

4 Pieces of the Prayer Puzzle

Psalm 5

(preached Pine Grove 3/24/19 Sun PM)

Introduction

Last week in Psalm 139 was such a blessing to all of us that we are going to look at another psalm tonight in Psalm 5.

Now, one thing that is both good and bad about the book of Psalms is that they are not grouped in a chronological fashion.

Which is good in the sense that you can jump into almost any chapter and still be able to understand what is happening in the psalm..

But that is also bad for me because I really like to go in order..

However, that has not been the case as I have preached the psalms to you over my years here..

We have literally jumped all over this book, preaching 28 of the 150 psalms, but over the next few years, I am going to take a more chronological approach to this book..

Since I have preached Psalms 1-4, I want us to get back into the book tonight with a look at Psalm 5.

My plan is to give us a break from the book of Genesis for a while.

We spent almost a year working our way through the first 11 chapters of it, so we need some time to regroup on Sunday nights..

For a few Sunday nights, we talked about the future of building and grounds and some necessary renovations to it..

You will be hearing more about that as we gather some options and estimates to present to the church at our next business meeting..

We also took a night to address the issue of abortion and its stain upon our culture while also hearing how we can fight against it in our county..

Then last week, we looked at Psalm 139, which has often been called the crown jewel of the book of Psalms because of it teaches about the nature of God..

Tonight, I simply want us to look at Psalm 5.

Now, a couple reminders about the book of Psalms and the OT in general..

The primary thing to remember is that the OT is of great value to the NT Christian.

Not only does the OT introduce the idea of God's kingdom and the person of Christ, the OT also provides examples to us of what to follow and not follow.

Listen to how Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11..

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was [a]Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them [b]did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them [c]did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them [d]did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

What is Paul is saying is that the OT is useful to the Christian because it provides examples to follow and example to avoid.

Now the picture of 1 Corinthians 10 is a negative one, but the picture of Hebrews 11 is a positive one..

In that chapter, you get a list of faithful OT men and women who pleased God with their lives..

Abel, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, and on and on..

And the clear teaching there is a positive light on some of the men and women of the OT..

Well, the book of Psalms fits in this view of OT for the NT Christian..

It is not binding law upon our lives.

It is simple instruction as we read the songs and hear the prayers of those God inspired to write this hymnbook of Israel.

Some times the teaching of a psalm encourages us to do this and sometimes the teaching of a psalm encourages us not to do that..

On a personal level, I love the book of Psalms..

Though the poetry is not our idea of poetry with English rhyme rhythm, it is nonetheless a very beautiful book to read..

And so we are going to spend some time in it on Sunday nights..

I also have plans to work through the book of 1 Peter on Sunday nights..

But tonight and for the next few weeks, we are simply going to move through some of the psalms.

I may not stay completely in order, but I hope to fill in some of the gaps I have created wandering around this incredible book..

And the first up is simply Psalm 5..

Let me read it to us real quick..

*For the choir director; for [a]flute
accompaniment. A Psalm of David.*

*1 Give ear to my words, O Lord,
Consider my [b]groaning.*

2

*Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and
my God,
For to You I pray.*

3

*In the morning, O Lord, [c]You will hear my voice;
In the morning I will order my [d]prayer to You
and eagerly watch.*

4

*For You are not a God who takes pleasure in
wickedness;
No evil [e]dwells with You.*

5

*The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes;
You hate all who do iniquity.*

6

*You destroy those who speak falsehood;
The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.*

7

*But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I
will enter Your house,
[f]At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for
You.*

8

*O Lord, lead me in Your righteousness because of
[g]my foes;*

Make Your way [h]straight before me.

9

There is nothing [i]reliable in [j]what they say;

Their inward part is destruction itself.

Their throat is an open grave;

They [k]flatter with their tongue.

10

Hold them guilty, O God;

By their own devices let them fall!

In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out,

For they are rebellious against You.

11

But let all who take refuge in You be glad,

Let them ever sing for joy;

And [l]may You shelter them,

That those who love Your name may exult in You.

12

For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O

Lord,

You surround him with favor as with a shield.

First off, as you can see in the title, Psalm 5 is a psalm of David..

David was Israel's second king.

And David's reign was good one for most of his time on the throne...

David was not a perfect king, but he was a king that sought to please the Lord the majority of his life.

And a major weapon in David's obedience to the Lord was an incredible prayer life, and that prayer life often shines through as an example for us..

Psalm 5 is a great lesson on how to tune up your prayer life..

IF there is one thing that most believers throughout history have desired, it is a consistent and God-honoring prayer life..

But what are the necessary components of a good prayer...

Well, let's look at Psalm 5 tonight and discover 4 elements of a God-honoring prayer..

