**Daniel’s Prayer for Forgiveness**

Dan. 9:1-4

Introduction:

1. Prayer is an important part of the Christian’s life, but no prayer is of any more importance than the prayer for forgiveness.

2. Most often we think of prayer as an individual matter, involving me and my relationship to God.

3. But in the prayer of Daniel there are broader concerns, matters concerning the people of God as a group. While Daniel personally may have been faithful, his people as a whole were unfaithful.

4. Daniel and his people are in Babylonian captivity, but God has promised their release. That time is approaching and so Daniel prays.

Discussion:

I. His prayer is founded upon God’s faithfulness (2-4).

 A. God had revealed the number of years they would be in captivity.

 1. Daniel knew that God would be loyal to His promise of only 70 years of captivity.

 Thus he prayed.

 2. He knew that God ruled in the affairs of men. He rules over the kings of the world.

 He is active in communicating and interacting with men. He is real!

 B. Daniel prayed because he recognized God as keeping His covenant.

 1. The great contrast throughout the prayer is the recognition that God keeps His

 covenant even though His people do not.

 2. His covenant loyalty allows for confession and forgiveness, even though it is

 undeserved.

 3. Daniel is clear in his understanding that God is gracious. Without this there is no

 motive for an appeal for forgiveness.

 C. Without such recognitions/realities prayer is “just pretend.”

II. Daniel confessed “national” sin (9:5-6).

 A. The “national” sin (7-8).

 1. Involved Judah, Jerusalem and all Israel.

 2. It also involved those nearby and those far away.

 3. Our kings, our princes and our fathers.

 B. The contrast (7-14).

 1. Righteousness belongs to God; to us open shame.

 2. Compassion and forgiveness belongs to God; to us rebellion.

 3. To us belongs disobedience and transgression against the voice of the Lord and

 His teachings, against His law.

 4. If we look at God’s people today; this congregation; the brotherhood of believers,

 what do we see? Unforgiveness, disunity, failures in leadership, lack of biblical

 knowledge, diminished evangelism, diminished interest in the things of God,

 materialism, selfish focus????

 5. And as we pray are these considerations or is our only consideration for our own

 personal salvation?

 C. The result for Israel was a national curse and calamity as described in the law of

 Moses (Deut. 27:15-26).

 1. God has confirmed His word.

 2. “But we have not sought the favor of the Lord by turning from our iniquity and

 giving attention to Your truth.”

 a. Repentance is the demand. Turning from iniquity. No mere, “I am sorry,” but a

 turning from iniquity.

 b. The turn from iniquity is evidenced by giving attention to Your truth.

 3. “Therefore the Lord is righteous in bringing calamity on us.” How many

 acknowledge this? Our tendency is to make God out to be the bad guy. We don’t

 like to see ourselves as we really are.

III. Daniel appeals for forgiveness on the basis of the Lord’s goodness expressed in the covenant relationship (15-19).

 A. The covenant relationship is evidenced by God bringing the people out of Egypt, but

 we have sinned, we have been wicked.

 1. You have been faithful to us.

 2. We have been unfaithful to you.

 B. Like a betrayed husband God has been angry.

 1. There is complete acceptance of responsibility—“because of our sins and the

 iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach.”

 2. There is no blaming God, and I might add there is no blaming others. Sometimes

 people abandon their relationship with God and blame others (Ezek. 18:2). “You

 sinned by not giving me enough attention. Maybe that is true. Maybe I do feel guilt

 feelings, but does that justify your abandonment of the Lord? Daniel confesses our

 sins and the iniquities of our fathers. Maybe we need to confess one another’s sins

 and turn from our unfaithfulness to Him.

 C. We cannot come before God on the basis of any merits of our own, but on account of

 His great compassion.

 1. We have nothing to offer.

 2. The Lord has everything to give.

 3. Daniel appeals for the Lord to take action, not because the people deserve it, but

 because it establishes the greatness of God’s name. He is gracious.

IV. God’s response to Daniel’s prayer (20-23).

 A. Gabriel was dispatched with a message of comfort for Daniel.

 B. It involved a message of the coming Messiah.

 1. There were difficult times ahead.

 2. But the Messiah would come. In Him men would have hope.

Conclusion:

1. Perhaps we need to be more like Daniel in identifying ourselves with sin so that we might receive the righteousness of God.

2. It is His compassion, His covenant, His forgiveness, His loyalty that delivers us.

3. We must accept responsibility, repent, confess, and seek His forgiveness and the favor of the Lord by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to His truth.