

Session 2

September 10, 2023

PRAY WITH PASSION

Daniel 2:13-23; 27-28

We'd probably all like to think that we pray more than we really do. Paul said to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:16), but let's face it...we too often cease without praying! Too often my prayers are not proactive, or even active; but *re-active*. Simply put, I wait for something to go haywire...then I pray about it!

In the next few lessons, we will talk about some aspects of prayer taken from the life of Daniel. This week's title is *Pray with Passion*, but it could just as well be titled *Pray with Wisdom*. The drama plays out in three acts.

A desperate situation (vv. 13-16). The preceding verses spell out the terrible predicament the king's counselors faced. Vexed by disturbing dreams, the king, as was the custom of the day, called together his pagan cadre of wisemen, astrologers, and sorcerers to interpret them. Apparently not entirely confident of their abilities, the king added an extra requirement to validate their accuracy. This time, they were required to recount the king's dream first, and *then* provide the interpretation of it (v. 5). If they could not tell him his dream first, then they and their families would be executed as phony soothsayers and worthless additions to the king's court (v. 9). Needless to say, the not-so-wise wisemen were mortified, but they exacerbated the situation by rebuking the king for his foolish and impossible request (vv. 10-11). Infuriated, the king issued the order for all the wisemen to be killed. And Daniel and his friends were on the list. Notice first, that Daniel's response to all this was *discreet* (v. 14). An already irate king was not to be pushed, especially by some Jewish teenager! Second, his response was *courageous* (v. 16). Daniel himself had an audience with the king himself. Third, his response was *confident* (v. 16). The idea is clear: if Daniel had but one night with God, he was confident that God would provide both the dream and the interpretation of it. For reflection: *How do you explain Daniel's ability to meet face-to-face with the king of Babylon? What groundwork had already been laid?*

A divine solution (vv. 17-23). Daniel's confidence was not spiritual arrogance, but a firm conviction that God's plan superseded the king's. Four things about Daniel's praying stand out. First, he understood the value of *corporate praying*. He shared the urgency of the situation and invited his friends to join him in intercession (v. 17). While the Bible is replete with examples of godly men praying alone in solitude, there is strength in numbers...and that goes for praying, too. Believers are to pray *for* one another (James 5:16) and pray *with* one another (Joel 1:14; Acts 4:24ff, et al). Second, Daniel understood God's *sovereignty*. He didn't pray for the king's mercy, but for *God's* mercy (v. 18). Third, Daniel understood that prayer comes *first*. Notice that the mystery the king sought to answer came to Daniel only *after* the praying. God knew it all along; but Daniel needed to ask for it (see Matt. 7:7-8). Finally, and most obviously from verses 20 on, Daniel understood that prayer is an essential part of *worship*. Simply put, while prayer and worship are not identical, prayer and worship are *inseparable*. For reflection: *Can you agree from your own life that prayer and worship are connected? How does your worship suffer when your prayer life suffers...and vice versa?*

A devout explanation (vv. 24-28). Notice the emotion that filled the throne room. Arioch (the captain of the guard) was *anxious*. He “quickly brought Daniel before the king” (v. 25), no doubt hoping that Daniel knew what he was talking about! Nebuchadnezzar was *guarded*. He had granted Daniel the extra night to seek an answer for his dream but was clearly in no mood for more wise-man shenanigans! (v. 26). Daniel was *bold*. He agreed with the previous counselors that no man could solve the king’s quandary (v. 10 and v. 27) but gave unwavering testimony that what no wiseman could do, the God in heaven could! (v. 28). For reflection: *Notice that Daniel gave immediate credit to the “God in heaven” for solving the mystery. What does that tell us about Daniel? What applications can we make from that?*