

BaptistWay Bible Series for March 9: What does our prayer say about us?

March 4, 2008

Posted: 3/04/08

BaptistWay Bible Series for March 9

What does our prayer say about us?

- 1 Kings 8:22-36, 41-51

[By Kenneth Jordan](#)

First Baptist Church, Alpine

I grew up in a time when kids still roamed free. The thought of someone causing us harm was foreign (at least to us). For me, the worst thing that could happen would be for us to get home later than we were supposed to and face the wrath of Mom and Dad. It was a time when my friends and I would ride our bikes all over town doing pretty much what we wanted to.

There was, however, the consistent admonition of my mother. When we would be getting ready to strike out on our own, she would say, "Don't embarrass your mother."

As my childhood years faded into the life of a teenager, I came to discover that Mom had spied all over the city. She had a way of knowing where we had been, what we had done and what the consequences would be long before our bikes were parked in our back yard.

Mom's advice reminded us we were to not only listen, but to adjust our behavior accordingly. It didn't take too many times of getting into trouble for me to begin to take Mom seriously.

As we look at the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8, we find someone who took God (and prayer) seriously. Take a moment and read through his prayer (vv. 23-53). It is a long prayer (see how long it takes you to read it aloud). Some folks in the congregation probably began to fidget. There is a lot that Solomon says in this prayer regarding his understanding of God's covenant and God's purpose for Israel.

But there is another thing that jumps out at me as his prayer unfolds: His belief that God will take an active part in responding to his prayer.

Read through the prayer again. Count the number of times that the plea of "hear" is combined with action. Hear and forgive (v. 30). Hear and act (v. 32). Hear and forgive (vv. 34, 36, 39 and 50). Hear and do (v. 43). Hear and uphold their cause (v. 49).

Sprinkled in the midst of the actions are expectations such as bring them back, teach them the right way to live, send rain, deal with each man according to all he does. Solomon's prayer was direct. His communication was honest. His faith that his God was not only inclining an ear but lending a hand is obvious.

When my mother sent us out of the house with her admonition, she was expecting us to not only listen, but to act in a given way considering our circumstances. She wasn't ambiguous as to her desires.

If we can learn something from Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem, perhaps we could learn to mold our prayers into a more direct form of communication. Rather than concern ourselves with posture or vocabulary, we could spend time telling God our heart. Rather than pray only when things are going well, maybe we should consider (as

Solomon did) that there will be times when we blow it. Instead of avoiding God when the conviction of his Holy Spirit falls on us, we should prepare for it ahead of time and know not only how we should act (confession), but remember how God promises to respond.

If you read to the end, you know Solomon was not a perfect man. That does not negate the fact that he understood prayer and understood the God to whom he prayed. We should all be so fortunate to come to a better understanding of both.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.