

Seeking Him by Prayer

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[0:00] We're going to read God's Word together. I'm going to invite Philip up, who's going to read for us Daniel chapter 9. If you've got a church Bible, it's on page 746. Daniel chapter 9.

In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, by descent of Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans. In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the words of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely 70 years.

Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.

We have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled. Turning aside from your commandments and rules, we have not listened to your servants, the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers and to all the people of the land.

To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to all Israel, those who are neared and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you.

[1:28] To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants, the prophets.

All Israel has congressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.

He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem.

As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us, yet we have not entreated the favour of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.

Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us. For the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

[2:46] O Lord, according to your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because of our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers.

Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant, and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.

O my God, incline your ear and hear, open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.

O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.

O Lord, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.

[4 : 03] At the beginning of your pleas for mercy, our words went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision.

Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and profit, and to anoint a most holy place.

Know, therefore, and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem, to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks.

Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing.

And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed, and he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week.

[5 : 06] And for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.

We are in the book of Daniel one last time before the Advent season starts, and it's a good chapter to end on, Daniel chapter 9 for now. And Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are in Babylon, that ancient city.

And this whole book has been about how they show us what it means to be faithful when being a faithful believer is risky, and what it means to follow God in a place where you are in the minority, in a city where you are in the minority.

And this is a place where if we were to update it to modern language, people would say that the faith of Daniel is outdated and silly and traditionalist, and we live in a not dissimilar time.

So it's been a really important book, I think, for us in 2025 in the city of Edinburgh. Now, one of the things we have not talked about this whole series is why they are in Babylon. We've barely mentioned it, and this is really what the prayer is about, why they are in Babylon at all.

[6 : 16] And so for 400 years, God's people, Israel, which were split into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom, Israel and Judah, they did not put God at the center of their lives, and they followed after idol, after idol, after idol.

And really, they lived as if they were already in Babylon. They worshipped Babylonian gods for hundreds of years before they ever got to Babylon. And so what happened is God gave them to Babylon.

He gave them what they really wanted, and that was to be polytheists and idolaters. That's the life that they had lived. And so in this prayer, just if you notice verse 5, we turned aside from your commands.

We did not listen to the prophets. That's verse 6. Verse 7, all of Judah, all of Israel disobeyed. So there's just references to that 400 years of following idols.

Even verse 8, our kings, our princes, and our fathers all disobeyed. And so God was really patient, and for centuries and centuries, He showed mercy to them, and then eventually they were disciplined.

[7:23] And so this is a story of their discipline, that they were disciplined by God for following idols. Now Daniel was a teenager when they went to Babylon. He was exiled as a young teenager in 605 BC, and that means that Daniel was not a part of that.

He was not a part of the 400 years of worshipping idol after idol. And so when we get there, Daniel's a man who hadn't done those things, like the fathers and the princes and the kings.

And then in the book of Daniel, unusually for the Old Testament, Daniel never has a fall story, a failure story. So you think about great David, King David.

He was great, but he had several major failure stories. And Solomon was very great, but in the end he worshipped lots of false gods. Abraham was very great, but he has at least three fall stories.

Daniel never has one. Very unusual for the Bible. So he's this teenager who never worshipped idols, and he's a man in this narrative that's presented without a failure story.

[8:30] He's full of integrity and wisdom and hope. He's a model of what it looks like to live in a city that thinks faith in God is silly. And, you know, if you want to know what it means to know God and follow God in a place where it's difficult to do that, we've got these examples like Daniel and Esther and Ruth and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that really show us how to do that in the Bible.

Yet, in Daniel 9, this prayer, he pleads for the redemption of every one of the people that got him into exile.

And he prays really for Jerusalem, and the prayer is all about the restoration of Jerusalem. Verse 16, Let your wrath turn from Jerusalem. Let sacrifices be restored in Israel.

