

# Forgive Us!

by Ronald Glass

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*Ronald Glass emphasizes the critical need for prayer and intercession for national revival, drawing lessons from Daniel's example in seeking God's mercy and forgiveness.*

**Duration:** 58:36

**Scripture:** Exodus 34:6-7, Lamentations 3:22-23, Daniel 9:11, Daniel 9:15-17, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the disconnect between the words of the Bible and the actions of believers in the world. He acknowledges that people have rebelled against God, but also highlights the hope of God's forgiveness and compassion. The speaker then goes on to describe the dire state of the nation, with its inheritance given to strangers, children becoming orphans, and the people suffering from various hardships. He concludes by acknowledging God's righteousness and the unfaithfulness of the people. Throughout the sermon, the speaker references the book of Daniel and the self-revelation of God in Exodus 34.

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## Transcript

And speaking of amen, it's so good to see our brother Noel Faustinorio back with his new kidney. And his daughter too, without one kidney. And we're so delighted that God has worked and blessed.

And we've got to keep praying for our brother. That day will come soon when he will be able to, with his wife, return to the Philippines and the church that they love there so very, very much. Well, we're delighted to see you all this morning.

And indeed we had a great day yesterday. Long day, but a wonderful day of watching God's nature, getting to know each other better, eating together like Baptists do so well. And it was a wonderful, wonderful day.

Well, I invite you back to Daniel chapter 9. Now, this morning, Daniel chapter 9. I hate to admit it, but I've had the occasion a few times lately to say I feel like I'm getting old. Well, the fact is we're all getting older. But I'm facing what some of you have already faced and others of you will through the Lord, Terry.

And that is moving out of middle age to senior years of our lives. And one thing I have noticed in many seniors, and I can feel it sometimes in my own mind, and that is we are tempted to become complacent.

Now, what I mean by that is that we look back at our lives and we say, well, I've fought many of life's battles, and frankly, I'm too tired.

I don't want to fight anymore. We get tired more easily than we used to. And that's not just physical, but it's also emotional and perhaps even spiritually as well.

We look at our deteriorating world and we contrast it to the blessed hope of our Lord's return. And sometimes we're simply tempted to say, why bother? Jesus is coming back. I think I've paid my dues.

I've worked. It's time for me to sit back and let somebody else do it all. But I would suggest to all of you seniors and all of you up-and-coming seniors like myself that there is another and probably a better way of looking at the declining condition of God's people, and that is not to see it as an occasion to throw up your hands and say, let somebody else deal with it, but rather as an incentive to pray harder for a spiritual awakening.

And the reason I bring up elderly people in this context is because the text with which we are dealing today centers on the prayer of a senior saint. And so I want you to follow with me today. We are in a series, as you know, on biblical revival.

By now you should understand that revival is a significant theme in the Bible, and particularly in the Old Testament, where we have a number of historical instances of the awakening of God's people. Throughout nearly a millennium and a half, 1,500 years, Israel experienced the frequent alternation of apostasy and revival. They would sin, the nation would fall into spiritual decline, and then God would send a prophet, God would send certain circumstances, and the nation would be revived.

And even when the nation was mired in sin, there were sometimes godly individuals who became intercessors seeking the Lord for spiritual awakening. And that's what we find here in Daniel chapter 9. In this text, we find Daniel is an elderly man. If you do the calculations and follow the historical timelines, we conclude that Daniel was in his early 80s.

From his childhood, he had lived a godly life. God had fitted this young man, who was apparently part of the royal family in Judah, and had fitted this young man for leadership for many years. You remember the story of Daniel's exaltation to authority, having interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

And you remember how, through a long period of time, Daniel demonstrated his godliness. We see it so vividly in the 6th chapter, where Daniel is tempted to give up, really, his godly practices in order to comply with the decree of the king. But you remember how he endured the lion's den, trusted God to keep him, simply because he refused to stop praying three times a day towards Jerusalem.

