

FBC - 4/10/83
Pastors Class
Dr. Wm. L. Bennett
From Tape/mc

DANIEL

LESSON #11

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS
UNANSWERED PRAYER

Ch. 9: 1-19

Open to Dan. 9. This great book of prophecy, meaning 'God is Judge'. We start at verse 1. Remember on Jewish Fellowship Sunday, we expounded in depth V. 24, 25, 26 & 27, but we did not deal with the whole chapter. We just moved forward because it was so ~~perfect~~ appropriate for Jewish Fellowship Sunday.

In DAN. 9, we have one of the greatest single chapters on prayer in all the Bible. In the first 19 verses, we have Daniels prayer. In the last seven verses, we have the answer. And ~~wxx~~ we're told the answer came immediately. As a matter of fact, God answered it before Daniel finished praying. The angel, Gabriel, was sent down to inform Dan. The recorded length of the prayer would be about three minutes. Gabriel came from Heaven and so he had to come in less than three minutes. You think that's possible? No problem.

The angels and God travel, not at the speed of sound, nor the speed of the concord, which is twice the speed of sound, as I told you last Sunday, but the speed of thought. As quickly as Gabriel could think and heard the command, he was on planet earth. Heaven is not far away - not at all. We want to look at it and then we want to do some Great Principles of Prayer. There is no such thing as unanswered prayer.

The greatest fact taught in the Bible, concerning Prayer, is this, in my judgment: God may not answer your prayers but He will always answer you! I'll show you this, in just a few moments, from the best known text on prayer in the Bible. God promises to answer you. Sometimes, He ~~won't~~ won't answer your prayers because He can't and be God. But He'll always answer you.

All right. Dan. 9:1 (read) this would be the year 538 B.C., 'the son of Ahasuerus' that would be Xerxes. Now we have this mentioned in Esther 1:1 - the husband of Esther was Ahasuerus.

This is not the same person because this is in the next century. There's no need to tarry here. It's Xerxes, 'the son of Xerxes, of the seed of the Medes.' You see this is the time of the Medo-Persian Kingdom and this person happen to be a Mede. Notice it says 'WAS made king' and he was made king by Cyrus, the Persian, who really was over the whole realm.

Of course, part of the Empire was the old Babylonian Empire or the Chaldean Empire, as I've already explained to you.

V. 2 (read) 'first yr. of his reign (this would be 538 B.C.). Daniel is read books or scrolls. The Jews carried into Babylonia their sacred writings. Among these books, we know, was the prophecy of Jeremiah, as he says on down. He says 'I understood by books (or from books) the number of the years whereof the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, the prophet, that he.....

In other words, he says 'I was reading the Book of Jeremiah (and if you turn back to Jer. 25: 11 or Jer. 29:10 (read). So 'I was reading the prophecy of Jeremiah and I read the desolations of Jerusalem'.... now of course, it included more than Jerusalem. But Jerusalem would be representative of the entire captivity --- period. So in a word, ~~how~~ he said 'I read in Jeremiah the time we were gonna be kept into captivity, under the enemy, would be a period of seventy years.'

Now Jere. gave the number of years they were gonna be under Babylonian Captivity, but he did not tell when the years began and when the years would

end. So, Dan. is concerned. It's the year 538. In three years, if the captivity began in 605 B.C., which was when Dan. was taken into captivity, then the captivity, the end of it is close at hand. Within three years, as a matter of fact. But suppose it started in 597 - then the captivity is not that close to ending. Suppose it started in 586, which was the time when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, it's still further off.

When was the terminus a quo(?) ? The reason I put this here, you just find this in the books over and over again. A Latin phrase for 'beginning'. When was the beginning of the captivity or the terminus a quo. When did it begin and when did it end. It either had to be one of these three dates. Either 605 B.C.; 597 or 586. Dan., of course, is praying that it will be 605. In that event, they are almost to the end of it.

Dan. is an old man. It's 538 and in three ~~xxx~~ years --- I think if you add 65 and 5, you can see you've got seventy years. Let me say in passing, God actually shortened it. It's an amazing thing. It didn't last quite seventy years. Through the prayers of Dan., God shortened the seventy years, though Jeremiah had given it in round numbers.

