

A Prayer for Protection

Psalm 5 (KJV)

1 Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. **2** Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. **3** My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. **4** For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. **5** The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. **6** Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. **7** But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. **8** Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. **9** For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. **10** Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. **11** But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. **12** For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

The Psalms Speak to Us Today

The Psalms were written over a period of around 900-1000 years. The oldest psalm was written around 1410 B.C. and the last one was written around 430-500 B.C.

The oldest psalm, being Psalm 90, describes the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness as Moses observed what took place during that time. It is marked by descriptions of the severe testing of Israel during their wanderings. There's an aspect of life where we are sometimes caused to endure things that aren't necessarily enjoyed, but required.

The last psalm, Psalm 126, is believed to have been written during the time of Israel's captivity to the Babylonians as they returned to Jerusalem from their exile. It's one that is filled with joy as they see the Lord opening the doors of opportunity to them.

All of the Psalms mark our own journey as a saint of God. Whether you are up or down, soaring or struggling, you can find a psalm that relates to where you are at in life. They aid us in our worship to the Lord. We've been given some instructions in the New Testament on how they contribute to our walk with God:

Sung as devotions—Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16

Prayed fervently—Acts 4:25-26

Preached evangelistically—Acts 2:25-28, 31, 34-35; 13:33-35

Taught expositionally—Luke 24:44; Rom. 3:10-14, 18; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 4:8; Heb. 1:5

In fact, it would be safe to say that when we look at the book of Psalms there is an evident God-centered focus to move our hearts toward the Lord.

Historical Background of Psalm 5

Sometimes there aren't clear markings in the superscriptions as to what the surroundings of the psalm are. Psalm 5 has a superscription, but it doesn't give us any real historical clues as to what is taking place in David's life.

Some believe that this is another psalm that deals with David's flight from his son, Absalom. That is gained from the designations of the times of these psalms.

Psalm 3—A morning prayer written the morning after David fled from Jerusalem under the cover of night. They had marched through the day and finally collapsed in the evening and it was written the next morning.

Psalm 4—An evening prayer that was written after David crossed the Jabbok and continued north fleeing from Absalom. He would move into the mountain terrain and hope to find some allies among the mountain tribes. On that evening, he acknowledged what God had done for him.

Psalm 5—A morning prayer that was written the following day. He was going to face his foes on this day and he was a bit uncertain about how things would turn out.

Even though David notes the greatness of God and the power of prayer, the superscription gives a bit of a hint as to what was taking place in the heart of David. It's a psalm written to be accompanied by a 'nehiloth.' This is a flute type instrument that was normally used to play songs that conveyed a heaviness of spirit.

What David is saying is, "I have written a song that someone else is going to have to sing." I don't have the energy to play along with my harp; it would just be better if someone else would sing it for me.

Everybody has times where the songs escape our hearts, worship seeps from our souls, and a heaviness plays in our minds, because of the circumstances we are immersed in.

Psalms 5 is a time of prayer where David is standing face-to-face with God and is speaking to Him. He does that three times, but as he is in his prayer meeting, a couple of times he alternately looks at the wicked. As his prayer turns from God to the wicked there are some contrasts that he comes to understand. You can encourage yourself in prayer when you are willing to see God in comparison to the wicked.

This kind of prayer helps a man to see the righteousness and purity of God in contrast to the darkness of wicked men who are attempting to advance their cause of evil.

"This prayer is not only for protection from wicked persons, but also a prayer for protection from becoming like them." – P. C. Craigie

A Prayer for Protection

As we move through this psalm, we can never underestimate the prayer of a saint of God! If there is something that I want to push home to you, it's that! We must turn every one of our burdens, worries, fears, and plans over to the Lord in prayer. He can hear us and He will endeavor to help us!

The Lord Who Listens

Psalm 5:1-7 (KJV)

1 Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. **2** Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. **3** My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. **4** For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. **5** The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. **6** Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. **7** But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

When you pray, God listens! There was a sense of urgency in the prayer of David here. Notice three words that give this away:

Give ear—v. 1

Consider—v. 1

Hearken—v. 2

David wasn't just kneeling and going through a routine of prayer. There was something urgent and difficult about his situation. He had some passion in his prayer. David was just like Elijah when he prayed:

James 5:17-18 (KJV)

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. **18** And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

I believe that there is a spirit by which we ought to pray. When I say “spirit,” I mean the human aspect of our heart. There ought to be some preparation that goes into our approach with God. I dare say that none of us would walk into an interview for a slot in an academic program, a job interview, or a discussion with someone who we deem as important and be unprepared. To do such a thing would mean that we are lacking a conscientiousness about what we are doing.

