

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** How to Pray for America

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Daniel 9:3-21

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2482

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) America is at a crossroads, and we dare not be careless or lazy.
  - i) Frances Schaeffer once said that if we do not change, then one day we will wake up and find that the America we once knew will be gone.
- b) We need to pray for America.
  - i) We need to pray a revival prayer.
- c) Our greatest resource is prayer, and our only hope is God.
- d) In our Scripture today, the prophet Daniel is praying to the Lord and asking Him to deliver the children of Israel.
  - i) God's people had been taken captive by the Babylonians.
    - (1) Babylon was the ancient name for modern-day Iraq.
  - ii) America has also been taken captive.
    - (1) America has been taken captive by the world, the flesh and the devil.
    - (2) We need a national, moral and spiritual revival.
      - (a) Without that, there is no hope.
- e) Only prayer can hold back the judgment of God.
- f) God is merciful; but if we do not pray, then we will get exactly what we deserve.
- g) In today's message, we will focus on the kind of prayer that God answers.

2) PRAY WITH SERIOUS CONCENTRATION (DANIEL 9:3)

- a) Many of our prayers have little effect.
  - i) It's not the arithmetic of our prayers; how many.
  - ii) It's not the rhetoric of our prayers; how eloquent.
  - iii) It's not the geometry of our prayers; how long.
  - iv) It's not the emotion of our prayers; how sweet.
  - v) It's not the logic of our prayers; how argumentative.
  - vi) It is the faith and fervency of our prayers.
- b) The time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God.
  - i) Churches need to repent.
  - ii) Churches across our country are only playing church.
    - (1) We pray without fasting.
    - (2) We witness without tears.
    - (3) We give without sacrifice.
    - (4) Is it any wonder that we sow without reaping?
- c) Prayer is the order of the day, but not just any prayer; we need to have prayer and fasting.
  - i) Matthew 6:5
    - (1) Jesus tells us not to pray to be seen of men.
  - ii) Matthew 6:16
    - (1) Our Lord did not say, "If you fast;" He said, "When you fast."
  - iii) The Bible is not against fellowships.
    - (1) God established His great feast days.
    - (2) John 21:12

- iv) The Bible also calls us to fast.
- d) What is fasting?
  - i) Fasting is not merely going without food.
  - ii) Fasting is going without food and certain pleasures for a spiritual purpose.
    - (1) It is not dieting or cutting down on our eating for our health's sake.
  - iii) It is like a spiritual string tied around our finger, and every hunger pain reminds us to pray and seek God's face.
  - iv) In the Bible, God links fasting with spiritual activities.
    - (1) Fasting and prayer
    - (2) Fasting and watching
    - (3) Fasting and worshipping
- e) Daniel's prayer was a concentrated prayer; it was a prayer with fasting in sackcloth and ashes.
  - i) Sackcloth and ashes speak of humility before God.
- f) The motivation for fasting is just as important as the fasting itself.
  - i) It is possible to fast for the wrong reasons.
  - ii) There are certain things we need to be aware of when we fast.
    - (1) Self-centeredness
      - (a) We should not boast about the fact that we are fasting.
      - (b) Jesus warned about giving money, praying and fasting in public to be seen of men.
        - (i) This does not mean that we cannot pray, fast or give money in public.
          - 1. We are not to be like the Pharisee.
            - a. Luke 18:11-12
      - (2) We are to avoid exhibitionism.
      - (3) We are to avoid legalism.
        - (a) We cannot buy a blessing through fasting.
          - (i) Blessings are because of God's grace and mercy.
    - iii) The devil has abused fasting, which is why we do not hear much about it in the modern church.
    - iv) Fasting is to be done unto the Lord.
      - (1) Zechariah 7:5
  - g) What can fasting do?
    - i) Fasting will strengthen your prayer life.
      - (1) Joel 2:12
      - (2) One of the ingredients of turning to God is fasting.
      - (3) Jeremiah 29:13
        - (a) Half-hearted praying is an abomination to God.
      - (4) When we fast, we're letting Heaven know that we are serious and that we are seeking God with our whole heart.
    - ii) Fasting holds back judgment.

- (1) America is ripe for judgment, but God will hold back the judgment we deserve if we fast and pray.
  - (2) Jonah 3:5
    - (a) Jonah preached judgment to Nineveh.
    - (b) But the people of Nineveh proclaimed a fast and humbled themselves before God.
    - (c) God then stayed the judgment that Nineveh was due.
      - (i) Jonah 3:10
    - (d) Nineveh was the capital of Assyria and was ripe for judgment.
      - (i) God had rather show mercy than judgment.
      - (ii) God wants to forgive.
    - (e) It is not too late for America.
      - (i) Jeremiah 18:7-8
      - (ii) Exodus 32:14
        1. Repentance means a change of mind.
        2. The people of Israel deserved judgment, but God changed His mind.
      - (iii) Psalm 106:23
        1. God may give us some people like Moses who will stand in the gap and pray that He will have mercy upon America.
          - a. We are in a cosmic battle, and our weapon is prayer.
  - h) How should we fast?
    - i) Examine our motivations.
      - (1) Pray to God, and ask God about your fast.
      - (2) Isaiah 58:6
      - (3) Ask God what He would have you to do; prayerfully choose your fast.
    - ii) Avoid extremism.
      - (1) Don't try to fast for a certain number of days if you're not used to fasting.
        - (a) Set aside just one day, and find a day when your activities are light.
        - (b) Plan ahead.
        - (c) A one-day fast is a good beginning.
      - (2) If you're sick, on medication, or pregnant, talk with your doctor before fasting.
      - (3) Don't brag about fasting or be ashamed of the fact that you're fasting.
- 3) PRAY WITH STEADFAST CONFIDENCE (DANIEL 9:4)
    - a) Our confidence is in Almighty God.
    - b) Face your problem, but focus on God.
      - i) Daniel set his face with sackcloth and ashes and fasting to pray.
        - (1) He did it with great confidence.
          - (a) Daniel 9:4
          - (b) Daniel knew that God was mighty, but He's also full of mercy.
      - c) Daniel 9:9

