

Daniel Fast

by John McGregor

John McGregor's sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer, fasting, and the character of Daniel as a model for spiritual growth and intimacy with God.

Duration: 27:44

Scripture: Daniel 9:20

Topics: "Fasting", "Prayer"

Description

John McGregor emphasizes the significance of prayer and fasting through the example of Daniel, who was esteemed by God for his dedication to the Word and his fervent prayer life. He recounts the recent spiritual awakenings in Peru, highlighting the importance of family reconciliation and the transformative power of prayer. McGregor encourages the congregation to engage in a 'Daniel Fast' to deepen their relationship with God, emphasizing that true humility and surrender lead to spiritual breakthroughs. He reminds the church that their best days are ahead if they commit to seeking God earnestly.

Transcript

...interviews a couple years ago, so that's where I first got to know them, and it always made me smile that when you would talk to people about Arviat, they'd get this distant look in their face like, well, you know, maybe Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Calgary, but not a way up there. And here are the folk that God sent to continue to build his church. Thank you for praying for me over the last two Sundays.

I've been in Peru, and I had an encounter with the sun last Saturday, so I'm not wearing makeup, not quite as white as I usually am. Very briefly, just to say, in the two services, the first Sunday, more than 60 people trusted the Lord as Savior, and in the two services last Sunday, just slightly over a hundred trusted the Lord as Savior. And that's also the greater family of the Alliance, and through the week we met with about 300 pastors and their wives, and then more than 400 pastors at General Assembly on Thursday and Friday of last week.

Last Sunday morning, at the time of the invitation, it was interesting to watch a family of seven people. In the smallest response that I had, invitation-wise, 39 people came forward in that service, but seven of them were one family, and it was thrilling to watch, just to see as the pastors came. You know, most of us have a family, or people in the family who don't know the Lord, or are not walking with the Lord, and here is a whole family together.

And it was interesting to see the reconciliation, not just with God, but with one another. And it was a lot of Spanish excitement going on, and I don't speak Spanish, but I gleaned that the Lord was doing some special things between children and parents, and between husband and wife, immediately that they had trusted Christ. Everybody wanted things to be right, and that's so powerful, just to see.

Let's take our Bibles and turn for a few moments before we come to the Lord's table, to Daniel chapter 9, and I'm going to read verse 20 through 23, and then over in chapter 10 I'll read verse 18. I want to comment on these scriptures for a few moments and bring a challenge to our hearts this morning. Daniel chapter 9 verse 20 says, while speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill, while I was still in prayer, Gabriel the man I had seen in the earlier vision came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.

He instructed me and said to me, Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore consider the message and understand the vision.

And just over in chapter 10 and verse 18 you'll find these words. Again, the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. Do not be afraid, O man, highly esteemed, he said.

Peace, be strong now, be strong. Went to me, I was strengthened and said, speak my Lord, since you have given me strength. Father, this is your will, and our hearts long for a continuing encounter with you, and as we rejoice in the things that have been happening in Arivat and Peru, we come, Father, and ask that you would touch us this morning, in these moments, through your word, in Jesus' name.

Amen. I want to just speak for a few moments this morning about this man, Daniel. If you think about his times, the whole system of worship had disintegrated, the temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed, the children of the nation of Israel have been carried away, he was one of them, and everything looked like devastation.

And then God begins to raise up his people. You see, he never forgets his people. And some said it was a week, and I want you to know God doesn't forget you in that tough week.

He raises his people up. But there's a little statement here about Daniel in both of these sections that we read that says, you're a man highly esteemed. And I want to just stop for a moment and consider this.

You see, we often highly esteem people. Somebody who touches our lives or who impacts us in some way, we highly esteem them. And then if they disappoint us, we kind of lessen the esteem.

And no matter who people are, they will disappoint you in some ways at some time, without a doubt, because that's part of being human. But it is said here that Daniel is a man highly esteemed. And I wondered, what is it that would make someone highly esteemed? Not by man, but by God.

Because you see, I believe, Glen Cairn, that the best days of this church are still ahead. But I believe the Lord wants to move us into this place of what it is that matters to him. And when you look at the life of Daniel and just think about his character, what is it that causes him to be esteemed by God? And just quickly this morning, let me share four things that come out of the Scriptures.

And I'll give you the reference, but for time's sake, I won't go to read it. So if you take notes, you can look them up along the way. First of all, you see Daniel is a man of the Word of God.

In verses 1 through 4 of chapter 9, and I hope that you had a chance to read it ahead of time, you see that he says in verse 2, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures according to the Word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet. He was a man who was in the Word and he understood God's timetable. You ever feel like you're in God's waiting room and things just will not click and happen, and it seems as if no matter how hard you push, things just can't seem to get there? Well, that's when we're in God's waiting room.

And it's a good place to be, and don't be upset when there aren't forthcoming answers from God. He is trustworthy. You can wait upon Him and know that His timing is perfect and His sovereignty is wonderful, and when He causes things to fit together, it just rolls on in a tremendous and powerful way.

