

Fireproof Faith – Prayer (Week 2)

Special Music – "If My People Pray" by Avalon (Video/Dance)

"Let's give a big thank you to our wonderful dancers for their beautiful rendition of 'If My People Pray.' Such an appropriate song for a time like this. AMEN!

Testimony for prayer

As the Scripture says, 'The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.' So here's a testimony of what God is doing because of your prayers: I love how He works and how gracious He is to allow us to be part of His great work! We pray, God moves, and we get to witness His testimony.

First, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who volunteered, made refreshments, and helped on-site for the Keiki Bible Club. And a special thank you to those who prayed for the children and their families throughout the five-day event. Mahalo, and thank you, Jesus, for sending Matt, Stacy, and the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) teams. They are an incredible group of people who train teens and young adults to lead these Keiki Bible Club sessions. Their mission is to share the gospel, one child at a time.

So, this was a couple weeks ago. By the end of the week, God had nearly doubled our attendance. The children had a wonderful time learning about God, meeting Jesus, and some even said, 'YES!' So, here's the part that warms my heart - Last week, a 10-year-old boy who had attended the Keiki Bible Club came to church on his own. He felt comfortable because of his experience with us. He sat in worship with the other children, joined Children's Ark, and Ms. Emily and her team reported that during Children's Ark, he accepted Christ. That's what it's all about—lifting up prayers, being obedient, and then watching what the Lord does as He transforms our homes, our workplaces, our schools, our communities.

2 Chronicles 7:14 says:

'Then, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.'

You know what that is? That's one of God's promises. He's saying that if we get too distracted, too focused on the world, too self-centered, He's going to try and get our attention. In verse 13, He says, 'I may stop the rain, I may allow sickness, I may allow calamity.' But then He says:

- If my people humble themselves and pray (confess),
- If they turn from their wicked ways (repent),
- I will forgive their sins and restore their land.

This is His promise, and I want us to keep this in mind as we continue our 'Fireproof Faith' series, where we're gathering tools in our arsenal—preparing for battle and strengthening our faith for all eternity.

Last week, Pastor Mark did an amazing job introducing us to the idea that this world is not our permanent home. As great as it might seem, this is not Heaven. In fact, while it might appear heavenly, this place is actually Babylon.

And because it is Babylon, Pastor Mark emphasized how crucial it is for us to know who we are and who we identify with. Will we stand with God, or will we fall elsewhere? When the pressure is on, will we know our true names, or will we let culture define us? Will we allow culture to dictate who we are, or will we listen to the One who created us—God?"

Introduction to Daniel 2 and the Power of Prayer

"This week, we're diving into Daniel 2 and receiving the powerful tool of prayer. Everyone say, 'prayer.' With that in mind, let's take a moment to pray.

Lord, we lift this time to You and declare, 'Have Your way.' Father, we thank You for the opportunity to encounter You this morning in a deeper, more meaningful way. We ask that You remove every distraction and help us focus solely on You, so that we may come to know Your heart just a little bit more and understand how You desire to commune with each of us in Your unique way.

Your Word commands us to pray. So, Lord, we ask that You remove every fear, every uncertainty, every false notion of what prayer is, and every stumbling block that might be in our way. Take us deeper into a relationship with You. May every word that comes forth be Yours, and may every action we take bring glory to Your name. Amen."

There's Daniel 2, but before we get into Daniel's story let's define prayer.

Prayer is NOT – a way to impress folks,
only asking or demanding things from God,
a way to control or bargain with God,
while it may be therapeutic, it's not therapy.

Prayer is **NOT** passive. For Christians it is **ACTIVE** engagement with God.

It's been said, "the greatest tragedy is not an unanswered prayer, but an unoffered one." We've said this before, that every prayer is answered. How it is answered may not be what we expect.

So, What Is Prayer?

Simply put, prayer is both worship and communion with God.

Why Worship? In prayer, we acknowledge:

- **God's Supremacy:** By praying, we recognize that God is bigger than us.
- **Our Surrender:** Through earnest prayer, we surrender and submit to God's will.

