

Praying with the Psalmist
“The Prayer of the Attacked”

Introduction: New series: Praying with the Psalmist

A. The mystery of prayer

1. I do pray, believe in its essential dimension of my faith walk, and can't imagine living without it.
2. But, don't understand how it works.

James Mays

“How can it be that I, one little speck of consciousness in the vast universe and in the unending flow of time, should claim the attention of the One who is the infinity and unity of all reality?”

B. The role of the Psalms in our faith journey.

(ILL) Augustine between conversion/baptism—read and PRAYED the Psalms and it was “part of my transformation as I learned a new language.”

Again Mays: (Of Augustine)

“He spoke the Psalms to and before the Christian God who was now the source and subject of his faith and life.”

C. The focus of this series.

1. Some of the great prayers of the Psalmist.
2. Emerge from a variety of contexts and present multiple issues.
3. How did they pray in various circumstances?
4. Informs, instructs, and shapes our prayer lives.

D. The context of Psalm 5

1. Possibly Absalom narrative (Psalm 3)
2. Young in the court of Saul, accused of brown-nosing
3. Like Psalm 7—attack of Cush—Benjamite
4. Regardless—not kind, lies, spreading lies/slander

(ILL) 4 pastors/fishing trip/campfire/secret sins/bare their souls—gambling on pony, temper, rum in cellar, gossip. “Can't wait to get home and talk to your church.”

5. Not funny when happens to us—gossip, slander, criticism
6. Happens to all of us and people are ruthless!

E. The outline of Psalm 5

1. 2 halves (1-7; 8-12)
2. Parallel each other
 - a. 1-3/8—Parallel as prayers
 - b. 4/6/9-10—David appeals to righteous judge
 - c. 7/11-12—Speaks of drawing near and finding refuge in God

Principles that emerge from this prayer

I. Instead of attacking back we should pray.

Give ear to my words, O Lord, Consider my meditation. 2 Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. 3 My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up. Psalms 5:1-3 NKJV

NOTE: Simple truth

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9 NKJV

- ✓ Easy to fight back, say ugly things
- ✓ David did not
- ✓ He took his complaint to the Lord

(ILL) Don Cox, Patty Parks, Ralph, letters to district office/board

Qualities of our Prayer

A. Pray with integrity

Give ear to my words, O Lord, Consider my groaning. Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, for to You I pray. Psalm 5:1, 2 NASB

(Groaning cry for help)

1. Honest appraisal of feelings
2. Not trying to act “together”
3. David did not hide his pain
4. Jesus at Gethsemane

Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Psalms 62:8 NKJV

(ILL) Romans 8:26

B. Pray with humility

v. 2 My King/My God

Matthew Henry—“*Kings on their thrones must be beggars at God’s throne.*”

C. Pray with intimacy

MY God/MY King

NOTE: Knew Him before he prayed

D. Pray persistently

NOTE: 2 times “in the morning”

1. First waking thought is of God
2. Not time but persistence that matters

E. Pray expectantly

In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch. Psalm 5:3 NASB

I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected. Habakkuk 2:1 NKJV

TRUTH: When under attack don’t hurl back ugliness. Pray! Take it to God!

II. Our prayers should reflect a confidence in the character of God.

For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You. 5 The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. 6 You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. Psalms 5:4-6 NKJV

- A. David rehearses the righteousness of God
- B. He acknowledges God's character but does not seek to manipulate His will
- C. Inherent certainty that God is:
 - a. All knowing
 - b. All powerful
 - c. All wise

TRUTH:

We want retaliation, He wants reconciliation.
We want deserved penalty, He wants unmerited favor.
We want immediate, He works deliberately.
We want equality, He wants restoration.

(ILL)

Prodigal—Older wanted apology, friends pay back.
Lepers—we would take back their healing, Jesus did not.
Offense—we struggle when people just go on and never pay the consequences, God doesn't.

III. Our prayers should be rooted in an awareness of our own guilt and God's grace.

But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple. Psalms 5:7 NKJV

- A. Take log out of our own eye first.

NOTE: I approach only because of your merit.

- B. Am I judging my own sin/my own heart?
- C. His mercy is our only claim to His presence.

NOTE: Mention of temple—some controversy—same word for tabernacle

D. I draw near in both reverence and confidence

1. Reverence

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Matthew 6:9 NKJV

2. Confidence

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16 NKJV

IV. Our prayer should be focused on the need for strength and direction.

Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face. Psalms 5:8 NKJV

- A. We have the tendency to get back.
- B. We want to retaliate—get even—make them pay.
- C. Lead me in righteousness—help me to:

1. Love my enemies

"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. 29 To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Luke 6:27-29 NKJV

2. Care about those who hurt me.

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles. Proverbs 24:17 NKJV

3. Respond kindly to those who hurt me.

Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Romans 12:20 NKJV

Pray for God's help/direction!

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V. Our prayer should be motivated by jealousy for God's name.

For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue. 10 Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, For they have rebelled against You. Psalms 5:9-10 NKJV

- A. Justice—not so we are satisfied
- B. Justice—so His name is upheld
- C. Can't pray this first—must ourselves be searched
- D. This really is a submission to the will of God

VI. Our prayer should be filled with an abiding joy which grows out of our trust in Him.

But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. 12 For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield. Psalms 5:11-12 NKJV

- A. When we take refuge in Him, no matter what our attackers do, we can know joy.

WORDS OF TRUTH!

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:11-12 NKJV

- B. Joy comes because He has a shield around us.
- C. Shield of God's favor surrounds us.

Conclusion: Today—easily offended society

1. Believers hurt by words, slander, and criticism.
2. So easy to take offense—shut yourself out and are of no value to anyone.
3. Praying is key

- Confident in God's character
- Aware of our own guilt/God's grace
- Focused on strength/courage

- Jealous for His name, not our own
- Rejoicing in His protection

What A Friend we Have in Jesus—

*Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge;
take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there.*