- d) The basis of our prayer is the greatness and mercy of God.
    - i) It is impossible to see the greatness and mercies of God and not pray with confidence.
  - e) The basis of Daniel's prayer was the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - i) Daniel 9:20-21
      - (1) The "evening oblation" was when a sacrifice was made in the temple of God.
        - (a) The temple had been destroyed 70 years before Daniel prayed this prayer.
      - (2) The evening oblation was the same time that Jesus died upon the cross.
        - (a) Evening oblation was about 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
          - (i) In the New Testament, it is called the "ninth hour."
      - (3) Daniel was looking backward to a sacrifice and also looking forward.
        - (a) When we pray today, we look backward to Calvary.
        - (b) Every Old Testament sacrifice was a picture and a prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ.
          - (i) It is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanses us from all iniquity.
  - f) We must pray with confidence that God can save us as a nation.
    - i) Have confidence that God can change your life.
- 4) PRAY WITH SINCERE CONFESSION (DANIEL 9:4-7)
- a) Sin brings judgment; confession brings forgiveness.
    - i) We must confess.
  - b) Daniel 9:20
    - i) Daniel confessed both personal sin and national sin.
  - c) Not one sin is recorded in the Bible against Daniel.
    - i) This does not mean that Daniel never sinned.
      - (1) 1 John 1:8
    - ii) If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive our sin and to cleanse us.
      - (1) 1 John 1:9
    - iii) There is no sin that is beyond God's forgiveness.
  - d) In addition to praying for forgiveness for personal sin, Daniel prayed for forgiveness for national sin.
    - i) These national sins were not sins that Daniel had committed.
    - ii) This was an "identification prayer".
      - (1) Daniel identified himself with a nation.
        - (a) We can identify with America and pray for this nation.
          - (i) The sinful, wicked people of a nation are not going to pray for themselves.
  - e) We need to make confession for America.
    - i) We need to confess our greed.

- (1) We are a materialistic nation.
    - ii) We need to ask God to forgive us for neglecting the poor.
      - (1) We have bread enough to spare, but we spend money on so many frivolous things.
      - (2) We have forgotten the poor and the needy.
    - iii) We need to confess our racism.
      - (1) Racism has divided our country.
    - iv) We need to repent of the sexual immorality of this nation.
    - v) We need to repent of the killing of the unborn.
    - vi) We need to repent of the humanism that has invaded and pervaded our schools.
  - f) We also need to make personal confession.
    - i) This is no time for finger-pointing; it is time for repentance.
  - g) America is a God-ordained nation, and no nation has ever had such a Christian beginning.
    - i) But we are turning from our faith, and our freedoms are quickly receding.
    - ii) It is time for national confession and repentance.
- 5) PRAY WITH SPIRITUAL CONCERN (DANIEL 9:11)
- a) Daniel expressed two concerns when he prayed.
    - i) The removal of guilt
      - (1) Daniel wanted guilt removed.
        - (a) Daniel 9:16
        - (2) America has so much, and we have done so little with it.
          - (a) Many nations know America only by our military might and materialism.
          - (b) America needs revival, and we need guilt removed.
    - ii) The restoration of glory
      - (1) Daniel 9:17, 19
      - (2) We need to pray for the glory of God.
      - (3) Most of us simply want to have revival so that we can return to our own ways once God gets us out of the difficulties we're in.
        - (a) We should, instead, desire to see God's glory spread over this land.
          - (i) This is true revival; and it's not for America's sake but for the glory of God.
- 6) CONCLUSION
- a) It is prayer time in America.
  - b) James 5:16
  - c) If our hearts are not inclined to prayer, then we should ask God to change our hearts.
  - d) The most patriotic thing we can do is not to say, "My country, right or wrong," but to give our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - i) There is a deeper reason than patriotism for turning to the Lord Jesus.

- (1) There is a death to die.
  - (2) There is a judgment to face.
  - (3) Soon, we will stand before Almighty God.
- e) Have you been saved?
  - f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
  - g) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
    - i) Romans 3:23
    - ii) Romans 10:9-10
    - iii) Romans 10:13
    - iv) Acts 16:31
    - v) John 3:16