Daniel knew, like the whole Old Testament, that as Jerusalem goes, so goes God's people. So you can really tell how God's people are doing in the Old Testament by the condition of Jerusalem. And so he pleads for Jerusalem and its restoration here in this prayer.

But even more notable, faithful Daniel, what does he say? We sinned against you. Faithful Daniel, a model of integrity, says, I bring my confession.

[9:50] And, you know, see, Daniel had every right to be bitter, every right to be angry about what they had done to get him into exile. Sixty-six years in this passage, we learn from verse 1, he's been in exile, now under Darius in 539 BC.

And for sixty-six years a slave. And he says, Lord, forgive me. And that means that Daniel is such a model of spirituality. He had never had an ounce of moral superiority, even though he was a man of integrity.

And really what we can say is in this prayer we learn his humility. And this is a prayer that teaches us about spiritual formation. That's really what it's about. What does it mean to be so shaped by the Holy Spirit, formed your spirit by the Spirit, that you've been consistently, deeply changed your whole life to the point where you can pray like that?

And Daniel's a model of spiritual formation, as is Esther and Ruth in similar books. We, in our philosophy of ministry here at St. C's, and in our vision statement, we have the language spiritual formation.

A lot of times we like language like that, but don't really know exactly what we're getting at or what it means. And all it means is that spiritual formation is the recognition of a process of change that has to take place in the Christian life.

- [11:12] And it's a change from where we used to not desire God in the life that God calls us to, and we're learning to grow into desire. So spiritual formation is all about desire.

Jonathan Edwards, the great American theologian and pastor, he said the Christian life is growing affection for God over time. So a heart full of longing for God.

St. Augustine very famously said, spiritual formation is the slow reordering of disordered loves. So what he meant by that is we love the wrong things in this life. Spiritual formation is the slow change of desire, loving the right things.

Daniel, what we have here in this chapter is Daniel's spirituality, spiritual formation. All right, it's phenomenally unsurprising what we learn here.

Let me give you three principles of spiritual formation from Daniel's life that are for us. Very simple, so basic, fundamental, so important.

- [12:18] Number one, first we learn from Daniel to immerse yourself daily in God's Word until it moves you to pray. So Daniel teaches us first, immerse yourself every day in God's Word until you desire to pray.

So he's been here 66 years in the city of Babylon. And in verse 2, he says, I discerned in the books. What are these books that he's looking at?

They are the scrolls of what we now call the Old Testament. So Daniel is scouring the scrolls of the Old Testament as far as he has them so far in history.

And he's looking for something. And what he's looking for is, when will this exile be over with? That's what he's looking for. And he finds it in the Jeremiah scroll. But very simple, the first thing to learn is how do you live in a city where the idols of Babylon are all around you and you are for this place and you love Edinburgh and you want to see the good, the common good, all throughout this land.

And yet, the idols of the city don't get into you, don't get into your heart. You're for Babylon, but Babylon doesn't get into you. And how do you do that? And the first thing we learn is by believing that when you open the Bible, God is speaking to you.

- [13:40] And it's basic and it's simple and it's classic reformed spirituality because it's biblical spirituality. But you've got to be a person who opens the Bible and believes the Word of God is here.

And that you have conviction that when you open the Bible, God is speaking into your life. And that's exactly what we see here in Daniel. He opens the scrolls and he knows that when he reads them, he's hearing from God.

And what does he hear? He hears from the Jeremiah scroll and he's probably reading Jeremiah 25 and 29. And there we learn that Jeremiah prophesies that Babylon would capture Judah and then after 70 years would send Judah back to Jerusalem.

And so he learns here, we're told, that it's going to be 70 years until he gets to go back total to Jerusalem. So in the year 536, Cyrus sends the Judahites from Babylon back to Jerusalem.

This is the year 539. So he's about three to four years away from this. And so that immediately leads him then to say, 70 years, I need to pray. I need to ask God to do this to actually fulfill what he's said.

- [14:54] And the text, the way it puts it is that Daniel discerned or perceived the 70 years in Jeremiah. And so there's this sense that he understood something of what was happening but not all of it.