We will simply begin in verses 1-3...

I. Be Prepared to Pray (1-3)

Let's look back at verses 1-3..

***I Give ear to my words, O Lord,
Consider my [b]groaning.***

There are times neither David nor we know what to say to God.

Sometimes the grief is so much.

Sometimes the circumstances are so overwhelming.

Sometimes our minds are too small.

But just because we don't know what to say, that is never a reason to say nothing to God..

In fact, David admits here that he groans to God at times.

Here is man that was as close to the heart of God as anyone, yet there were times that he didn't know what or how to pray.

Even in those times, David called God to listen to his groaning..

So even when the words won't come out right, we still offer them to the Lord..

But also notice the care that David gives to his prayers to God..

In verse 2, David addresses the Lord in his prayers as “my King and my God.”

***2 Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God,
For to You I pray***

It truly wish that Christians would stop referring to God as the Man Upstairs..

What a blasphemous title for God..

The world’s worst is when people point to heaven and call God “the big guy.”

There are titles for God all over Scripture, but people create their own and in the process devalue God.

When you pray, don’t be flippantly talking to God as the man upstairs or as your buddy.

David prayed to my King and my God...

We would do well to follow his example..

But then the greatest instruction of this first section is found in verse 3..

3

***In the morning, O Lord, [c]You will hear my voice;
In the morning I will order my [d]prayer to You
and eagerly watch.***

Two things to note here..

One is the issue of praying early in the morning..

It seems that the morning is key to day...

David even says that God will hear his voice in the morning..

In other words, it won't be groaning that seem to mark his afternoon and evenings when he may be physically and mentally spent.

No, he will speak to God in the morning when he is fresh mentally and physically and spiritually..

And I would second that motion by saying that morning prayers often set the course for the day..

But a second note to make here is what Dvd says in the second part of this verse about "ordering" his prayers to God..

This is idea of careful planning and preparation of how we pray to God.

Look, I don't write down my pastoral prayers that I offer to God on Sunday mornings, but I certainly think about how I am going to pray.

I don't know where we get the idea that prayer has to spontaneous and off the hip.

It doesn't.

I think there is much wisdom in order our preyers, even writing them down and then praying them to God..

Now, I am not talking about memorized prayers..

In fact, the church hears enough of that..

We don't need more "God is Great, God is Good prayers.."

WE dont more "Now I lay me down to sleep."

We dont need more "of the use this food to nourish our bodies and use our bodies for your service prayers."

But we do need well-thought out and well-planned prayers..

David ordered his prayers to God.

I think we can learn much from that.

So, first understand that good prayer requires work and discipline and thought..

And all that requires preparation of the part of the one praying..

A second element of a God-honring prayer is found in verses 4-6..

II. Be Aware of God's Character (4-6)

Let's read these verses again..

4

For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness;

No evil [e]dwells with You.

5

The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes;

You hate all who do iniquity.

6

You destroy those who speak falsehood;

The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

As David commits himself to prayer in verses 1-3, he offers a reason in verse 4..

For you are not a God...

And then David goes on to explain some of the characteristics of God..

#1 - God does not delight in wickedness.

#2 - God is not evil.

#3 - God opposes the proud.

#4 - God hates unrepentant sinners.

Man, that really through a wrench into the favorite saying of "God hates the sin, but loves the sinner.

That certainly doesn't seem to be what this verse is saying.

#5 - God destroys the liar.

#6 - God detests men of bloodshed and deceit.

Now, these don't sum up the entire character of God, but these qualities inform David's prayers..

Here is what I mean by that..

When we were in high school, the upperclassmen would often give us clues on how to deal with other teachers..

They would tell us things like, she loves to give pop quizzes on her lecture notes.

Or she will get off topic if you try to distract her..

And that information helped us learn how to approach our classes with her..

Well, David's prayers are guided by what he knows to be true about God.

David can pray for God to deal treacherously with wicked people because he knows that God takes no pleasure in wickedness..

David can pray for God to remove proud people in his life because he knows that the boastful will not stand before the eyes of God..

Simply put, your prayer life should line up with what you know to be true about God..

I have heard prayers offered to God that included untruths about God in them..

Simply put, the more your learn about God, the more effective your prayers become..

Now this is not meant to make you nervous in your prayers to God.

God knows what you know about Him.

If you are a new believer, that is one thing.

If you are a lazy believer, that is something entirely different..

David knew he could call on God because He knew who God was.

The same applies to you.

Get to know God and you will know what and how to pray.

So be prepared for prayer..

Be aware of who God is.

A third element of God-honoring prayer is found in verses 7-9..

WE will call this...

III. Be Clear in Your Requests (7-9)

In verse 7, David comes to God in prayer with humility and reverence...