Now when Dan. read this - reading the Bible - he began to pray. Here's one of the greatest things about prayer. You're not gonna pray unless you read the Bible, but when you begin to read the Word of God, it'll set you to praying. So I urge you to read the Word of God in your home. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word. When you read the Word of the Lord, it sets you to praying, if you read with any discernment.

Daniel has been reading the Bible and man, he begins to pray. You say 'well, why pray? God said it was gonna be seventy years'. That's the amazing thing about prayer. You turn to the 29th Chap. of Ex Jeremiah, the 10th verse(read)

he plainly says it's gonna be seventy years and yet, in V. 13, he says 'pray'. 'Pray about this and I will return your captivity'. There in V. 10 or 11, he says it will be seventy years and then he goes and says 'ye shall seek Me and find Me when ye shall search for Me with all your heart and I will be found of you saith the Lord, and I will turn away your captivity and I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I've driven you'

If God promises something, why pray? Because we need to be prepared for the answer. And God calls on us to pray, even about that which He has promised and God loves to be reminded of His promises. One of the most effective ways in the world to pray is to say 'Lord, You promised it. You promised it in Jer. 29: 10.'

One boy in the Seminary was praying and he knew the Bible and he began to quote, he said 'Lord, herè's Your promise'. But he suddenly forgot his verse. And he said 'Lord, excùse me and let me check out this verse'. So he opened his Bible and found it and said 'Lord, here it is'. Do you realize the Lord is pleased (in one of the most powerful ways to pray) is to remind the Lord what He said.

Did you ever have a financial need or a material need. Well, I HAVE and you know what I did? I reminded the Lord of what He said in Matt. 6:33 (read) and the Lord will hear that. The Lord wants to hear us remind Him of the promises He made. All right. Daniel sets about to pray. Look at

V. 3(read) 'set my face' means 'I gazed upon the Lord'. This indicates utter intensity and earnestness. 'Prayer and supplications' - what's the difference? Prayer is your attitude - that's bowing before the Lord. That's what the word means in your soul. Did you know attitude is more important in prayer

than words? Dont' forget this! Words are not too important. You know the prayer God hears? A broken word from a broken heart. Broken words from a broken heart. A man who many not even be able to speak good English and has no flow of English at all - if he's praying out of a broken heart, he's the man who can pray.

Some of the greatest prayers I've ever heard in my life were broken English, out of a broken heart and some of the worst prayers I've ever heard in my life, were UNbroken English out of an UNbroken heart. Dan. is broken in attitude. What are supplications? Specific requests. Prayer is attitude; supplications ~~requests~~ are the specific petitions. Then he says 'with fasting'. Does the Bible command we fast? Under the Old Covenant, one time a year, on the day of Atonement. Lev. 23, Moses said 'afflict your souls' - that was fasting.

How about under the New Cov.? There's no specific command but Jesus just assumed we would fast, in Matt. 6:16(read) when we get serious with the Lord, He will often bring us to a place of denial, of many things, that we may concentrate on prayer. There are many people in our congregation today, who fast. God's people over the world today, are fasting, as I've never known.

If you've never learned to fast, to discipline yourself, you've missed one of the greatest blessings in the world. The saints of old and the saints of Scrip. fasted. Then he says 'in sackcloth and ashes' - sackcloths was the cloth that bags were made out of and sacks. Just ordinary cloth and ashes - that was put on the forehead or on the body to indicate the status of the soul. I've seen people, in our society, wear it on ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

Matter of fact, I had a boy in class with me in Duke Univ.. Every Wednesday,

he'd come to ~~xxx~~ class with ashes on his forehead. But it's supposed to be an external representation of an inward brokenness of heart. No need to do it unless it represents a condition of the heart.

V. 4(read) the word 'Lord' here indicates 'one with utmost authority' - the word Lord here is 'Adaniah'. 'Unto Adaniah, my God' notice how personal? MY God. Dan. made 'my confession'. Who? Dan. need to confess? Here's one of the purest men who ever lived; one of the most obedient men. Do you realize the closer you get to the Lord, the more you recognize your sins and how you need to confess?