Because later, Gabriel comes to him and we'll get to this at the end. Gabriel comes to him and explains the vision of the 70 years, the prophecy in detail that would be absolutely impossible for him to ever know.

Now let's, basic and simple spirituality again. Daniel believes that when he opens God's word, God is speaking to him. And we learn here that Daniel believes that he is able to discern or perceive what the Bible says.

And it's just to say that the Bible is clear enough to be discerned and believed. And when Gabriel comes to explain the vision, we learn that there are depths to the Bible that only God and his angels know.

And there are caverns in a good way, so deep in Scripture that we will never get to the bottom of them in this life. And that's why you can come to the Bible and say, this is clear enough for me to understand what it means to be saved.

[16:09] And I can come back to the Bible over and over and over again and realize that there are depths here that I have yet to penetrate. You might have had this experience where you, if you've been in the church your whole life, you read the Bible your whole life and then you come maybe listen to a preacher or you meet with somebody and you read the Bible with them and you start to see things in the Bible that you've never seen before.

And you say to your friend, I've read this passage so many times and I've never seen that. And it's because the Bible is perspicuous. It's clear. It can be discerned and perceived.

And there are depths to it so deep that only God truly knows the bottom. And that's exactly the experience that Daniel has here. But he believes that when he opens the Bible he is reading God's Word.

So let me put it in the simplest form. 2 Timothy 3.16 All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable. And I just want to ask you this morning do you believe that?

Are you believing that Monday to Saturday that when you open God's Word the scripture is breathed out by God and speaking directly to you and directly into your life because the Bible tells us it really is.

[17:18] Now that is at the heart of biblical spirituality but you may come today and say I've been reading the Bible and I don't feel that. I don't when I open the Bible most days I don't feel like it's breathing on me and breathed out by God.

And the one thing I want to say about that today is that part of the reason for that is we have to learn to discern what the Bible is teaching in order to fully experience the breath of scripture.

Jesus in John chapter 5 he comes to a group of religious leaders and he said you keep searching the scriptures because you think there you will find eternal life and they bear witness about me yet you refuse to come to me to have eternal life.

Now Jesus is saying something so striking and that's he's saying to them the reason you're not able yet to discern the scriptures properly is because you've yet to realize they are all about me.

And in Luke 24 he comes to his disciples and he tells them in the law of Moses the Torah the first five books and the prophets most of the books of the Bible Old Testament and the writings like Daniel it says that Jesus spent days explaining to them how it was all about him.

[18:36] And one of the ways maybe the Bible isn't yet coming alive this could be the case in your life is because you've yet to see you've yet to grow as much into the Christocentric nature of scripture that the Bible is actually all about Jesus and it's not only that it points to him but it all flows back out from him.

It's like looking at a bicycle wheel and if you think about imagine a bicycle wheel the outer rim of it is like the books of the Bible and there are all those spokes you know running into the center in and back out again.

And at the very center of that wheel is the center that holds it all together and gives it life makes it possible and that is Jesus. That's what he says there. So you can the scriptures can come alive to you they really are God's word they can come alive to you when you discern that Jesus is the point.

He's the center the meaning the habitus that you go into and back out of again to understand the whole. John Lennox is a famous Christian public intellectual that many of us know about and I was reading recently how he was preparing he told the story of preparing to preach at one of his friend's funerals and this friend had been with him at Cambridge and they were students together and they were mathematics students at Cambridge and they were in a department mathematics at that time where they were actively told if you want to survive in this world you must make sure no one thinks that you're a Christian you must suppress the faith very Babylonian in that way and he was sitting at the deathbed of his dear friend who survived that with him and he said what do you want me to say at your funeral and this is what his friend said encourage the people to do what we did when we were students together tell them read the word of God together discuss it think about it pray about it and wait on God until his face appears now if you're not there yet his advice was get somebody to read God's word with pray about it discuss it together and wait until God's face appears and basic biblical spirituality is right here it's get your head get your heart get your mind get your eyes on the Bible until it leads you to prayer so that's what happened secondly in Daniel's life he then turns to prayer and again this