Well, he has held a prominent position of influence now in the new administration of the Median king, Darius, the son of Ahasuerus. The Medes have just defeated the Babylonians. They have entered the city of Babylon, and they had killed the king there, Belshazzar, and they had set up their authority in the city of Babylon.

And so now, Daniel is living in the first year of the new king, the Median king, named Darius. He has also, however, continued to cherish his Hebrew heritage. All of these years, he hasn't lived in the nation of Israel since he was a young teenager.

But now, at the age of approximately 82, Daniel is still thinking about his Hebrew heritage and the land that he had left behind. And that's why he cares so deeply for the spiritual welfare of this nation. Now, the year is 538 B.C. About 12 years earlier, he had received revelation that is recorded in the previous chapter, chapter 8. It's a prophecy of what was coming for Israel, particularly the rise of the Syrian tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Israel, according to the message of the prophecy that he received in that chapter, Israel is destined for judgment. But, more immediately, Israel can look forward to deliverance. Now, Daniel understood this from reading the words of Jeremiah, which had been written probably 80 or so years earlier.

Jeremiah lived through the defeat of Judah at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. As you remember, he himself was carried into exile in Egypt. Jeremiah had written concerning the end of the captivity of Israel, their expatriation.

Now, he recognized, and this is very interesting when we see it in verse 2, where he says, In the first year of the reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years, which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet. Now, it's interesting to see here that even though the words of Jeremiah were perhaps only 80 years or so old, and perhaps, and we don't know this for sure, Daniel may have just recently come into possession of these manuscripts, and he's reading them. It's interesting that Daniel regards this as the word of the Lord, clearly as revealed scripture.

Now, where was he reading? Well, there are two places that he could have been reading, and maybe both. Jeremiah, chapter 25, verses 11 and 12, which read this way, This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon 70 years. Then it will be when 70 years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation declares the Lord.

Daniel had just seen that take place. The Babylonian kings had been dethroned. There were two at the time.

They were dethroned, and the Medes had installed themselves now as authorities over the land of the Chaldeans. And I will make it, Babylon or Chaldea, an everlasting desolation, and bring upon that land all the words I pronounced against it. All that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.

Now, you turn a few pages to the 29th chapter of Jeremiah, and in the 10th verse we read, For thus says the Lord, when 70 years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill my good word to you, and bring you back to this place. This is what Daniel read. And he got out his calculator, did a little figuring, and realized that the 70 years of exile were just about up.

Israel would be restored to her land soon, but the prophecies that he was receiving from God indicated that there would be sometimes a very severe judgment coming upon Israel. I think there was something else that Daniel knew from the words of the prophets, and that was the words that we've already studied together in this series, the words of Habakkuk the prophet, in Habakkuk chapter 3 verse 2. And this could be Daniel speaking. Listen to Habakkuk's words again.

Lord, I have heard the report about you, and I fear. Judgment is coming. O Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years, between the time now where I am, and for Daniel, that was the impending restoration of Israel back to its land, and the time in the future of coming judgment.

In the middle of these two events, Lord, bring revival to your people. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, in spite of judgment, in wrath, remember mercy.

Now, praying in that spirit, I believe that he also bases the prayer that we are studying today in this ninth chapter upon another passage we have already studied in our series, and that is 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14. And my people who are called by my name, if they humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Daniel chapter 9 verses 1-19 have 2 Chronicles 7-14 written all over it.

This is the biblical basis for Daniel's prayer. Now, in our last study, we heard David praying for personal revival. We studied together as David asked the Lord to search him and to show him his sin and to revive him personally.

But now, Daniel has seen his people's sin, and what he does is he prays for a national revival. Now, my brothers and sisters, this morning, I believe we stand at a critical juncture in the life of our nation, the United States of America, and equally and perhaps even more critical crossroads in the life of evangelical Christianity in America. I've been reading recently in the history of American revivals, and it's interesting to see how God has blessed our nation with revivals time and time again.