He does not just set himself up and say 'well, I'm all right and the people are bad'. He said 'I made MY confession'. When a man gets ready to pray, he'll confess his sin and he'll never claim righteousness. He'll always realize his sins. The Holier you are, the more you realize your sins. It's the person who is sinful and wicked and mean, who doesn't realize their need to confess sins.

He says 'great and dreadful' now that doesn't mean stern. But the word 'dreadful' means 'awesome'. He inspires our reverence. Notice he says 'great and dreadful'? That doesn't sound like the language of modern America, does it? Where people talk about God like they would talk about man or less than man. My buddy. Ever heard anyone call God 'my buddy'? 'The man upstairs'? We should not call Him the 'man upstairs'. ~~THE XXXXXX~~ A living doll? People don't do that who've met God and who know God in prayer. We should be overwhelmed with the sense of the Holiness of God.

'How dreadful you are, O God; how Holy and we are to approach You with the utmost reverence'. 'Mercy' is loving kindness.

V. 5(read) See? Dan. says 'WE have sinned'. He uses four words. He doesn't want to leave out any type of sin. He says 'WE have sinned' - what does that mean. We have missed the mark - that's what sin means. 'We have committed iniquity' - what does that mean? Acted perversely; crooked. 'We have done wickedly' - means we have done that which we knew was wrong. 'We have rebelled' - against authority. Did you know that's one of the greatest sins?

Satan will put that in your heart to rebel against authority. Just any authority. When sin is in a mans life, he will rebel against authority. He doesn't want the pastor to tell him to do anything. He doesn't want anybody to tell him to do anything. That's rebellion. REbellion against authority and yet, all of us under authority. He mentions these four levels of sin.

He say 'even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments'.

V. 6(read) we have not listened to the preachers of the Word of God. 'Kings' (he starts at the top) This is a great sin. When people will not hear the preacher of the Truth, they're headed for judgment. They're headed for judgment, because that's the way God gets His Truth and of course, a haughty proud heart will not hear the preacher of the Truth. He'll rebel. He'll say 'well, that's just another man'. But here was one of the great sins of Israel. Not hearing the preacher of the Truth.

V. 7(read) Dan. talks about Gods righteousness. In V. 9, he'll talk about His mercy. See, God's not responsible for this condition. You're righteous, Lord. The word 'confusion' means 'shame'. Now sin does bring confusion and there's great confusion in America today and in society at large. But the Hebrew word is 'shame'. Why does he speak of ~~XXXXXX~~ 'shame of face'? Because sin on the inside shows in the face. You can look at a man and tell

a great deal about him. They were so sinful Dan. says, until it showed on their faces.

He says 'to the men of Judah' (that would be the people in the Jerusalem area) 'and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem'; 'and unto ALL Israel' (that was the Northern Kingdom). You see the South was called ~~the~~ Judea; the North called Israel. The North had been taken into captivity in 722. So he says not only Judah and Jerusalem but he says 'and unto all Israel that are near and are far away, through ALL the countries'... the Jews had been scattered in to Assyria in (in 722) the Northern Kingdom.

Then into Babylonia (in 605-599-586) but quite a number of them had been taken to Egypt. They'd been scattered over a pretty broad area. He's talking about these areas. 'Through all the countries.....'

'Because of their trespass against thee'. Moses had said this would happen in Deut. 28. He says 'the reason you've been scattered is because of your sin'. Because of 'our' sin.

V. 8(read) 'we' have sinned against thee. You know the hardest thing for a man to say? 'I've sinned'. It's just hard for me to say 'I've sinned'. But until we're willing to say we've sinned, we'll never get right with God. We can say 'Oh, I made a mistake'; 'I made a misjudgment' - but listen, we need to say 'we've sinned'. Not 'if' I've sinned. See, that's no confession at all. If I've sinned, Lord. That's no confession. Dan. says 'WE' have sinned and he names the sins. I John 1:9 says 'if we confess our sins' - s-i-n-S.