Daniel 9 needs a sermon series not a one off okay so we can only be cursory here he says here that prayer is seeking the face of God and that's what we have to learn today is that reading the Bible until it leads us to prayer is basic spirituality and then when it leads us to prayer prayer is seeking him his face is actually the language here in Hebrew so in verse back to verse 1 this is at the time of Darius and that means that we're backwards in chronology to the time between Daniel chapter 5 and Daniel chapter 6 this is before Daniel had gone into the lion's den this vision and this prayer and in that chapter 6 right before he's about to go into the lion's den it says that to prepare for that he got on his knees with an open window facing Jerusalem to pray three times a day as was his custom and so in the when you read the book you just simply realize that Daniel prayed habitually three times a day and he prayed very much in the midst of crisis as well and we learn from Daniel the call and the invitation to spiritual formation that it requires habitual prayer and especially praying in crises and that's exactly what happens here so what does that look like for him he had read

[22:36] Jeremiah 25 and 29 and he had heard God say there 70 years and then you'll get to go back to Jerusalem it's been 66 years and so he immediately starts to pray and you can think of a moment like verse 17 where he says Lord make your face shine on your desolate sanctuary Jerusalem temple restore the temple and then he says for your own sake now over and over again in the prayer he says that do it for your sake Lord do it for your sake and what he's saying there is you promised in Jeremiah the scroll to lead us back to Jerusalem and restore the temple and so do it make good on that promise and you see in this prayer he's holding intention to realities number one that's that God has determined everything that will come to pass in history and he in the Bible even sometimes comes and says it in 70 years the temple will be restored that's a promise and then Daniel turns in the prayer and now says okay well do it do what you said you're going to do and so in the Bible you've got this tension where God has determined all that comes to pass and prayer prayer changes history prayer works prayer changes the world and both of those things fit together there's no zero sum game it's 100% true and 100% true and that's all that's here it's all throughout scripture one writer described it like this and I had this experience last Saturday so it was very helpful to me where at 6.30am 7am on a Saturday my one day off a week which is relative 6.30 7am a child comes to the bed and says you said on Tuesday you would take me swimming today and what did he say he said now I'm here to see to it that you make good on your promise right now I am not God far away from that and that means that I am regularly disappointing to my kids and they come and they say make good on the swimming promise and I say

I have a lot to do today and we're probably not going to go and in the same way and in a holistically different way prayer is coming in childlike dependence and awe to a God to a father who has already said he's made the promise and then you come and you say now do it and that's exactly what Daniel's doing here you said 70 make it that way Lord but unlike us God will do it and he did it and that's exactly what prayer is the heart of prayer here in this passage the language is the language in verse 3 and that's where he says it says that Daniel lifted his face to God to seek the face of God so the text says seeking him in prayer but the actual Hebrew says sought his face and that's the language all throughout the Old Testament why because prayer is intimate and relational you lift your face to God to seek his face and it's this idea of this face to face with the living God now listen

Daniel believes that when he opens the Bible he hears from God and then he believes that he can lift his face to God and look at God's face and they have a face to face conversation he believes that that is the reality the heart of prayer do you believe that that you are having a conversation with the living God because he's conversed with you by scripture and then you're turning and giving your face to him as he gives his face to you in prayer and that's exactly what prayer is and Daniel very much believes that's fundamental to spiritual formation and biblical spirituality in his life and in our lives as well and it's here it's accompanied with these acts of self-denial so he fasts he puts on sackcloth and pours ashes upon his head we don't do that anymore but I just want to note that the fasting we do and spirituality real spirituality is accompanied by acts of self-denial and fasting is one of them but the sackcloth and the ashes was really about this whole Bible idea of posture and prayer and so all throughout the Bible people get on their knees to pray in 1 Timothy 2 in the New Testament