That's a history that is not taught in our schools, by the way, but it is a very wonderful record of God's working in America, especially in the first 50 years of the existence of America. There was hardly a time when there wasn't revival somewhere in America from about 17... well, the founding of the nation in 1775-76, in that area, down through around 1825 or so. Now, as we look at our nation today, we realize that for the last half century, our nation has officially excluded God from public life.

We have said that our children cannot read the Bible or pray in the schools. We have essentially pushed out every display of Christianity from government buildings and from the public square. This campaign to root out Bible-believing Christianity from American society continues unabated.

We constantly hear of the virtues of being a tolerant and diverse people. Of course, the one thing that can't be tolerated is biblical Christianity. And that's why I can say that throughout this time, from the early 60s, when the Supreme Court decided these cases, essentially ejecting God from our schools and our public life, from that time, we have had very little evidence of revival.

Now, perhaps revival has never been more urgent than it is today. You say, no, wait a minute, Pastor. There are times where things have been much worse.

If you go back in history, think about the Civil War, where our nation was just about torn apart. The nation could have fallen apart during the Civil War. Well, you read the history of the Civil War, and if you read the whole thing, what you're going to find out is that there was a monumental, powerful, spiritual awakening in the Confederate armies during that time, which I believe is one of the reasons why there is more evangelical Christianity in the South today than there is here in the North.

And so you find that even then there was revival. But in the last 50 years, you're hard-pressed to find any significant awakening in the United States of America. Not only that, as we see today, and this is what is very grieving to me, you read Chapter 1 of the Book of Romans, and you find out that there is a mark upon this nation, upon any nation, when God says, I've given up on it.

And that is the open display and acceptance of homosexuality. If you heard or read the news last night or this morning, I hope you are as grieved as I am to hear our president standing in front of an organization of homosexuals, telling them that their day is coming, that they're going to get their way eventually. They're going to change the don't ask, don't tell policy in the military.

And he, our president, is now in favor of repealing the Defense of Marriage Act, which says that a man and a woman make a marriage, not a man and a man or a woman and a woman. Now our White House is firmly on the side of homosexuality. Ladies and gentlemen, God says in Romans 1, He gave them up.

And this ought to cause us to cry out to God for mercy. How should we pray for corporate revival? For revival in America, for revival in our church. Back to Daniel chapter 9, there are four pairs of contrasts in what may be one of the most eloquent, may I think, is the most eloquent, passionate prayer in Scripture, with the exception of John 17, our Lord's High Priestly Prayer.

Four pairs of contrasts. Let me begin with the first. It's in verses 4-6.

Let me put it in a summary way in Daniel's words. Oh Lord, you are faithful, but we have sinned. You are faithful, but we have sinned.

This prayer is primarily one of confession. It is an amazing prayer, because it is the intercession of one man for an entire nation. When we ask, what can one person possibly do in the interest of revival, the answer is pray.

Now I think that Daniel instinctively knew something that approximately the same time Daniel lived was being written in another prophet, a contemporary of Daniel's, and that is the prophet Ezekiel. Let me read a couple of verses from Ezekiel chapter 22. Listen to what God said to his people through Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 22 verse 30. I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before me for the land, so that I would not destroy it. But I found no one, and thus I have poured out my indignation on them.

I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. Their way I have brought upon their heads, declares the Lord. Back at Mount Sinai, when Aaron made the golden calf, and Israel was dancing around it, one man stood in the gap.

Moses said, destroy me, but save this people. And God saved the nation. One man.

One man. Daniel knew this. Daniel understood the principle.

And it's as though Daniel is saying, even though I am far removed, I am hundreds of miles away from the land, even though my people are scattered around the Middle Eastern world in exile, I am going to be the man who stands in the gap. I am going to pray. I am going to seek God's face for the forgiveness of my people.

Now note here how Daniel prepares himself. Verse 3. I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications with fasting sackcloth and ashes. He is focused like a laser beam upon this.