That means it has to be specific. God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We, as America, have an

emphasis on prayer today. We need an equal emphasis on confession of sin. Because unless prayer is accompanied by confession of sin, it'll get nowhere. Real prayer will always bring people to confession of sin. Every revival, in the history of the world, has been preceded by confession of sin on the part of Gods people.

The church must confess its sin. Gods people must get right before there'll be revival. That's where we are in America today. If Gods people were broken before God and would confess their sins, there'd be a mighty outpouring of the H.S. The church will never repent until the church - I mean the WORLD will never repent until the church repents. Jesus gave messages to seven churches of Asia and to five out of seven, He said 'repent'. Or I will withdraw My power and My mission from you.

To five out of seven churches of Asia. Well, here you have the church repenting - Dan. representing the people of God. He says in

V. 9(read) PTL! He says 'you're righteous'(in V.7). If He were just righteous and not forgiving, we couldn't approach Him. He says 'to the Lord our God, belongs mercies and forgiveness, ~~which~~ though we have rebelled against Him'. That's what is so wonderful. Doesn't matter how far you've gone from God or how far a nation has gone from God; if it's willing to repent and confess its sin, God will forgive. True of any individual. There's mercy with the Lord.

If this were not true, there's no need to pray. It's wonderful: the mercy of God and God is trying to call our nation back. He's trying to call the church back. He's merciful and He's longsuffering. He will not always be. But He's calling us back, in America today.

V. 10(read) he keeps bringing it back. He says 'we've just refused to listen to the prophets. We've had the message but we wouldn't listen. We wouldn't listen.'

V. 11(read) 'might not' or 'refusing'to obey thy voice'. What curse is he speaking of? YOU read Deut. 28 and you have the listing 68 verses of curses. Most amazing thing you ever read. Moses has said it would happen. One of them is the bubonic plague. It came upon them. All kinds of curses came upon them because of their sins. Why are so many curses upon us today, in America?

Because of sin. It's because of sin these terrible things that are happening in our culture and our society. Its' because of sin. 'Therefore, the curse is poured out upon us!'. Well, now what's the oath? Well, the curse was often occompanied by an oath, which made it more solemn. God giving His oath that He would do what He said He would do. 'Because we have sinned against Him' over and over again he just keeps saying this to the Lord.

And always 'we' -never excluding himself. WE! We, he says, have sinned.

V. 12(read) 'judges' now that doesn't mean just the special classes of officers called judges. Like Gideon and the crowd but that just means the leaders of Israel, in general. 'Bringing upon us a great evil' the Hebrew word is 'calamity'. What is that great calamity? The captivity. He says 'we're in bondage, Lord. We're in bondage because of sin'.

But look at the latter part of the verse - isn't that amazing? He says 'there's no city in the world where the judgment of God has been expressed as in Jerusalem'. You know what this says? We're judged according to our

Light. We're not judged according to the number of sins, we're judged according to the Light we have. And our obedience and disobedience to the Light.

America is responsible for more than any nation in the world. Therefore, ~~unless~~ unless we turn to God, our judgment will be greater than any nation in the world. Certain individuals are responsible for a great deal more than other individuals because they have been enlightened. They have been taught. They know. Jesus said to Capernaum, where He preached the Gospel, 'Tyre and Sidon, in the judgment, will rise up and condemn you. Because IF these pagan cities had heard the Gospel like you've heard it, they would have repented and in the Judgment, they will rise up'.

Pekin, Red China, will rise up in the Judgment, against N.Y.City and condemn it. Moscoe will rise up against Washington, D.C. and condemn it, in the judgment. I tell you, if we know the Truth, and we don't do it, we are treading on dangerous, dangerous ground. I, as a pastor, unless I preach the Truth and live the Truth, which God has given me, I stand in danger of the judgment of God. God holds us responsible for that which we know.

That which we don't know, He doesn't. We are responsible for so very much. That's what he's teaching.

V. 13(read) 'made we not our prayer before the Lord ~~our~~ our God' literally 'we didn't smooth His face' the Hebrew says. Says we did all these things but God's still frowning at us because we haven't repented'that we might turn from our iniquities and understand thy Truth'.

