

Welcome

We want to welcome you to the Bismarck Seventh-day Adventist Church. Whether you are a visitor or a long time member we hope that you experience God's presence as well as warm Christian fellowship today here at church. Have a Happy Sabbath!

Announcements:

January 7 – Church Board Meeting – 6:45 pm
January 11 - Communion Sabbath

Communion: There will be our communion service on next Sabbath, January 11.

Weekly Prayer Session: Join us each Sabbath at 9:45am for a brief time of prayer in the sanctuary before our regular Sabbath School classes.

Small Groups: Our fall semester of groups comes to an end on Dec. 14. Thank you to all the group leaders, hosts, and participants. Stay tuned for details on our upcoming spring semester. If you have an idea for a group, would be willing to lead or host a group or have feedback to offer, please contact Julie Bitz.

Shut-In Coordinator: If you would like a visitation shut-in list, please call Brigetta Warner at 220-4938. Thank you for volunteering for this “at home” missionary service.

Brentwood Constituency Meeting: Rescheduled for January 11, 2020 at 5:30 pm. the Brentwood Constituency meeting will be held at Brentwood School with a game night social following the meeting.

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Redeeming the Years

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| Musical Prelude | | |
| Welcome & Announcements | | Lauren Block |
| Invocation | | Pastor Neil Biloff |
| Praise Time | #251 He Lives | Kimber Flemmer |
| Tithe and Offering | Local Church Budget | Aaron Dalusong |
| Children's Story | | Michelle Candy |
| Scripture and Prayer | Joel 2:28-32 | Cole Frank |
| Sermon | Redeeming the Years | Pastor Neil Biloff |
| Closing Song | #202 Hail Him the King of Glory | Kimber Flemmer |
| Benediction | | Pastor Neil Biloff |

Elder of the Month – Lauren Block
Sunset Today: 5:06 p.m.
Sunset next Friday: 5:14 p.m.
Offering next Sabbath: Dakota Challenge

Pastor Tyler Bower
972-352-7437

Church Secretary
701-226-4765

January 4, 2020
Bismarck Seventh-day
Adventist Church



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Pastor's Corner – 1-4-20 – Praying the Perfect Prayer

This morning I was having my devotional time and I read one of my favorite psalms that, to me, is an example of a perfect prayer. It's not a perfect prayer because of flowery language or noble themes of righteousness. It's not even a particularly God-centric prayer, if you ask me. None of these things are what make a prayer perfect though. Instead, it's a result of honesty, openness, and vulnerability before God. That's what makes this prayer a model prayer that we can follow. So, let's take a look at Psalm 109 and see what we can see.

Psalm 109 is one of the psalms that David wrote with the intention of having it used as part of worship. It has a heading stating that it was "for the director of music" which means it was supposed to be included in the church hymnal. I have a hard time imagining a congregation singing this song in church. The subject matter doesn't quite seem appropriate for praise time and yet, there it is. I guess it just goes to show you how subjective worship music truly is.

The first part of the psalm begins with a brief acknowledgement of God and then immediately dives into what I can only describe as a complaint. David talks about how wicked and deceitful men have lied about him and unfairly attacked him. He offered them friendship and they repaid his kindness with accusations, evil, and hatred. This isn't a God centered hymn. It's all about David and how he is being mistreated.

Next, he begins to make some very specific requests of God. He asks the Lord to "appoint an evil man to oppose" his oppressor. David pleads for God to judge his enemy and find him guilty. He goes on to pray that his enemy becomes penniless, that his children become fatherless, and that his descendants be cut off. Rather than praying for God to forgive his enemies he specifically asks God to remember their sins. "May their sins always remain

before the Lord," he says, "that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth." Such Christlike compassion. Do you begin to see why I don't want to sing this one as an opening hymn next Sabbath?

After praying for curses on his enemy, David then begins to outline all the bad things that his enemy has done. Apparently, this guy was not a nice person in general, not just towards David. He wore cursing as his garment and never thought of doing a kindness. Nothing like publicly dragging your enemies through the mud. Is this a prayer or a campaign speech for political office? It's hard to tell.

About half-way through David switches focus and begins to talk about himself. He prays for God to show him mercy and goodness. He prays for deliverance. He acknowledges that he is, "poor and needy," and his "heart is wounded" within him. This is a nice turn in the psalm though there is a distinct note of self-pity or even depression going on here. It's good to see David turn away from the themes of slander and revenge though.

The whole thing ends with David saying, "With my mouth I will greatly extol the Lord; in the great throng I will praise him. For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save his life from those who condemn him." Finally, at the very end we have a true expression of praise.

So why is this the perfect prayer? It includes complaints, pleas for revenge, and depression. How is this a good prayer? I believe it is the perfect prayer because David is being completely open, honest, and raw with God. He holds nothing back. He doesn't try to sanitize his prayer or his feelings. He lays all his cards on the table.

In fact, it seems as if his no-holds-barred honesty is what allows him to process his feelings with God. Notice that the prayer begins with bitterness, anger, and pain. It progresses to sorrow and self-pity. But by the end, David is singing praises to God. He has found comfort and the hope of deliverance by sharing his pain with his God. I think this

kind of healing is only truly possible when we have this kind of honesty with God.

The moral of the story is this. Be honest with God when you pray. Don't hold back. If you feel angry, tell God you're angry. If you want him to hurl fire and brimstone down on your enemies, ask him to hurl down fire and brimstone. If you're sad or depressed, let him know. Whatever you are feeling, share it with God. He can take it.

It is only through this kind of honest and open communication that we can truly learn to depend on God and to ultimately receive the comfort we need. So, give it a try sometime. Have a hold-nothing-back prayer session with the Lord one of these days. Let him in to the deepest parts of your soul. Let him see the darkness and the pain. I promise it won't scare him off.

Happy Sabbath
Pastor Tyler