He put on the sackcloth, the burlap, torn burlap, sat on an ash heap. He fasted. He did all of the external things to demonstrate that he means business with God.

And then he pours out his heart to God. And he begins in verse 4 with a very important principle. And it is this.

We ground our prayer for revival on God's divine nature. I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God who keeps His covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments. He begins with words that magnify the very character of the Almighty, His transcendence, His majesty, His covenant faithfulness, that God keeps His promises, and His enduring love for those who obey Him.

These words serve to set a tone of deep, deep reverence. He knows to whom He is coming. He is approaching the living God of heaven, the Creator, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David and Solomon and all the great prophets.

This is the God to whom He has come. These words remind us that when we come to God, we need, as we pray, to realize who it is to whom we pray and to approach Him with the utmost reverence. Secondly, not only do we ground our prayer for revival on God's divine nature, but we focus our prayer for revival on our own human failures.

And that's what he does here in verses 5 and 6. Listen to this, as he simply piles one word on top of another to express the sinfulness of his people. And he says, he's speaking on behalf of the nation. We have sinned.

We have committed iniquity. We have acted wickedly. We have rebelled.

We have turned aside from your commandments and ordinances. We have not listened to your servants, the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings and our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land. How many different ways can you say we've sinned? Daniel strains language in order to pile term upon term for sin.

Without any question, the burden of Daniel's confession is, Lord, you have spoken and we are guilty. We have defiled the very character of you who are the great and awesome covenant-keeping and loving God. We have sinned against you.

You are faithful. We have sinned. That's the first contrast, pair of contrasts.

Now, here's the second. We find it in verses 7 and 8. Let's put it this way. O Lord, you are righteous, but we have been unfaithful.

Notice in verses 7 and 8, righteousness belongs to you, O Lord, but to us open shame. The key thought of these two verses is the thought of shame. Daniel confesses for the whole nation that he and they are ashamed.

To us open shame, as it is this day. To the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel. Those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which you have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against you.

Verse 7, the Lord possesses righteousness. Righteousness belongs to you. This is by virtue of his nature as God.

Again, in this second set of contrasts, we see him going back to the character of God again. Lord, you are righteous. There is no sin.

There is no stain of unrighteousness in you. You are the very standard of righteousness. Therefore, our disobedience, our rebellion, our sin is not your fault.

It is a violation of your holy and righteous character. The Lord possesses righteousness, verse 7. But, in the rest of verse 7 and verse 8, God's people practice unfaithfulness. He speaks of those who are far away in all the countries to which you have driven them.

When we read the account of Ezra, the book of Ezra, we realize that there were not very many, comparatively speaking, there were not very many Jews who returned from exile and went back to their homeland. Why is that? Because the vast majority of the Jewish people who had been scattered first to Assyria and the Assyrian Empire, then had been deported to Babylon, and others who had scattered other places, these Jewish people who were living around the world had become comfortable citizens of their new homes. They had established homes, raising families, doing business in other countries.

And when the invitation came to go back to their land, there was no interest in that. They were comfortable. They were settled.

They didn't want to uproot their lives and go back to a pile of ruins to try to build that again. How can we take our children and our grandchildren and go back there? We're prospering here. And so they lived their lives just like Americans do today.

That is, they lived in prosperity and essentially in spiritual unconcern. They didn't care. No wonder Daniel prays for them.

Those who still, those few people who are inhabiting Jerusalem and those who are scattered around the world. Verse 8, Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes, our fathers, because we have sinned against you. From top to bottom, from kings and princes, from fathers to sons, the whole nation has been unfaithful.

And that's why they are covered in shame. Not only before God, but also before the world. The Jews had become, to use one of the Old Testament terms, a byword.

They had become a proverb. They had become the butt of the world's jokes. They still are today.

They are a hated people, a ridiculed people. They are a people who bear shame before the world. This was always a terrible predicament for God's people.