Therefore, we should come to the Lord in the same manner of preparation. There are attitudes that mark our prayers. Often, in the Bible, we see the prevalence of those who will kneel in their prayer. But even beyond that, there are attitudes and spirits that accompany those prayers.

Luke 22:41 (KJV) And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

Just as the Lord kneeled in prayer, we can have that same manner of preparation in our prayer.

Kneel reverently as Solomon did at the dedication of the Temple—2 Chron. 6:13

Kneel continually as Daniel did three times a day—Dan. 6:10

Kneel in worship as the psalmists urges us for Jehovah our Maker—Psa. 95:6

Kneel in submission as the Lord did in the Garden of Gethsemane—Luke 22:41

Kneel earnestly as the leper did when he was seeking for healing—Mark 1:40

Kneel in forgiveness as Stephen did when he prayed for his murderers—Acts 7:60

Kneel in intercession as Peter did when he prayed for Tabitha—Acts 9:40

Kneel faithfully like Paul when he prayed for the church in Ephesus—Acts 20:36

Kneel confidently like Paul when he recognized God in His greatness—Eph. 3:14

There is also a sense of persistence that is demonstrated. In Psalm 5:3, David says, “in the morning” twice. There was a persistence that said, “My prayer is going to go on all morning until I can sense you are hearing, considering, and listening to my prayer.”

But it doesn't stop there, because David gives us the understanding that there is also a sense of expectation that he has... “I will look up!” He tells the Lord, “I am directing my prayer to you but I am also looking up in faith.”

That is the key to answered prayer, “looking up to the Lord in faith.” The devil does not want us to get that little detail into our prayer. He is fine with us praying, but he doesn't want us to expect for the Lord to work it out.

Then David sort of casts his eyes to the side and looks away from the Lord for a bit at the wicked in 5:4-6.

Each of the four preceding psalms have spoken about the wicked:

Psalm 1—The way of the wicked.

Psalm 2—The rebellion of the wicked (particularly the kings and rulers of the earth.)

Psalm 3—The attack of wicked people.

Psalm 4—The slandering tongues of the wicked.

Now it takes a darker turn and David writes that the Lord will not hear the prayer of the wicked and He will take no pleasure in them:

Psalm 5:4-6 (KJV)

4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. **5** The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. **6** Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

This world is so confused about who God hears. They seem to think that all will turn out well after death, but this is not what Scripture advocates nor teaches. In fact, these verses teach us that the sinner who has no footing (shall not stand v. 5) also has no future (You destroy those v. 6).

In this second portion of his prayer, David reviews the types of evil-doers moving from terms that are general to those that are stronger and more descriptive:

The wicked—v. 4

The arrogant—v. 5

Those who do evil—v. 5

Those who tell lies—v. 6 (This is a pretty strong condemnation of a sin that is practiced regularly almost without remorse.)

The bloodthirsty and deceitful men—v. 6

Furthermore, he is reminding himself, in his prayer, how God views sin and again the words grow in their passion:

He does not delight in wickedness—v. 4

He hates those who do evil—v. 5

He destroys those who tell lies—v. 6

He abhors those who are bloodthirsty and deceitful—v. 6

This is a good way to gauge your own prayers. If you are drawing closer to God, then you will become more increasingly aware of sin both in a general sense in society and in a specific sin, those hidden away in your own heart. This only takes place when we gain a place of prayer that elevates God to a rightful place of holiness and reverence.

“Prayers of this kind may have more value than our age is inclined to admit.” – H. C. Leupold

This very brief theology of sin that David finds in his prayer does something to him:

Psalm 5:7 (KJV)

7 But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

The closer you get to the Lord, the more humility it will bring out in your life. He said that when he came into the house of the Lord, he discovered a multitude of undeserved mercy and a fear, reverence, and awe of God.

We cannot afford to come into the house of the Lord on our “high-horses” so to speak. We have received mercy far beyond our capacity to bear and our worship should have an element of awe of God in it!

“Though evil persons are excluded from God’s presence because of their sin, it does not follow that the psalmist is admitted because of his own goodness. The psalmist’s entrance into God’s house would be based only upon ‘the abundance of your loving kindness’ which is to say, it was only God’s grace and covenant love toward his people which made entrance into his presence possible.” – P. C. Craigie

The Lord Who Leads

If the Lord listens to us in prayer, the next portion of Psalm 5 tells us it is also the Lord who leads us:

Psalm 5:8-9 (KJV)

8 Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. **9** For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

The leading of the Lord is required to navigate us through the landmines that the unrighteous have set up. Absalom had turned the hearts of the people against David.