V. 14(read) 'watched upon the evil' that is He's kept it ready. He's kept His eye on the evil; we wouldn't repent of it and He kept it ready - is what

the Hebrew says. We obeyed not His voice through His Word and through His prophets.

V. 15(read) first part of this verse he is praising God. He's talking about the exodus, says 'You brought Your people out of the land of Egypt'. You made a name for Yourself, Lord, by this. 'We have sinned, we have done wickedly'. He constantly comes back to this.

V. 16(read) why does he call it the holy mountain? Literally, the mount of Your Holiness. That's where the Temple was and the Holy of Holies. Notice he calls Jerusalem 'Gods City'. Why? What does it mean? City of peace. He's the Prince of Peace. Jerusalem is His city. Still is. He's gonna come back to Jerusalem. That'll be His headquarters for His Kingdom in the world.

He says 'Lord, this is Your city; turn away Your anger from it and from the Mount of Your Holiness, because for our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people, are become a reproach to all ~~they~~ that are about us'. He says because of Your judgment upon us, even Your city has become a reproach to Your Name. The heathen looks at us; makes fun of us.

You know nothing brings reproach upon God like that which is His, sinning and going against His way. When a church; when a Xtn does wrong, that brings such reproach upon the name of the Lord. See when the world does wrong, that doesn't bring any reproach upon God. But when that which belongs to God sins, that brings such reproach upon the name of the Lord and he says 'Lord, Your name is in jeopardy.' We know this.

V. 17(read) notice, he's praying for the Lords sake - not for his sake. This is the way we must pray. Now we'll come back to all these principles and

summarize them in a few moments. You want to be an effective prayer warrior? Pray for the Lords Sake, always. Not for your sake. Pray for the glory of the Lord. If your praying that your child, pray that your child might be saved for the glory of the Lord. If you're praying your financial needs be met, pray 'Lord for YOUR glory'.

If you're praying for a new home, pray for the Lords sake. Always for the Lords sake and it lifts your prayers to where God can hear them. Dan. says 'Lord, I'm asking you to do this, not for Dan. or for the Jews, but for YOUR sake, Lord. YOUR name is at stake'.

V. 18(read) 'for our righteousness' or 'because of OUR righteousness' notice? He says 'Lord, we know we don't deserve it but will You be merciful to us?'

Then, in staccato form, but with utter earnestness and humility, he concludes it in V. 19 - his prayer. And he's only been asking for one thing but he's been confessing his sins and claiming the honor of the Lord.

V. 19(read) 'hear our petitions, Lord'. 'Forgive our sins, Lord'. 'Harken, (give heed to what we're saying) and do (that is, act). 'Defer not' - that's the bottom line of the prayer. 'Defer not', what? The ending of the captivity Lord, I read in Jeremiah that it was seventy years. Oh, I hope the seventy yrs. are up. Defer not, Lord. That's what he's been praying about all the time but he had to bring in his confession, you see.

But that's the bottom line - that last word 'defer not'. But look what he says 'for Thine Own sake, O my God'. That's the same thing in the N. T. as praying in the Name of Jes. He says 'Lord, defer not for thine own sake, oh my God, for Thy city and Thy people are ~~xxx~~ called by thy name'. Says 'Lord,

us back to the land. Remove the reproach over Jerusalem. Not for our glory, but for Your glory and for Your sake, Lord.' God hears that kind of praying.

Now we've already looked at the succeeding verses and we don't have time to go into it, except I want to point out the Lord tells him that He heard him, before he even got through. And answered his prayer. FHe actually began the captivity in 605 and it ended before 535. God actually shortened it. This might be an amazing thing to us, but God actually shortened the captivity because of the prayer of this righteous man.

He says down in the verses following, he made the prayey (there in V. 21) at the time of the evening oblation. I want to point this out. Now Dan. is in Babylon. But he made the prayer at the time of the sacrifice in the Temple over in Jerusalem. In his mind, it was the same as if they were still offering sacrifices. Now this teaches one of the greatest things about prayer. He was approaching God on the basis of the sacrifice of the blood. That's the only way, in the world, we can approach God. On the basis of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

Never in our own merit. But only in the merit of the shed blood of JC.