And yet God had promised Israel that if they disobeyed him, this is one of the outcomes. This would be one of the consequences of their disobedience. Yes, but now what about us in the church today? It's a terrible predicament for God's people to find ourselves ashamed, and yet look at the ridicule to which evangelical Christianity is being held up today.

It's one of the reasons that we put in your bulletins every other week, that little What in the World insert. I hope you read those. Read the ones today.

Two more instances of homosexuality being promoted. And you also read some of the other things in there, and you realize the ridicule and the scorn with which American evangelical Christianity is held by

the so-called influential, powerful, and beautiful people in this nation. I don't know if it moves you, but we should be looking at this and saying, Lord, we are ashamed.

We are ashamed to be treated this way. We who worship the living God, we who are indwelt by the Spirit of God, saved by the blood of the Son of God, the very creator of the universe, we who are the most privileged people on earth, and we are treated with all of this shame. Why? Because we have failed to live our faith.

Because our faith has been so anemic before the world. So Daniel prays in that spirit, O Lord, you are righteous, but we have been unfaithful. Oh, that we would confess that sin constantly to God.

Lord, we have been unfaithful. And as I think about the United States of America, I'm persuaded that we need to pray this prayer. God gave us a great nation.

He established not only a great nation, but He has given continual outpourings of His Spirit. He made this nation a haven for religious refugees around the world. This nation became the primary sending center of missionaries across the globe.

This nation, which has had so many godly churches and preachers, and yet today has been reduced to, well, in one of those articles, pickpocket Christianity. What a shame. We ought to be utterly humbled and ashamed.

O Lord, you are righteous, but we have been unfaithful. Now let me come to the third set of contrasts. Verses 9-14.

We would say it this way. O Lord, you are forgiving, but we have rebelled. Notice how Daniel begins this paragraph.

To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him. This is an expression of God's self-revelation. Let me take you back again to the 34th chapter of Exodus, when Moses asked for God to reveal His glory, and God did.

Do you remember how God revealed Himself? Here it is. Moses in the cleft of the rock. God's hand over until He passes by.

He removes His hand. Moses sees the backside of the glory of God. He is overwhelmed, and as he does, God says something.

Here's how He reveals Himself. Verse 6. The Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin. When God revealed His essential character, He revealed Himself as good, compassionate, gracious, abounding in faithfulness and truth, and keeping His promises from generation to generation.

A God who forgives. But notice, He also says at the end, and yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations. God is not a moral pushover either.

God is righteous. But God delights in His kindness, His goodness, His graciousness, His compassion, and His forgiveness. That's why He named those first.

And then He adds that He is also a God who judges. And so we have both sides of the coin here. The compassion of God and the judgment of God.

Now what does all of this mean? Well, what it means is, we have no excuse for our sin. We can't plead ignorance. I want you to follow with me now, beginning in verse 10.

We have rebelled against Him, nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. Indeed, all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice. So the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him.

Thus He has confirmed His words, which He has spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth.

Now once again, Daniel piles up confessions of sin here. He just piles them up. But this time what he does is he underscores the fact that Israel has defied divine revelation.

You see, what he is saying here is that Israel has no excuses for their sin. By the way, neither do we. Why? Because God has spoken.

God has revealed His will. God has given us commandments. It is not as though God simply says, I'm disappointed in you and we can say to Him, but Lord, You never told us what You wanted us to do.

Oh yes, He has. So look at him as he piles up these words. The voice of the Lord our God, His teachings, Your law, Your voice, the law of Moses, His words, Your truth.

We can't plead ignorance. We have no excuses for our sin. Evangelical Christians in America today cannot use the excuse, We don't know.

I'm sorry, America is drowning in Bibles. We have the Word of God. America has preachers and teachers all over television, radio and the internet.

There is no excuse for our sins. We cannot plead ignorance. Moreover, the Lord has no liability for our calamity.

We can't blame Him. Verse 14, Therefore the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us. For the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

Now what he is saying here is that God is merely confirming His Word. Everything promised by way of judgment took place. Yep, the Lord was patient.

