big."

### **Serious Repentance**

A little boy just got saved and sat on a bench next to old man who looked upset. The little boy said to the man, "Sir, do you need to get saved? The man startled said abruptly, "I'll tell you I've been a Deacon in this church for over 30 years and Chairman of Deacons for 15 years." The little boy responded, "Sir, it don't matter what you done, Jesus loves you and He'll still save you!"

### **Daniel 9:1-19**

Xerxes' son Darius, who was a Mede by birth, was made ruler of the kingdom of Babylon. <sup>2</sup>In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from the Scriptures the number of years that Jerusalem would remain in ruins. The LORD had told the prophet Jeremiah that Jerusalem would remain in ruins for 70 years. <sup>3</sup>So I turned to the Lord God and looked to him for help. I prayed, pleaded, and fasted in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>4</sup>I prayed to the LORD my God. I confessed and said, "Lord, you are great and deserve respect as the only God. You keep your promise and show mercy to those who love you and obey your commandments. <sup>5</sup>We have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly, rebelled, and turned away from your commandments and laws. <sup>6</sup>We haven't listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, leaders, ancestors, and all the common people. <sup>7</sup>You, Lord, are righteous. But we—the men of Judah, the citizens of Jerusalem, and all the Israelites whom you scattered in countries near and far—are still ashamed because we have been unfaithful to you. <sup>8</sup>We, our kings, leaders, and ancestors are ashamed because we have sinned against you, LORD. <sup>9</sup>"But you, Lord our God, are compassionate and forgiving, although we have rebelled against you. <sup>10</sup>We never listened to you or lived by the teachings you gave us through your servants the prophets. <sup>11</sup>All Israel has ignored your teachings and refused to listen to you. So you brought on us the curses you swore in an oath, the curses written in the Teachings of your servant Moses. We sinned against you. <sup>12</sup>So you did what you said you would do to us and our rulers by bringing a great disaster on us. Nowhere in the world has anything ever happened like what has happened to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>This entire disaster happened to us, exactly as it was written in Moses' Teachings. LORD our God, we never tried to gain your favor by turning from our wrongs and dedicating ourselves to your truth. <sup>14</sup>So you were prepared to bring this disaster on us. LORD our God, you are righteous in everything you do. But we never listened to you. <sup>15</sup>"Lord our God, you brought your people out of Egypt with your strong hand and made yourself famous even today. We have sinned and done evil things. <sup>16</sup>Lord, since you are very righteous, turn your anger and fury away from your city, Jerusalem, your holy mountain. Jerusalem and your people are insulted by everyone around us

because of our sins and the wicked things our ancestors did. <sup>17</sup>"Our God, listen to my prayer and request. For your own sake, Lord, look favorably on your holy place, which is lying in ruins. <sup>18</sup>Open your ears and listen, my God. Open your eyes and look at our ruins and at the city called by your name. We are not requesting this from you because we are righteous, but because you are very compassionate. <sup>19</sup>Listen to us, Lord. Forgive us, Lord. Pay attention, and act. Don't delay! Do this for your sake, my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."

### **Isaiah 58:3-9**

Why have we fasted if you are not aware of it? Why have we inflicted pain on ourselves if you don't pay attention? Don't you see that on the days you fast, you do what you want to do? You mistreat all your workers. <sup>4</sup>Don't you see that when you fast, you quarrel and fight and beat your workers? The way you fast today keeps you from being heard in heaven. <sup>5</sup>Is this the kind of fasting I have chosen? Should people humble themselves for only a day? Is fasting just bowing your head like a cattail and making your bed from sackcloth and ashes? Is this what you call fasting? Is this an acceptable day to the LORD? <sup>6</sup>This is the kind of fasting I have chosen: Loosen the chains of wickedness, untie the straps of the yoke, let the oppressed go free and break every yoke. <sup>7</sup>Share your food with the hungry, take the poor and homeless into your house, and cover them with clothes when you see them naked. Don't refuse to help your relatives. <sup>8</sup>Then your light will break through like the dawn, and you will heal quickly. Your righteousness will go ahead of you, and the glory of the LORD will guard you from behind. <sup>9</sup>Then you will call, and the LORD will answer. You will cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am!"