Warren Wiersbe succinctly captures the purpose of prayer: "*The immediate purpose of prayer is the accomplishing of God's will on earth; the ultimate purpose of prayer is the eternal glory of God.*" Let me read that again: So, prayer is not about our will or our glory; it's about His. We get to be part of His work, and in that, we learn to submit and allow Him to be God.

Daniel 2:2-4, NIV

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled, and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, 3 he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me, and I want to know what it means."

4 The astrologers answered the king, “May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”

5 The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. 6 But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So, tell me the dream and interpret it for me.”

8 The king answered, “I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize this is what I have firmly decided: 9 If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”

10 The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, enchanter, or astrologer. 11 What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.” *(Interesting that even these magicians acknowledge that only a god could do what the king is asking.)*

12 This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death. *(Even Daniel and his friends were at risk—showing how misled Babylon was, grouping magicians, astrologers, and prophets altogether.)*

Daniel 2:17-23

17 Then Daniel went to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 18 He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven *(say "God of Heaven")* concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. *(Notice how Daniel knew this was something only God could solve. He didn't ask for advice from others; he went directly to God. Imagine being given an important task at work or school and seeking everyone's opinion except the one who assigned it. We should go directly to God first. Prayer is like being given an assignment from the divine.)*

19 During the night, the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven 20 and said: (Daniel had complete certainty it was God who revealed this. How many of us struggle to discern God’s voice? This is a testament to Daniel’s close relationship with God—something that comes from direct communion.)

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.
21 He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

22 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

23 I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

Here we see a beautiful picture of Daniel fully submitted to God, demonstrating the power and purpose of prayer.

Slide 9

Other observations from Daniel ...

- **Prayer is Continuous:** A few weeks ago, I was updating the fire extinguishers and was reminded of those encased in glass—there’s usually a sign above them that says, “Break in case of emergency.” God pointed out that many of us treat prayer the same way: as something sacred reserved for emergencies or when we feel we have no other option.

Prayer, like our faith, isn’t just for Sundays; it’s a 24/7 lifestyle. Imagine if I had a business partner, not just an investor, but someone actively involved in the business, and I only communicated with them when a problem arose. Would that partnership be successful? Similarly, God wants to be actively involved in every aspect of our lives, not just during difficult times. He desires a constant relationship with us, guiding us through all circumstances.

The Word instructs us to pray without ceasing:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NASB: 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

In a more informal version: “Stay joyful all the time. No matter what happens, make time to talk to God all the time. No matter what happens, say ‘Thank you!’ to God. This is what God wants because you are close to Jesus.” - HPB

- **Subversion: Contend for God’s Very Best**

What Daniel did, and what we are called to do, is:

- not to acquiesce.

- Not to rebel.

- but rather subversion to contend for God’s manifest presence in places and situations we don’t fully understand. God’s manifest presence happened amid prayer with Daniel and his friends. As a result, they were raised to positions that would transform their King and communities.

Our lesson ... Throughout history, God’s covenant people have often faltered in this partnership with God — Noah, Abraham, the nation of Israel, King David, and indeed all of us have at times compromised or failed to fully engage in this partnership.

The pattern shows us that kingdoms rise and fall, but the promise remains: God endures through it all. He is continually reestablishing His Kingdom. Once again, God is asking us to take a stand for His very best.

Testimony by Shane Konno

Discussion Questions:

1. What did God speak to you through this weekend’s message?
2. Consider the definition of prayer given in our discussion. What is God speaking about prayer to you? What does it mean to have prayer an “active” activity?
3. As discussed, prayer is a form of worship. Why?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17. Share what the Lord might be speaking to you through that scripture.
5. Considering Daniel 2, how did Daniel live 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 out? can How can we make prayer an even greater part of our lives?
6. Discuss what Daniel did differently from the sorcerers, magicians, and astrologists? What impact did his actions have on the outcomes? How much control did he have
7. Read and discuss 2 Chronicles 7:14.
8. How does prayer help to fireproof your life and faith?
9. What role does prayer hold in keeping hope alive? in one’s transformation?
10. What is the ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) template for prayer? Consider what each of the letters in the acronym mean to you?