You read the history of the Old Testament, you find that God suffered with Israel's disobedience for centuries. God pled with Him through the preaching and the writing of the prophets and godly kings. But there is a limit.

God draws a line. And in the end, He did exactly what He said He would do. Daniel puts it in a very interesting way in this 14th verse.

Literally, He watched over the curse. You see, here is what He is saying. Back there, on Mount Sinai, Exodus 34, God revealed that He was a God of compassion and forgiveness, but also a God of judgment.

But here is what He did. It is as though He said, I am going to take that judgment. I am going to put it over here on the shelf or in the drawer.

I am going to close that drawer. I know it is there. But I really am not too interested in doing that.

I want to show you my love and my grace and my compassion and my faithfulness. I want to fulfill my promises. And I want to forgive your sins.

This is what I want to do. The judgment, that is over there in the drawer. He kept the calamity in store.

He watched over the curse. He had it kept stored up. He could always, at any time, go and open that drawer and take out that curse.

But for centuries, He didn't do that. And then finally, they had provoked Him to a point of no return. And finally, and you can almost see it with tears running down His face, as it were, God came over there and opened that drawer and took out that judgment and imposed it on Israel.

And the nation was destroyed and the people sent into captivity. Their misery was not His fault. What was it? It was the result of accumulated guilt.

It was their fault. And they had no justification for blaming God. Now, what I see here is that we have a sobering reminder that a society ignores God's word at their own peril.

We can pay lip service to God without evidence of His word having any impact in our lives at all. And that, my beloved friends, is called hypocrisy. And that's where we are in America today, especially the church.

Evangelical Christianity today. What I see in Evangelical Christianity is, as I read magazines and I hear what's going on, and I see what's going on. What I am seeing in Evangelical Christianity today is this very kind of hypocrisy.

We have our worship. We have churches, in some cases, that are large and filled. And what is being proclaimed, in some cases, is truth, God's word.

At least parts of it are being preached. But by and large, American Christianity today is worse than anemic. It's basically on life support.

Because the vast majority of American Evangelical Christians today have made this decision. I will go to church. I will be a part of Christianity.

I will carry my Bible. I will read my devotional book. When I leave the doors of my house and I go out into the world, I'm going to live however I want to live.

There is no translation of the words of this book into the actions of our lives, or the thoughts of our mind, or the affections of our hearts. That's where we are today. Lord, we have rebelled, but here's the hope.

Lord, you are a God who forgives. To the Lord, our God, belong compassion and forgiveness. Well, that brings me to the fourth contrast here.

And we find this in verses 15 through 19. We could describe it this way. O Lord, you are compassionate, but we are wicked.

You will notice that basically, four times, Daniel says the same thing. That's right. That's what he's doing.

He's saying it over and over again. In the midst of all of this judgment, Daniel offers another appeal to God's compassion that is connected or coupled with another confession. This is the final pair of contrasts in the climax of the prayer and the petition.

Daniel's request with which he ends it. Now, there are two things that he asks for here. Let's look at these verses.

Verse 15. And now, O Lord, our God, who have brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for yourself, as it is this day, we have sinned. We have been wicked.

O Lord, in accordance with all your righteous acts, let now your anger and your wrath turn away from your city, Jerusalem, your holy mountain, for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a reproach to all those around us. So now, our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his supplications. For your sake, O Lord, let your face shine on your desolate sanctuary, that is, upon the temple site, which was a pile of ruins, and even beyond that, to the nation, which was the sanctuary of God.

So what does he pray for in these verses? Verses 15-17, he says, O Lord, turn away your anger. He bases his request on history. Notice, this is very important, and I have emphasized this before.

He goes back to Egypt and how God delivered Israel from Egypt. This is why I continue to talk to you about revivals in the past history of the church, because once we grasp that this is something God has done in the past, it is something that we then pray to God to do again. Once again, you have to think that Daniel was meditating on Jeremiah.