His worship of God is driven by the Word of God, and you'll see that in verse 3. And that's a good thing for you and I to remember. When we meet God in His Word day by day, it causes us to worship Him. And unlike man, He will not disappoint us.

And He did not just read the Word, but He lived it. It caused life change in His heart. I was talking to somebody in Peru struggling with a lifetime sin, and he said, I can't get rid of it.

It's been in my mind and my heart since I was a teenage boy. And I said to him, do you want to know how to get rid of it? Fill your heart and your mind with the Word of God, because Jesus said it is the Word of God that cleanses. Now you are clean through the Word that I have spoken unto you.

And you know, He is the one who can do that. And indeed, He does do that. God speaks to us through His Word.

One of my friends, Dr. Dennis Nehan from Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, gave a young man a job as a janitor there in his department, a young Muslim lad. And the young man asked Dennis, can I get a Bible? And then one day he said to him, can I come to chapel? And he said, sure, why do you want to come to chapel? He said, well, you know, our God speaks. Dennis said to him, now what do you mean by our God? He said, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I've been reading in the Word. He is our God, yours and mine. It wasn't some great evangelist that led him to Christ.

It was the greatest of all evangelists, the Spirit of God, drawing him through the Word of God. Secondly, Daniel, we see, is a man of prayer. And as you see in this section of chapter 9, 20 through 23, he is praying.

And while he is still praying, the answers are coming. I love that, don't you? While I was still praying. But you'll find in verse 3, it says, so I turned to the Lord and pleaded.

He prayed. And I want us to think about his prayer life, and especially as we come along to one of those important events in the church calendar, the annual meeting coming up on the 22nd. Here's some of the ways that Daniel prayed.

He prayed frequently. In Daniel 6.10, it says he prayed three times a day. And believe it or not, in Peru three years ago, they asked me to teach a session, how often should I pray? And you know, there's a little verse in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 that answers that question.

Do you remember what it says? Pray without ceasing. But when it says that Daniel prayed three times, it means purposefully he set aside time to just meet with the Lord. He prayed biblically.

Daniel 9 and verse 2, again, it was because of the Scriptures. And you'll find so many people throughout life and history who have prayed according to the Scriptures. For instance, George Muller of Bristol, a man who fed thousands of orphans with nothing.

God answered his prayer. But if you examine his life, you'll find he prayed the Scriptures. He would be in the Word of God and take the promises of God and just return them to him.

And you'll see that in the life of people like Moses and others. This thing of praying the Scriptures and believing the Lord for answers. He prayed fervently.

It says he pleaded in verse 3 with the Lord. And in prayer and petition and in fasting. Fervently.

More than just, God bless me and my wife, my brother Joe and his wife, us four and no more. It wasn't that kind of praying. He was fervent before God.

And you know, this word fasting is used here. And there's all kinds of definitions of fasting. But I think one of the best that I have learned over the years is fasting is praying without words.

Fasting is praying without words. It's giving up natural to embrace the supernatural. To come more close and intimate with the Lord.

And in these days, I want to just bring a short challenge to you. In the next two weeks, would you consider doing a Daniel fast? You say, John, what do you mean by that? Well, I'm not asking you to do a total fast. Don't give up everything.

But just for these days, do the basics. Youth, forgive me. And some others forgive me as well.

No pop, junk food, etc. Just the basics. In order to set aside more time to be with him.

No desserts. And those kind of things. Now, I'm smiling because Roberta and I are going to Niger tomorrow.

And it's not likely that we'll have to struggle. Okay. So forgive us.

Apologize in advance for that. But I want to encourage you to think about this. We have some needs as a people of God.

We need his direction. We need his healing touch for some relationships. We need him to move into that hospital room where Tina Hoffman is and touch her body with his healing hand, don't we? We need his loving touch to touch Lorene over here as she struggles with some of those health issues and so on.

Wouldn't it be great to spend two weeks more tightly drawn to the throne of grace in prayer? And there are hidden things that we need victory over. Last Thursday when I spoke to the General Assembly in Peru, I spoke to the pastors about attitudes. And there are those kinds that are just there and they're so hard to break.

But you know, when we get to this kind of praying that Daniel is doing, we've set aside the natural to embrace the supernatural. Now listen, next Sunday there's a potluck and so receive absolution for the

potluck. But maybe you want to give up supper next Sunday and just spend some time with the Lord.

It's a great thing to do. Daniel prayed reverently in Daniel 9 and verse 4. You see, he prays to the Lord my God and confessed. Oh Lord, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant.

You see, he knows who he's coming to meet with. He hasn't forgotten who he's approaching as he comes to the Lord. He prayed penitently confessing his own sin and the sin of his people.

And you know, he was a righteous man. When they tried to find something that they could accuse Daniel of, they couldn't find it except this thing, that he met with God no matter what. So when you think about Daniel confessing his sin, he's a righteous man without question.

But like you and me, he needs a Savior. And I need him today. How about you? And I'll need him tomorrow just as much.

And that's part of the importance of this table as we come as a community of people with needs to the throne of grace to remember him who died for us and who lives for us. He was verbalizing the shortcomings. He was interceding identificationally with the people of God and it's good for us.