Paul says men of the church when you pray lifting holy hands in the air now the Bible says that the physical body is important in prayer and that posturing your body teaches your soul how to pray and we don't lift holy hands in prayer here in our church but that's culture that's not the Bible says it all the time that the body is so important to train the soul and these acts of self-denial and fasting and getting into the word and then coming to prayer is all the basics of what it means to have spiritual formation in your life and Daniel really lives by that and believes that that is why he's a man of faith and hope and wisdom and integrity throughout the whole of this book and today if you're feeling stale in spiritual formation I just want to say simply that God when you come to Jesus the spirit breaks the power of canceled sin in your life it makes you able to change able to be transformed and then says now go work out your salvation with fear and trembling not go get your salvation but go flesh it out be changed in your life and that's just to say that spiritual formation is not automatic and so if you feel like you're not growing and your life your spiritual life is stale it's important to hear again and see Daniel's example that spiritual formation is not automatic it takes acts of self-denial and discipline and habitual prayer and habitual scripture reading and coming back to the word this is never something that distances you from the justification of forgiveness that you have in Jesus no not at all never and so you may be

I'm far away today from acts of self-denial from spiritual formation in my life being meaningful that's and all this is today is an invitation by King Jesus to say come back come closer draw near you're forgiven you're saved now work out your salvation with fear and trembling now one way he teaches us to do that is through prayers of confession and so this whole chapter is mostly a prayer of confession and there's so much in it again we need a series but just notice what he says he said verse 4 I made confession verse 5 we have sinned we've done wrong we've acted wickedly we've rebelled we've turned aside verse 6 we didn't listen verse 7 we are people of open shame there are lots of different words there for rebellion against God every one of them means something different lots of ways to sin against God and then four times in the prayer verse 7 is notable he talks about God's righteousness now for us as modern people we say the word righteousness and we don't say the word righteousness you know we don't use that word if we do use that word we mean it as a pejorative so we would say you know she is very self-righteous he is very self-righteous but in the Bible righteousness is a relational term and what it you could translate it into modern language like this you do right by me that's righteousness it's relational so four times he says

[30:10] Lord you sent us into exile into Babylon and I'm here today in my confession to say you did right by us that's a very hard thing to say but he said when you judged us it was righteous it was right you did right by us and then two times he says you are righteous Lord and in your righteousness it belongs to you to now show mercy and forgiveness now in this prayer there's this tension where he says you are the righteous God and you did right by us to send us into exile and judge us and then on the other hand you are the righteous God and you do right by forgiving and showing mercy and you say well what is it how could it be both at the same time how do you fit those two pieces together there's a real tension there Paul Kingsnorth is a famous English writer that some folks here will probably know he's just published a new book that's been very well received critically and it's called

Against the Machine it's really about the spiritual cost of modern technocracy a life of technology that we live but Paul Kingsnorth wrote this famous essay called The Cross and the Machine and in it he tells his own testimony really and he says that as a teenager he believed in science quote that's how he says it and he would he thought Christianity was very silly and he grew up in rural English parish and he did attend the Anglican church there sometimes but he says that as a teenager he and his pals would go parish to parish into the Anglican little parish church and they would open the visitors books and they would write not very nice things into the visitors books so that on Sundays people would flip the pages and find not very nice things on Sunday mornings to the point where he said after a while they would return and find there were no longer any visitors books at the churches so that he said that's what I thought of Christianity later in life he was reading a friend of his by the name of

John Moriarty and he read in John Moriarty's book a man who also said I believed only in science he said it struck me John Moriarty wrote this I believed only in science I thought Christianity a myth and then he writes until I was ruined until I was ruined shattered into seeing only prayer became big enough for me and then Paul Kingsnorth reading Moriarty as an unbeliever says Moriarty wrote this line and it changed my life the story of Christianity is the story of humanity's rebellion against God he said the one line that changed my life the story of Christianity is the story of humanity's rebellion against God and he said I had never thought of that before he told he said Moriarty taught me that humanity is a history of rebellion against God and Christianity is how God fixed it and then he writes this is the truth