7

***But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I
will enter Your house,
[f]At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for
You.***

I shudder when I see TV preachers making demands of God in prayer..

David was the king of Israel put there by God, but that didn't mean that he could approach God with arrogance or presumption.

And David acknowledged that by saying that he only approach God because of God's lovingkindness and mercy.

I will pray before we leave tonight, but just because I am a pastor and we are a church, we have no right to make demands of God..

All prayer should come from a heart of humility nad reverence...

But all prayer should also be clear in its requests or praise..

In this case, David clearly states the heart of his prayer in verse 8 and 9..

8

***O Lord, lead me in Your righteousness because of
[g]my foes;***

Make Your way [h]straight before me.

9

There is nothing [i]reliable in [j]what they say;

Their inward part is destruction itself.

Their throat is an open grave;

They [k]flatter with their tongue.

David was surrounded by liars and flatterers.

WE don't know the situation in David's life, but the picture here is that he didn't know who he could trust.

Nobody was reliable.

All seemed set on destruction.

Their words were flattery and deceptive.

So, David prayer is simply for God to show him the way to take.

David isn't flowery in his language here...

He doesn't throw in a lot of prayer sounding words.

He simply tells God that there are troublesome people all around and he needs to know God's way out.

That is it.

And look, simple and prepared prayers are the best prayers.

Peter was sinking into the sea of Galilee, and he said, "Save me, Lord."

You don't need a whole dictionary of fancy, church words to speak to the Lord.

Spend time identifying the problem.

Spend time identifying what you would like God to do.

And pray that simple prayer.

God may have a better solution.

God may send you through the trial.

God may choose another time.

But you be clear in your request and trust God to work in his time.

So Be Prepared to Pray.

Be aware of God's character.

Be Clear in Your request..

And #4...

IV. Be Sure of God's Care (10-12)

As David wraps up his prayer, it has two distinct parts...

The first part is a prayer for the destruction of the wicked..

Verse 10...

10

***Hold them guilty, O God;
By their own devices let them fall!
In the multitude of their transgressions thrust
them out,
For they are rebellious against You.***

And David follow that up with a prayer for the protection of the righteous..

Verse 11..

11

***But let all who take refuge in You be glad,
Let them ever sing for joy;
And [l]may You shelter them,
That those who love Your name may exult in You.***

12

***For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O
Lord,
You surround him with favor as with a shield.***

Now some will look at this and be appalled.

How can David pray for the destruction of the wicked?

Isn't that very judgmental on his part?

Shouldn't he have more compassion and care?

On top of that, how can he pray for his own protection?

Isn't this arrogant on his part?

And the answer to all that is real simple.

The destruction of the wicked ensures the protection of the righteous...

Let's just say that a prisoner escapes and is armed and dangerous and hiding out in your neighborhood.

You would pray for God's protection, but that protection would have to include that prisoners capture..

David has a heart after God's own heart.

And God's heart will not endure the wicked forever.

In fact, God loves his people so much that He is moved to destroy anyone who threatens their protection..

Hell exists to punish unrepentant sinners but hell also exists to protect the righteous from them.

David's ends his prayer by resting in God's character.

God will care for him.

He will make it out of this dangerous situation.

It may not be how David had in mind, and it may not even lead to David's death..

But in the end, David will prevail because the Lord's people are always ultimately protected..

God is their shelter..

God is their shield...

And because of that, a song of joy is always on their lips..

In the end, let your prayers end with the certainty that God will care for his people.

Conclusion

What we can take home with us tonight from Psalm 5?

#1- Put thought into your prayers.

For some of you that means getting to know God better in order to pray more effectively to Him..

For some that means writing down your prayers and reading them to God in a prayerful way.

For some that means giving up your memorized prayers and phrases and simply saying some meaningful words to God rather than reciting what you have memorized.

For some that means practicing public prayers in your head before you offer them before others..

For all of us, this means recognizing that prayer requires work and discipline.

Get up in the morning.

Get your thoughts together and pray.

I think the church has enough people who simply pray what pops into their head..

It is past time that we devote some thought to what we say to God.

#2 - Put clarity in your prayers.

Open your heart to God as you pray and be clear in what you want.

God may not answer how you ask, but often we lack for failure to ask.

Be humble, be reverent, but be clear in your prayers.

#3 - Put some persistence in your prayers.

The greatest thing lacking for most folks in terms of their prayer life is discipline.

Most Christians ride the roller coaster of on and off prayer life.

Look, you never forget to eat.

You never forget to bathe.

You never forget to go to work.

Yet, you will easily forget to pray.

Make prayer consistent in your life, and it doesn't have to be 30 minutes of every day.

It simply needs some preparation, some clarity, and some truth about God..

Let us pray.