

Sermon: The Prayer

Text: Daniel 9:1-19

Discussion Questions:

On October 8, 2012, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda celebrated his nation's 50th anniversary of independence from Britain at a National Jubilee Prayer event. During the celebration, he did something very unusual for a national leader: He publicly repented of his personal sins and the sins of the nation. Take a moment to read out loud his prayer.

"Father God in heaven, today we stand here as Ugandans, to thank you for Uganda. We are proud that we are Ugandans and Africans. We thank you for all your goodness to us.

I stand here today to close the evil past and especially in the last 50 years of our national leadership history and at the threshold of a new chapter in the life of this nation. I stand here on my own behalf and on behalf of my predecessors to repent. We ask for your forgiveness, and confess these sins, which have greatly hampered our national cohesion and delayed our political, social and economic transformation:

We confess sins of idolatry and witchcraft which are rampant in our land. We confess sins of shedding innocent blood, sins of political hypocrisy, dishonesty, intrigue and betrayal.

Forgive us of sins of pride, tribalism and sectarianism; sins of laziness, indifference and irresponsibility; sins of corruption and bribery that have eroded our national resources; sins of sexual immorality, drunkenness and debauchery; sins of unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred and revenge; sins of injustice, oppression and exploitation; sins of rebellion, insubordination, strife and conflict.

These sins and many others have characterized our past leadership, especially the last 50 years of our history. Lord forgive us and give us a new beginning. Give us a heart to love you, to fear you and to seek you. Take away from us all the above sins.

We pray for national unity. Unite us as Ugandans and eliminate all forms of conflict, sectarianism and tribalism. Help us to see that we are all your children, children of the same Father. Help us to love and respect one another and to appreciate unity in diversity. We pray for prosperity and transformation. Deliver us from ignorance, poverty and disease. As leaders, give us wisdom to help lead our people into political, social and economic transformation."

We want to dedicate this nation to you so that you will be our God and guide. We want Uganda to be known as a nation that fears God and as a nation whose foundations are firmly rooted in righteousness and justice to fulfill what the Bible says in Psalm 33:12: Blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord. A people you have chosen as your own.

I renounce all the evil foundations and covenants that were laid in idolatry and witchcraft. I renounce all the satanic influence on this nation. And I hereby covenant Uganda to you, to walk in your ways and experience all your blessings forever.

I pray for all these in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

- What stands out to you the most about this prayer?
- What sins does President Yoweri ask God to forgive? Is it important to name them?
- What promise of God does President Yoweri articulate? Why is this important?
- What does President Yoweri ask God to do?
- Read **2 Chronicles 7:14**. Do you believe this promise still applies to us today?

Examination:

- Read **Daniel 9:1-3**

- Daniel chapter 9 takes place the same year that Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den (Daniel chapter 6)—in the first year of the reign of King Darius (539/38BC). Daniel is now up in his 80’s. Is this what you would call “retirement”? Do we ever really retire for doing the work of God?
- We are told that Daniel *“understood from Scriptures, according to the Word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.”*
 - Read **Jeremiah 29:1-14**. What promises does God make to Israel? What does God say He will do after they have been held captive in Babylon after these seventy years?
 - Jeremiah told the people to “settle into the land” during that time. Why?
 - Is **Jeremiah 29:11** a verse that you’ve been familiar with? Why is this such a hopeful verse?
 - How does Daniel’s awareness of Jeremiah impact the way he prays?
- Read **Daniel 9:4-19**
 - Daniel begins his prayer by telling God that He is great and awesome. He also “reminds” God that He is One *“who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”* Why do you think Daniel includes this in his prayer?
 - Daniel is acknowledging that both he and his fellow Israelites deserve all that has happened to them. What sins does he admit to? What does he confess?
 - Daniel uses the word “covered in shame” in verse 8. What do you think that means? What does it mean to be covered in shame?
 - The summary of verses 11-14 is: “We got what we deserved.” In making this confession, Daniel refers to the curses and judgements “written in the Law of Moses.” What he’s talking about here is Deuteronomy chapter 28. Take a few minutes, and go back and read at least the first half of **Deuteronomy 28**. What are the blessings that God promises for obedience? What are the consequences for rebellion and disobedience?
 - Verse 13 describes “turning from our sin and giving attention to your truth.” Daniel begins this prayer by “giving attention” to the “truth” of God (v. 2). He reminds the Lord of the promises that were made through Jeremiah. Are you a person who gives attention to the truth of God? Do you spend time in His Word? Are you willing to commit to giving His Word more attention in your life?
 - Daniel concludes his prayer by reminding God of His great and awesome work of delivering the Israelites out of Egypt (v. 15). He mentions to God that by accomplishing this great act of deliverance—you *“made for yourself a name that endures to this day.”* With this in mind, what is Daniel asking God to do?
 - What three things does Daniel ask of God in verse 19?

Application:

Think right now of one of the promises that God has made to us in His Word. Fix that promise firmly in your mind. Take some time, right now, to pray that promise back to God. Remind God of it. And ask the Lord to HELP YOU. Admit your need. Ask Him to listen, forgive, and act!