Now in this we have the great principles of intercessory prayer and I've got to move real quickly here and answer some questions. There are twelve great principles in intercessory prayer. I want you to look at these and you may want to get the tape! ~~INXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

INTERCESSARY PRAYER IS

FIRST: GENERATED BY THE WORD OF GOD. Dan. was reading Jeremiah when God set him to praying.

SECOND: MARKED BY INTENSITY AND IMPORTUNITY. Dan. said 'I set my face. He was single minded and his whole heart was gazing upon God.

THIRD: ACCOMPANIED WITH BROKENNESS. Sackcloth, ashes, fasting. We're not gonna do much praying until we're broken before God. And as a nation, we haven't yet been broken. I don't know why. I say again the greatest prayer I've ever heard was broken English out of a broken heart. The worst prayer I've ever heard was unbroken English out of an unbroken heart. Dan. is broken before God. This great man.

FOUR: CHARACTERIZED BY TOTAL CONFESSION. In V. 5 and 16, he mentions these sins - all kinds of sin. Every expression of sin. I've already gone over it. But also, all kind of sinners, from the king on down and he doesn't exclude himself. None of us dare exclude ourselves. Then he stresses the sin of not hearing Gods Word. It's a great sin not to hear the Word of God. The Bible says the time will come that there will be a famine of the hearing of the Word of God. It doesn't say there will be a famine of the Word.

It says a famine of a HEARING of the Word. Man, what a responsibility we have, when the Word of God is preached or taught, to hear it. And to obey it. That was one of the things that brought the judgment upon Israel.

FIVE: APPROACHED IN AWE AND REVERENCE. He says 'Oh, great and dreadful God'. Doesn't mean he was afraid of God but he just revered Him.

SIX: GROUNDED IN GODS RIGHTEOUSNESS. God is righteous. He will do ~~what's~~ what's right. 'I cannot overlook this' Dan. says. 'You've got to do what's right. You can't bless sin. ' God's righteous. But also dependent upon Gods mercy. 'God, You're merciful'. I've already said how wonderful it

is that God is so merciful. When no one need despair, who's willing to honestly come before God. There's nothing hopeless at all. The hopelessness is in the wrong attitude. If our attitude is wrong, it's hopeless.

If we're willing to face our need, under God, there's not a person here this morning, who can't be saved if they're lost. There's not a person out of fellowship who can't be restored. Everything can be made right if our attitude is what it ought to be. It's when ATTITUDE is wrong, that hopelessness comes. Dan. attitude is great.

EIGHT: CONCEIVED WITH THE PEOPLES WELFARE. He was not looking at Dan. but he was concerned about the people. The glory of Gods name but the welfare of Gods people, and the House of God. He was not concerned about building him a new house. You know I've seen, for years, people who are not concerned about the House of God, there's a terrible need in their lives. There's a direct relationship of our attitude toward the House of God and the things of God and what's going on in our hearts.

He says 'Lord, the House of God is torn down. It's a reproach unto the Lord'. The situation of the House of God. Then he says ^{NINE:} 'it was requested for Gods glory'. 'Lord' he says 'it's for YOUR glory I'm praying this prayer. That I want Israel restored'.

TEN: GOVERNED BY GODS WILL. 'Lord, do what Jeremiah promised'. Well, why was he praying? To get his own heart right and because he wanted to remind God of His promise. Why do we pray about that which God has promised? He' predestined? Why doesn't it take place? God says 'pray'. God said the H.S. was gonna come upon the church but the people prayed and they prayed for ten days. In Rev. 22:20, Jes. says 'behold I come quickly' and John,

immediately, begins to pray 'Lord, come'.

Here's one of the mysterious things. We're to pray to prepare our own heart and to create expectancy. Dan. proves ~~he prays~~ this; he prays though God says 'I'm gonna do it in seventy years' - he prays, he prays, he prays!

