

Thesis: **Razing hell requires heaven's help!**

## INTRODUCTION

Nine weeks ago I introduced to you a theme that had been in my mind for months, the theme of Razing Hell. It is my contention that we (the Church) have become too passive against the onslaught of evil, the works of the devil. The biblical story is replete with examples of men and women who successfully stood against the adversary. Most importantly, Jesus himself was a hell-razer! 1 John 3:8 tells us that *for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil*. And, as we read the New Testament it seems clear that we are sent to do the same; we are to raze hell!

Two weeks ago I issued the 7/24 Challenge: **Seven days a week I will spend at least 24 minutes each day interacting with God through His Word**. I have been greatly encouraged as people are sharing with me and others how embracing this challenge is changing their lives. Praise the Lord! I do not believe we can raze hell apart from God's Word dwelling in us. It is only as we live in the Word and live by the Word that we are able to overcome our adversary the devil!

Do you remember the four disciplines I shared with you to help you hear God's voice in His Word? Adopted from an ancient practice (Lectio Divina) they are: Listen slowly, think deeply, pray fervently, and obey faithfully.

Today, I want to focus on the third of those habits of the heart: prayer. Listen to this sentence: **Razing hell requires heaven's help!** Does that resonate with you? Are you fully aware of the foolishness of entering this battle with only the power of the flesh? Satan laughs at such silly saints! We need help from heaven, and prayer is the appointed means by which we access God's help.

Today we turn our attention to Daniel who razed hell in his generation, despite the fact that he was a slave in a strange land. Look with me today to Daniel 10 as we find Daniel exercising his holy habit of prayer:

*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.*

*4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.*

*7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.*

*10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.*

*12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come." NKJV*

This is a wonderfully intriguing story! I believe Daniel received heaven's help because he prayed! Let me remind you again: **Razing hell requires heaven's help!** We need to pray before we engage the enemy!

What are the characteristics of victory praying?

### **1. Victory praying is serious praying!**

Expl. People mourned over sin (see Daniel 9:3ff), calamity, and death.  
See Nehemiah 1:4.

Daniel was serious about prayer!

He was willing to risk his life for prayer!

Illus. *"The secret to success is success in secret."* Dr. John Marshall

Appl. When it comes to prayer, how serious are you in secret?

Why are we not more serious in our praying?

Illus. *We cannot know what prayer is for until we know that life is war.*

Let The Nations Be Glad! By John Piper page 41

Illus. Molly praying (age 2)

Illus. Remember the time the disciples of Jesus could not heal a demonized boy? Mark 9:29 *So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."*

Appl. Razing hell requires heaven's help!

We access heaven's victory by our praying!

What is victory praying?

**Victory praying is serious praying!**

There is a second characteristic of victory praying:

### **2. Victory praying is persistent praying!**

Expl. Notice v. 2 (*three full weeks*)

Trick question: How long had Daniel been praying before his answer came? All his life!

Prayer was the pattern of his life!

Persistent prayer accessed heaven's help!

Illus. Luke 11:9 *Ask . . . knock . . . seek . . .*

The parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8)

Paul tells us to *pray without ceasing* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Illus. *Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.*

*Talent will not; Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.*

*Education will not; The world is full of educated derelicts.*

*Persistence and Determination alone are omnipotent.*

*So with the strength supplied by a close relationship with God,*

*Press On.* (Received from Gary Greenleaf)

Appl. Isn't that the word we need concerning prayer? Press on!

My struggle with persistence comes when I forget it is more than just me and God; there is also the world, the flesh, and the devil!

Illus. Jon Courson in his commentary has this to say about this persistence in Daniel's prayer life:

*Thus, the answer to prayer was hung up in a heavenly conflict. What would happen had Daniel quit praying after eighteen days? I believe the answer would never have come. He had to pray through. There are demons at work, gang. We are not wrestling against people, against flesh and blood. It's not your boss's personality, your husband's insensitivity, or your wife's inadequacies that are irritating you. Rather, there are demons in place that are causing all kinds of irritations, improper evaluations, and very real frustrations. If you're wrestling against people, you're fighting the wrong battle. It's the demons you need to war against, not flesh and blood.<sup>1</sup>*

Appl. I fear we know far too little about praying through!

I wonder how many times I have given up a few days shy of victory?

Razing hell requires heaven's help!

We access heaven's help by praying!

What are the characteristics of victory praying?

**Victory praying is persistent praying!**

Not only is victory praying **serious praying** and **persistent praying**, but **3. Victory praying is humble praying!**

Expl. Look again at verse 12

Daniel knew what he didn't know!

He humbled himself before God.

Illus. *"The neck is a kind of switch. The instant we bow our head, the light turns on."* Calvin Miller *Walking With Saints*, Page 218

Illus. D. L. Moody said once that Moses lived his life in three phases. He spent his first forty years thinking he was somebody, his second forty years finding out he was a nobody, and his third forty years discovering what God could do with a nobody! *Transformation*, pp. 83-84, Bob Roberts Jr.

Illus. An altar full of praying men and women at Church Army in Branson. The Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14).

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<sup>1</sup>Courson, Jon: *Jon Courson's Application Commentary : Volume Two : Psalms-Malachi*. Nashville, TN : Thomas Nelson, 2006, S. 735

Appl. Remember 2 Chronicles 7:14 on humility.

God responds to the humble, but resists the proud.

Appl. Razing hell requires heaven's help!

We access heaven's help by praying!

What are the characteristics of victory praying?

**Victory praying is humble praying!**

## CONCLUSION

These are days of great challenge and great opportunity. Some of us are finding out that the battle gets hotter as we raze hell! I am not calling you to a life of ease; I am calling you to a life of high adventure, great risks, and many dangers. The devil will not roll over and play possum; he will attack. Our challenge is to look to heaven for help, to call on the name of our Lord, to pray – serious, persistent, humble prayer. **Razing hell requires heaven's help, and help is available to those who pray!**