To do that. That's why Galatians 6 says, if one person is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual restore him because the next time it might be you. He prayed trusting God's mercy in chapter 9 and 9 through 18.

It's all about the mercy of God. It's not coming on the basis of any other confidence, but on the mercy of God. Not Lord, look at what we could do, what we could become or anything like that.

But oh God, you are merciful. And so I can come to you. All of the things that are there he brings to the Lord because of his mercy.

He prays specifically in verses 16 through 19. He brings specific requests to the Lord and he prays persistently. He's making solid arguments.

Lord, you brought your people out of Egypt, he says in verse 15, and you're not going to abandon them now. And you know, as we pray, let's not forget that there is a heritage that comes to us as those who belong to the Lord Jesus. He did not save us.

We might fail and fail miserably time after time after time, but he saved us that we might come to be those who are surrendered to him, full of his Spirit, able to overcome in his strength. And oh how we thank God for it. You think about Daniel, he was a humble man.

You look again in chapter 10 with me and I'll just quickly look at verse 17. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my Lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe. Look at the posture that he has as he is before the Lord.

Even though he is highly esteemed by God, he is there so humbly before the Lord. And God-fearing is a word that comes to my mind when I think about Daniel. He's humble before the Lord and his prayer is heard.

In these next two weeks, wouldn't it be a wonderful thing to come before God in a prayer life, in a position like this, and see some breakthroughs, see some people that we have longed to come to Christ actually come there, see some relationships that we want to know God has touched, healed, see some lives set

free, and so on. Oh, my friends, this is the place, I believe, that the Lord says, come and let's meet and let's do business together. There are times when he has advanced to the highest position in the land and he's humble.

Just a young lad who was dragged away from his home and stuck in a foreign place, but God lifted him. And there are times in his life where he is under great adversity. I love the story of Daniel and the lions.

Roberta and I were privileged to watch a pride of young lions one day, and they brought a dead cow carcass to them, and in 11 minutes and 10 seconds there was nothing. Nothing. I mean absolutely nothing.

One of the few Spanish words I learned over the last 10 days, nada. But when Daniel, under that kind of adversity, is in the lion's den, he didn't defend himself. He didn't say, oh king, don't you put me in there.

Those lions will eat me. Oh, look at how these bad guys lined up against me. Oh, God, listen, let me make a defense.

You don't find one word of that. And the king loses sleep, and Daniel doesn't. I wonder if he wasn't curled up with some of those babies in that den.

Could you take your mane out of my face? And the king comes and says, Daniel is your God, Abel? And his response is almost Irish. He says, okay, live forever. Those who plotted against him are those who pay the price.

This is the God that we serve. Daniel was a humble man. Lastly, let me just say that as you consider the character of Daniel, he's a man fully surrendered to the Lord.

Now, I don't very often read things when I'm preaching, as you know. I want to read you something, because people always ask me, John, when you do Revival Meetup, you always talk about dying to self, and living for Christ, and living for the Holy Spirit. What does that look like? And so here's just a few short paragraphs, author unknown, that describe what does it look like when we are fully surrendered to the Lord.

When you are forgotten, or neglected, or purposefully set at nothing, and you don't sting and hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy for Christ, that's dying to self. When your good is evil spoken of, your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient, loving silence, that is dying to self. When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, or any annoyance, when you stand face to face, waste, folly, extravagance, ritual irresponsibility, and endure it all as Jesus endured it, this is dying to self.

When you're content with any food, any offering, any raiment, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption by the will of God, that is dying to self. When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown, that is dying to self. When you can see your brother prosper, and have his needs met, and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit, and feel no envy or question God, when your own needs are far greater, and you're in a more desperate circumstance, that is dying to self.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of lesser than yourself, and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within you, that is dying to self. The last thing the little article says is, are you dead yet? And you know, if we answer it honestly, we would have to say, no. And that's why we all of us need this Savior that we celebrate this morning at the Lord's table.

That's why we need a deeper touch with him. That's why I say to you, Glencairn family, set aside time to meet the Lord in the place of prayer, just humbly, and in his word, and in prayer, dealing with him over these next 14 days. I'll say it again, believe as we become a people in that place, the best days of Glencairn Alliance Church are yet to come.

Father, thank you for your word this morning, for the example of this man Daniel. Lord, we all this morning freely admit we are not where we should be, but by your grace, Lord, and through your Holy Spirit's fullness, you can take us deeper and further into the presence and purpose of the Lord our God. Father, as I pray for us as a community of believers this morning, I pray that you would indeed draw our hearts out in the place of prayer.

Grant to us in these coming days many breakthroughs, personally and corporately as a family. Lord, we're asking that you would mend relationships. We're asking that you would set people free from addictions.

We're asking, Lord, that you would allow us just to become one step more intimate with you, because there is a place close to the heart of God for everyone who is here this morning. Lord, would you continue to bless this word to our hearts, and Holy Spirit, would you be the after speaker? Would you settle in our hearts the things that we can do in order to have a few more minutes with you in the day? In Jesus' name we pray, amen. I want to take us just to the Lord and

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21828.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-mcgregor/daniel-fast/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net