ELEVEN: OFFERED ON BASIS OF THE BLOOD ATONEMENT. V.21. Offered in the evening at the time of oblation (or sacrifice). He realized he could not come except through the blood of Christ.

TWELVE: PRAYED FROM A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE. V. 23. John 15: 7(read). That means to be controlled by God's Word; and then 'ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. Dan. didn't come in there as a worldly fellow, who had no regard for the Word of God. He said 'I've sinned' but at the same time, he ~~was~~ a man that was determined to obey God. God honors obedience as nothing on earth and if we expect to be powerful in prayer, we have got to be obedient.

Let's move on. We've got to move quickly.

MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE FACT TO KNOW ABOUT PRAYER: Now keep this in mind: God ALWAYS answers YOU, but He may not answer your prayers. I'm talking about a real sincere, out of the heart of a child of God. Jer. 33, for the example is Paul in II Cor. 12: * & 10. Paul thought his thorn in the flesh was gonna hinder his ministry and so he says 'Lord, remove this thorn. I've got a job to do and I can't do it with this thorn'. That was the prayer. God did not answer the prayer but he answered Paul.

He did exactly what Paul needed and wanted. He left the thorn to humble Paul so the power of God might be upon him. You read.....

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....answer thee'. It doesn't say 'I'll answer your prayer'. The Bible is very carefully worded. 'Call unto me and I will answer THEE'. God answers us and often, it's not our prayer that's our need. That's the greatest thing in the world about prayer. The greatest thing I ever learned about prayer was that God was answering ME - not some of my foolish prayer but He always answered Bill Bennett. He'll never fail to answer a sincere prayer. NEVER!

That's the most important thing to know about prayer.

MYSTERY QUESTIONS CONCERNING PRAYER

I put some mystery questions in the paper concerning prayer and I want to go over them:

1. DOES PRAYER CHANGE GODS MIND? The answer to that, in the main, is no. It prepares us to receive Gods mind and Gods will. But in II Kings 20 : 20: 1 & 6 (read) this sounds like it changes Gods mind. That was Gods purpose all along. He put Hezekiah to a tremendous test. In the case of Dan. praying, He actually reduced the length of the captivity. But that was His purpose all along. It would be dangerous to say 'prayer changes the predestined eternal purpose of God' but you've got Scrip. that indicates a modification. Strange! The Power of Prayer!

2. WHY PRAY ABOUT SOMETHING GODS ALREADY PROMISED? We've already seen that. For two reasons: He commands it. He actually commands it in Jeremiah 29. He says 'seventy yrs. of captivity' and then in V. 13 & 14, He says 'you pray about it that I may fulfill what I promised'. But also, He wants to be reminded of His promise. God delights for you to sight Scrip.

and verse of that which He's promised.

3. DOES GOD HEAR THE PRAYER OF A NON-XTN? Yes, sometimes. He heard the prayer of Cornelius in Acts 10:4 - this plainly says He did. He certainly hears the prayer of the lost sinner. That is clearly stated in the reference I give you here in Luke 18:13. Jes. said when that man prayed 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner' that God heard him. If one is seeking the Lord, though he doesn't know the Lord, but is earnestly seeking the Lord, God will answer those prayers so often.

Now if one is professing to be a Xtn and has rejected Christ, and yet, he claims he's getting through, in prayer -- uh huh. It's only where that person is walking in the Light he has - like Cornelius is walking in the Light he has, though he did not know Christ - the Lord heard him and sent Peter. For someone to reject Christ and then say 'I have access to God' - that's contrary to the Scrip. But to say that no ones prayer is ever heard, except a Xtns is false.

Because some peoples prayers have been heard, before they ever became a Xtn. That was a process of bringing them to the Lord.

4. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRAY IN JESUS'S NAME? Well, it means to pray in the very authority of Jes. It means to pray as Jes. would pray. It means to represent Jes. at the Throne of Grace. If I had time, I have a marvelous illustration I could read you. I'd like to give you R.A. Tory's classic illustration. I don't have time to read it, but it's to pray with His authority, as his representative and to pray what HE would pray. To have His mind. Is to pray for Gods glory, in other words.