Jeremiah chapter 32 and verses 20 and following. God had set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even to his day, both in Israel and among mankind. You have made a name for yourselves at this day.

You brought your people, Israel, out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand, without stretched arm, with great terror, and gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey. See, he is echoing Jeremiah here. And once again, just as he has done three times before, Jeremiah employs multiple confessions of sin, leading to a plea for God's favor.

He says, essentially, Jerusalem and the temple lie in ruins. We have become a reproach, O Lord. Therefore, Daniel is emboldened to pray, verse 18, O Lord, turn away our reproach.

O my God, incline your ear and hear, open your eyes and see our desolations in the city which is called by your name, for we are not presenting our supplications before you on account of any merits of our own, but on account of your great compassion. Daniel has been immersing himself in Jeremiah's writings. I'm convinced of that.

I wish I had time to read it all to you, but it would bear reading to go back and read the entire fifth chapter of the book of Lamentations. Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us. Look and see our reproach.

And he goes through it. Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers. Our children have become orphans.

We have to pay for drinking water. We are worn out. Our fathers have sinned.

Slaves rule over us. We get our bread at the risk of our lives. Our skin burns with heat.

They have raped our women and our virgins in the cities. The princes of our nation were hung by their hands. Elders are not respected.

Young men worked at grinding mills serving those who had conquered them. Elders are no longer at the gate. There's no longer young men who are performing music and joy in the streets.

The joy of our hearts has ceased. Our dancing has turned into mourning. The crown has fallen off of our head.

Woe to us, for we have sinned. And against that backdrop, you have to go to the previous chapter, or two chapters back. Lamentations chapter 3. Now listen to these words.

This I recall to my mind. Therefore I have hope. The Lord's loving kindnesses indeed never cease.

For his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness.

Now there's the two dynamics. The misery of our judgment, our present situation, but the faithfulness and the promises of God. Now let me also suggest to you that Daniel may have been thinking about a couple of passages that we know well.

At least we know parts of them well. Jeremiah chapter 29, verse 10. Listen to this.

For thus says the Lord, when 70 years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill my good word to you to bring you back to this place. Now we all know verse 11. For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord.

Plans for welfare, not for calamity. To give you a future and a hope. By the way, that's not a word to the church.

Now you can make an application, but this is a word addressed to Israel in captivity. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

That's what Daniel is doing. Read verses 18 and 19 of our text. He is searching with all his heart.

That's why he tore his clothes and sat on ashes and fasted. Searching for God with all his heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord.

And I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I've driven you, declares the Lord. I will bring you back to the place where I sent you into exile. We can just see Daniel reading these verses and his heart leaping for joy.

All we have to do is go back and plead to God His mercy, His grace, His love, His compassion. 31st chapter of Jeremiah. Listen to these verses 1-6.

At that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel and they shall be my people. Thus says the Lord, the people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness, Israel, when it went to find its rest. The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying, here's another verse we know well and take out of context.

I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, I have drawn you with loving kindness. This is addressed to Israel in captivity.

Again, I will build you and you will be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel. Again, you will take up your tambourines and go forth to the dances of the merrymakers. Then you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria.

The planters will plant and you will enjoy them. For there will be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim call out, arise, let us go up to Zion to the Lord our God. Promise of God.

And Daniel says, look, there it is, Lord. Do it again. Fulfill it for us.

And he recognizes that he and Israel have no merits of their own. They can only plead the Lord's great compassion. And that's what we have to do in America.

We read Romans 1 and it says, God gave them up. And we simply go back and say, Lord, your judgment is just. But Lord, you are a God of mercy.

Revive your people. Revive this nation in the midst of the years. Everything Daniel has prayed accentuates the impact of his final request, which is offered with the maximum passion available in human language.

Verse 19. Oh Lord, hear. Oh Lord, forgive.

Oh Lord, listen and take action for your own sake, oh my God. Do not delay because your city and your people are called by your name. Words fail him.

