

Sermon: Speechless

Text: Daniel 10

Discussion Questions:

One of my favorite Christian singers is Steven Curtis Chapman. As a family, we have been going to his concerts whenever he is performing nearby for well over twenty years. It's hard for me to single out one of his songs as a "favorite"—but I would say that in my "top three" is a song called "Speechless." Here are some of the lyrics:

*Words fall like drops of rain, my lips are like clouds.
I say so many things, trying to figure You out.
But as mercy opens my eyes my words are stolen away—
With this breathtaking view of Your grace*

*And I am speechless. I'm astonished and amazed.
I am silenced by Your wondrous grace.
You have saved me, You have raised me from the grave.
And I am speechless in Your presence now.
I'm astounded as I consider how You have shown us
A love that leaves us speechless.*

*So what kind of love could this be that would trade heaven's throne for a cross?
And to think You still celebrate over finding just one who was lost.
And to know You rejoice over us—The God of this whole universe...
It's a story that's too great for words! And we are speechless.*

As you think back over your life, what are some of the things that leave you speechless? What have you seen or experienced that overwhelmed you to the point that you simply couldn't talk?

That's exactly what happened to Daniel as we read today in chapter 10. We are told that it's the third year of the reign of King Cyrus—which puts it in the year 536BC. Daniel is now in his mid-eighties. A group of exiles led by man named Zerubbabel have already left Babylon to return to Jerusalem to begin rebuilding the temple (Ezra chapters 1-2). But Daniel has stayed behind in the land of Babylon. And he's praying. No, not just praying—he's pleading with God! For three weeks he has been on his knees and going without food.

Little does Daniel realize that for these entire 3 weeks—there has been a spiritual battle taking place in the "heavenly realms" that has been brought about because of his prayers. The first day that Daniel began to pray—God dispatched an angel (likely Gabriel) to appear to Daniel and give him another vision of the future. HOWEVER! What we read here in Daniel 10 is almost too incredible for words (speechless!). For 21 days, Gabriel has been doing battle with high-ranking demons in the "spiritual air space" over Persia. The conflict was so great that the arch-angel Michael needed to be called in for support!

- Talk about this. What does this make you think? Does it frighten you to think of this kind of spiritual warfare taking place? Does it encourage you to pray more?

Examination:

- Read **Daniel 10:1-9**

- It's interesting that we have a parentheses in verse 1, reminding us that Daniel was called "Belteshazzar." This was Daniel's Babylonian name, and the name that he would have been called almost his entire life. Why do you think we are reminded of this here in verse 1?
 - As we will see next week in chapter 11, the vision that Daniel received was a detailed "play-by-play" of a more than 100-year war that was to occur several hundred years into the future. It was to be a "great war" (v. 2). However, there was also a great war playing out directly above Daniel in the "spiritual air space" over the land of Persia. Gabriel and Michael are doing battle with demonic forces (v. 13)—a battle that lasts 21 days! What do you make of this? Do you appreciate having the curtain pulled back, and getting a glimpse into the unseen spiritual battle that is taking place all around us?
 - What kind of impact do you think Daniel's prayers (v. 3) were having on the spiritual battle that was (unbeknownst to Daniel) taking place?
 - Before Gabriel (I believe) touches Daniel and wakes him up (v. 10), Daniel is first visited by this man in verse 5. There are many reasons to believe that this first visitor was not an angel—but was Jesus Himself. Compare the details of verse 5 with the description of Jesus in **Revelation 1:12-18**. What conclusion do you reach?
 - What do you think those with Daniel sensed or experienced as all of this was happening? (v. 7) How does this compare with what happened to the Apostle Paul in **Acts 9:1-9**?
- Read **Daniel 10:10-21**
 - Following Daniel's "deep sleep" in verse 9, Daniel is roused by a hand—telling Daniel to stand up (v. 10). Verse 13 details, as we have seen, the battle that has taken place the previous 21 days.
 - My first question is: Do you think it's a reasonable conclusion that the first visitor in verse 5 was Jesus—but this visitor in verse 10 and following was NOT Jesus? Do you think Jesus would have had to call in Michael the archangel for support?
 - Does this "pulling back" of the curtain into mostly unseen spiritual realities frighten you—or encourage you? Do you believe it's true?
 - What does this tell us about the impact of our prayers?
 - How many times does the angel "touch" Daniel (vv. 10; 16; 18)? Why?
 - What is Daniel told in verse 19? Is this something that God needs to say to you today?
 - Read **Ephesians 6:10-18**. How does this account of the spiritual battle that is taking place here in Daniel 10 relate to what Paul describes in Ephesians?

Application:

If this is what happens when we pray—why don't we pray more? Seriously! Reading this chapter gives us an unprecedented glimpse into the true impact of our prayers. Don't stop praying. Know that your prayers are having an impact far beyond what you can see!