This is the same thing Dan. was saying when he said 'for Thy Names sake'. It's not ~~just~~ just the words; it's the most powerful thing in prayer. Far more than the language we use.

5. WHEN SHOULD A PERSON NOT PRAY? He should not pray when God has specifically commanded him to do something else, like Joshua 7: 8 thru 13 (read) God said 'get up from there, don't pray. Get sin out of the camp'. Prayer is no substitute for confession of sin. Sometimes a man should not pray. He should confess his sins. He should get right with his fellowman. Or he should get in the church. He should do what Gods told him to do. Prayer is not a substitute for obedience.

And there are some times we have to be obedient before we can even pray. In Matt. 5: 23 & ~~XX~~ 24 (read) there's a time not to pray, indeed.

6. IS IT TRUE THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS UNANSWERED PRAYER? I'll answer that in just a few minutes.

7. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE STATEMENT 'Prayer changes things'? Well, prayer doesn't always change things. That's just false. That's a cliché. Prayer didn't change things in Pauls life. It changed Paul. The greatest meaning of prayer is - if you really pray, you'll be changed! Now sometimes God changes THINGS, but not always. But when you really pray, you can deal with anything that's a problem in your life.

It's YOU He changes, basically. There's some things that can't be changed, in the very order of the world. But YOU can be changed. I can be changed. Through prayer. Don't ever use that as a cliché. It's a bad statement.

8. WHY DID THE WORLDS MOST PERFECT MAN, JESUS, FEEL THE GREATEST NEED TO PRAY? Because He's the perfect humanity. In John 5:30(read) in His humanity, ~~XXXX~~ He NEVER did anything except what God empowered Him to do. Because He is the perfect example of our humanity and our dependence upon God, He prayed, as no one has ever prayed and that's the way you and I ought to pray. We're never to think we can do ANYTHING apart from God.

Jesus NEVER did anything apart from the Father, He tells. He could not do it, in His flesh.

9. CAN SATAN BLOCK TWENTY ONE DAYS TODAY? He did in Dan. 10 :13 and we'll study about that next Sunday. Well, we cannot answer that he can do that; the Bible has no teaching on this. This is a special case in Dan. 10 :13

FOUR ANSWERS TO PRAYER

1. DIRECT. God answers prayer direct, sometimes. One time I prayed for a hundred dollars. I needed a hundred dollars to go to camp; it came to me, exactly. Not ninety eight - exactly one hundred dollars, anonymously. That was a direct answer to prayer.

2. DIFFERENT. Sometimes the answer to prayer is different to what we pray. Paul is a shining example.

3. DELAYED. Often it's delayed. Zacharias and Elizabeth prayed for a child and God said 'your prayer WAS heard (when you prayed it)'. But you see God had to wait to give them John, the baptist. Often God delays our prayers. One of the greatest answers I've ever ~~XXXX~~ received to prayer has been to prayers I prayed years ago. I remember in 1954, I prayed^{FOR}/something

so meaningful to me and I thought God has forgotten me. He answered it, beautifully, in 1958. It often is that way, in the life of a believer.

4. Denied. Sometimes God denies our prayer. But the greatest answer He ever gives is a denial. Answer 4 is the answer to be most grateful for. God shows His love as much, or more, by saying 'no' as saying 'yes'. Sometimes God says 'no!' But that is the greatest answer of all, so often. He cannot remain God sometimes and answer a 'yes' but that 'no' is one of the greatest things God ever did.

As I was studying this lesson, I just began to think through some things of where God had said 'no' in my life and I honestly believe the greatest answers I have ever received in prayer in my life, was when God said 'no'. And I praise His name.

I just make some notes here - you might want to get them - I don't have time to go into this. These are some things on the Will of God and Prayer. These references, and I'd like you to have them, if you want them and I'm gonna share them again tonight: John 14:13 (ask anything in My name, that will I do) and that means to pray as His representative and to pray with His authority and pray His desire.

Our greatest weapon is prayer. I pray that we will use it as Dan. did. Next Sunday, we continue our study ~~xx~~ and at 5:30, we, of course, will do the same lesson, essentially.

Let's stand and pray before we go.