I would later surrender to and today Paul is a Christian this is a prayer of confession and what Daniel says the man of integrity the man of faithfulness who was sent into exile because of other people's sins said Lord I too have sinned and every single person here today no matter where you are spiritually what religious background you may have what you believe in you need confession you need to get it off your chest we all do and the Bible says we all need to confess to God and to other people our sins and our debts and if we don't do that the Bible tells us our bones are going to rot Psalm 51 it hurts to not be able to confess and this man of integrity knew this prayer just simply says the history of humanity is the history of rebellion against God and the story of the Bible is how God fixed it and that's the tension in the prayer so how can Daniel say

Lord we deserve this and you do right to forgive us what? and the answer is in the final very brief vision here and that's this the third principle we've got to learn today is true prayer is in the name of the prince how can you how can you pray like that because it has to be in the name of the prince and today are we going to solve the vision at the end of this passage 62 years one week 70 years 70 weeks the answer is no because this passage needs a series and but let me do a flyover to say this in verse 20 Gabriel comes to Daniel and says your prayer has been heard you are greatly loved I don't think we can over stress over explain or push what that must have meant to Daniel a man who's been living in exile for 66 years to hear an angel of God say you are greatly loved the comfort that must have been and so to express that he explains

[35 : 23] Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years now Jeremiah's prophecy was going to be fulfilled four years after this Israel was going to turn Judah was going to return to Jerusalem but in the prophecy there's a complex set of numbers and if you read the commentators what they tell us very helpfully is that Jeremiah's 70 years is being listed in the prophecy as 70 weeks times 7 so another way to read it is this angel Gabriel is talking about 70 years times 7 490 years and then there's numbers like 62 weeks and 7 weeks and 1 week and all of those if you add 62 and 7 and 1 and I'm not good at mathematics but I know that that equals 70 and so when you read through you'll see all these numbers but all the numbers if you go through carefully just simply reiterate 70 70 70 and this is figural language and here's what the figural language is doing it says what does it say at the end of the period of 70 times 7 this fullness of time this creation number what does it say did you did you see the language

I will verse 24 put an end to transgression a full atonement an everlasting righteousness an anointed one a prince will come that's the word messiah in Hebrew and it says that prince will come and he will be cut off that's the language of execution from Isaiah 53 you see what this prophet it's very detailed it's very complex but what it's really talking about is that in the fullness of time the prince would come and so when Daniel says Lord you're right to send us into exile and you're right to forgive us how and the vision says because there is a full atonement coming the prince Jesus Christ the one who would be cut off the one who would be executed and it's by the power of that future prince in his death that Daniel in that moment could say now make right by us forgive us like you said you would why because he's saying God look forward to the prince who is to come and we today look backward and that means this morning when you see this vision and that it's actually about Jesus you can realize that every single time you pray in Jesus name it is not just an angel from heaven that God sent to Daniel to say you are greatly loved when you listen when you say when you pray and say in Jesus name you need to know what that comes with and here's what it comes with you can hear

God saying to you in that little phrase you are greatly loved when you pray in Jesus name it is the pronouncement that you are greatly loved God sent the prince from heaven so that when you make confession you can say Lord you're right to judge me and Lord you are right to forgive me how not by me but because God says I will not punish sin twice and in the prince he already did every single one of us today needs confession how do you enter into the Christian life by confession how do you live the Christian life by confession Jesus says Lord our to say our father forgive us our debts every day as we forgive others the heart of spiritual formation is confession and God says I will show you mercy plead with him this week don't miss a day without confessing your sins today even let us pray

Father we pray Lord have mercy we plead for mercy forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors our bones hurt we deserve your righteous judgment yet we are right to be forgiven because Jesus Christ was condemned and so we make our plea we make our confession this morning entirely on his basis and we pray that in Jesus name Amen