Falsehood, foulness, and flattery is what David is up against. David was pleading with the Lord to lead his steps.

“This doth admonish us, (1) that the speeches of natural unregenerate men are unsavoury, rotten, and hurtful to others; for, as a sepulcher doth send out noisome savours and filthy smells, so evil men do utter rotten and filthy words. (2) As a sepulcher doth consume and devour bodies cast into it, so wicked men do with their cruel words destroy others; they are like a gulf to destroy others. (3) As a sepulcher, having devoured many overthrown many corpses, is still ready to consume more, being never satisfied, so wicked men, having overthrown many with their words, do proceed in their outrage, seeking whom they may devour.”
– Thomas Wilson

You will walk through words like that in some of the passages of your life, but you’re able to ask God to help you to walk through the crossfire of enemies. Sometimes co-workers, sometimes two-faced people who you thought were friends, and sometimes your own family. It is moments like these that the Lord can move in and give you safe passage, not necessarily comfortable passage, but safe passage.

Psalm 25:4-5 (KJV)

4 Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. **5** Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Psalm 27:11 (KJV) Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

Psalm 86:11 (KJV) Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

Psalm 119:10 (KJV) With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

Psalm 143:8-10 (KJV)

8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

9 Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me. **10** Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Take heart, O saint of God, He will lead you through the narrowest and most treacherous of paths! He will prevail in every aspect of your safety and ultimately your own salvation.

The Lord Who Legislates

So, in Psalm 5, we find a Lord who will listen, lead, and lastly, will legislate.

Psalm 5:10-12 (KJV)

10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

David again, in a place of prayer, a prayer for protection, calls out some things:

Destroy them... Let them fall... Cast them out...

These three phrases open a term to us that has not been present in the first four psalms. It is the first utterance of what is called an imprecatory prayer. What this means is that it is a prayer asking for God's judgment on the wicked. Prayers like this present a difficulty for many people, but there are multiple psalms that are

considered imprecatory in nature (Psalms 7; 35; 40; 55; 58-59; 69; 79; 109; 137; 139; 144).

These kinds of psalms are motivated by a fiery zeal for God's glory to be exalted. They are provocative and often controversial, but they are seeking relief from the enemies of the psalmist who are enemies of God.

David is looking to the Lord to legislate trouble on those who have come against him. I dare say that if we are honest with ourselves, that there have been times that we have prayed for the Lord to mete out some justice against those who are actively antagonizing us. Pray those prayers, pray for your enemies, but make sure that you leave the end of the matter in the hands of God. It is never right for us to take up our cause in a manner of violence or abuse.

Pray these matters out! One of two things will happen; God will reveal your own immaturity to you and give you a chance to grow spiritually by it, or it very well may be that God will deal with them in some catastrophic way. I can tell you by personal experience that I have seen the hand of God at work several times as God worked either through an accident that stopped something bad or through some sudden health issue that took place in the lives of the attacker. Leave them alone and let God deal with them after you have brought it to your prayer closet.

David had such trust and confidence in the Lord, that he ended his prayer with a sense of celebration. If you have put your trust in the Lord: rejoice and shout with joy! God is a defender, be joyful in the Lord! The Lord blesses with righteousness! The Lord surrounds us with His favor!

Shout to The Lord

There is a song that's been around for at least ten years that was one of Hillsong's first songs that crept into churches around the country. It had a catchy tune to it, but even more than that, it had some words that made you want to worship the Lord.

My Jesus, my Savior,
Lord, there is none like You;
All of my days
I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love.

My comfort, my shelter,
Tower of refuge and strength;
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship You.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth,
Let us sing power and majesty, praise to the (King);
Mountains bow down (mountains bow down) and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name.

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands,
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand,
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.

(My Jesus) To my Savior (my Savior),
Oh, Lord there is nothing like You;
All of my days
I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love.

You're my comfort (my comfort), and my shelter, yes (my shelter),
You're my tower of refuge and strength;
Let every breath, and all that I am
Never cease to worship You.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth,
Let us sing
Power and majesty, praise to the King;
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name.

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands,
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand,
Nothing compares to the promise I have in...

Shout to the Lord, all the earth,
Let us sing, yeah,
Power and majesty, praise to the King;
Mountains bow down (mountains bow down and the seas will roar)
At the sound of Your name.

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands,
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand,
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You...
(Nothing compares to the promise I have in You...)
Oh, nothing compares to the promise I have in you.

That is certainly a song you can sing after you have prayed a prayer of protection!