Hear, forgive, listen, act for your word's sake and for your reputation's sake, oh Lord. Do not delay. Ezekiel chapter 20, verse 14.

God declared, I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations before whose sight I had brought them out. God is saying, I judged Israel in the past for the sake of my name. Unless somebody think, the nations think, that I am a weak and tolerant God who does not see sin or care about sin.

And so for my own sake, for my own name's sake, I judged. Daniel is saying, Lord, you are a God who has revealed yourself as a compassionate, gracious, loving, and forgiving God. Now Lord, for your name's sake, forgive us.

And thus Daniel prays in the spirit of Habakkuk. Lord, I have heard the report about you and I fear. Oh Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years.

In the midst of the years, make it known in wrath, remember. But I believe that Daniel takes that prayer of Habakkuk to a more profound level. He acknowledges that God's people are in their present condition solely because of their own sin.

Their suffering and their coming judgment are their own fault. Israel has been unfaithful to the Lord. They deserve nothing but God's just indignation.

That's all true. But that did not discourage an old man from praying and praying with passion. Can you see this 82-year-old man praying like this? Oh Lord, forgive us.

You think he understood the power of God? He had seen Nebuchadnezzar eat grass for seven years like an animal. He had survived a night among a den of hungry lions. Daniel knew the power of God.

His years of walking with God now just erupt in this eloquent and passionate prayer for the revival of Israel. Are we willing to pray this way and mean it? Again, we cannot individually or corporately do much to bring about change in our nation or in the church. You hear the kinds of stories we've heard overnight about what's going on in Washington.

And your soul cries out, but you say, what can I do? Call my congressman? Join a march on Washington? Write letters? Yeah, well, you can do those things. And I'm not saying that they're bad. But ladies and gentlemen, we name the name of Christ.

Who is he? Not only our savior, but our great high priest. He is at the right hand of the throne of God, ever living to make intercession for us. He prays to the Father in our behalf.

And what that tells me is, we can pray. And here's a powerful prayer of one man that availed much. The 70 years of captivity calculated from the first deportation when Daniel was exiled as a teenager in 605 B.C. That captivity would have concluded in the year 536 B.C. The Jews returned to the land under Zerubbabel and Ezra in the year 536 B.C. In fact, Cyrus, the other of the co-regents of the Median Empire, Cyrus actually issued the decree of repatriation.

Allowing the Jews to return, sometime in the very year Daniel prayed this prayer. I believe that this passage is the supreme example in all of scripture for corporate revival praying. It is the consummate expression of repentance and the desire for spiritual awakening in behalf of a people who have become steeped in sin.

However, there is a promise of blessing. Israel will be restored, not because they deserve it, but because of God's faithfulness to his word. And my friends, that is our hope today.

The church languishes in spiritual indifference. Cold, generally unconcerned for our worldly lifestyles. But there is just one hope.

It is that God is a God who revives. And he has proven it in the past. Time and time again.

God has changed. Thus, my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray. Seek my face and turn from their wicked way.

Then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and will heal their land. Our Father, we do not deny that you are just to judge. As we pray before you today, we are ashamed.

We are ashamed to hear what is coming from the leaders of our nations in open defiance of your word. We are ashamed at the moral depravity of a careless generation of Americans. We are ashamed that all we care about is being entertained and amused.

We are ashamed that those who seek holiness are ridiculed. Those who believe your word are mocked. That we are the subject of the world's indignation because we love you.

We are ashamed, Lord. And we acknowledge that when you declare in your word to such a nation, a nation that has suppressed the evidence of your creative power and your righteousness, that that nation is a nation you give up. But Lord, we would pray again together as your people in this place on this day.

Lord, we're standing in the gap. We're praying for America. We're praying for evangelical Christianity in America, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're praying for revival. Come, Holy Spirit, and break us and remake us into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ in obedience to your word and in conformity with the faith of our fathers. The faith that has gone before us of men and women who were willing to stand for truth and suffer for it and who ultimately triumphed.

Oh, God of our fathers, revive us. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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