

Psalm 4-6 – Thursday, June 14th, 2018

Psalm 4 -- To the Chief Musician. With Stringed Instruments. A Psalm of David. 1 Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer. 2 How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? Selah 3 But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The LORD will hear when I call to Him. 4 Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the LORD. 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us. 7 You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. 8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

- What I love about Psalm 4 is that it shows the connection between the power of prayer coming vis-à-vis the passion in prayer.
- Notice at the beginning of the Psalm where David cries out to God in his distress and pleads for relief from it and mercy in it.
- I would suggest that the prayers with the most power are those with the most passion, which in turn are the most effective.

James 5:16b - ...The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

- It's interesting to note that after David talks to God in verses one and two, he then starts talking to man in verses three to five.
- Then, in verses six through eight to the end of the Psalm, David starts talking to God about men after talking to men about God.
- The reason I point this out is that it speaks to an important principal when it comes to prayer, which is that of talk to God first.

- That's what David did, but perhaps more importantly, it should be noted as to why David did what he did, which is in verse two.
- David's reputation is being attacked by way of slander and lies in an attempt to turn his glory to shame by the false accusations.
- It's for this reason that David not only prayed concerning this, but he also had the confidence that God would hear his prayers.

- This confidence is available for every Christian, however there are certain instances in which God may not answer our prayers.
- Over the years, I've heard some of the best teachings on unanswered prayer, and I'd like to share some of those reasons.
- Please know that this is in no way an exhaustive list, however, it does in some way provide us with the specific reasons for this.

Inconsiderate Husbands -- 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Un-confessed Sin -- Proverbs 28:9,13 – 9 If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable. ...13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Harmful Request -- James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Wrong Motives -- James 4:2-3 - 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Wrong Timing - Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him.

Psalm 5 -- To the Chief Musician. With Flutes. A Psalm of David. 1 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. 4 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. 7 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. 8 Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face. 9 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. 11 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.

- Psalm 5 is the go to Psalm for those who have many things against them and even many adversaries against them as well.
- It's one of those Psalms that provides us a much-needed reminder of how we need to seek the Lord first thing in the morning.
- This because, without doing seeking the Lord in the morning, one has no hope of facing the adversity awaiting during the day.

- It's interesting to note how that Psalm 4 was about praying in the evening before David would lie down for a good night sleep.
- Then, this Psalm here in Psalm 5 is about praying in the morning in anticipation of all that David knows he will face that day.
- The lesson here becomes quite clear, such that, it speaks to the paramount importance of praying continually day and night.

- I want to point out two very important principles concerning this prayer in verse three, which are not so easily seen at first read.
- First, notice how that David both in verses two and three says his prayer is out loud as he uses his voice not just in his mind.
- In other words, he's giving voice to his prayers, which he is hearing himself, and in so doing asking God to hear and answer.

- The second important principle concerning prayer has to do with David saying that he's directing his prayer to the Lord first.
- Then, secondly, after he's directed his prayer to the Lord David looks up with anticipation and even expectation that God heard.
- To me, this speaks to how prayers that are effective and powerful have both the meditation before it and the expectation after it.

Charles Spurgeon - "Do we not miss very much of the sweetness and efficacy of prayer by a want of careful meditation before it, and of hopeful expectation after it? Let holy preparation link hands with patient expectation, and we shall have far larger answers to our prayers."

Psalm 6 -- To the Chief Musician. With Stringed Instruments. On An Eight-Stringed Harp. A Psalm of David. 1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure. 2 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled. 3 My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD—how long? 4 Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake! 5 For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks? 6 I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears. 7 My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of all my enemies. 8 Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping. 9 The LORD has heard my supplication; The LORD will receive my prayer. 10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled; Let them turn back and be ashamed suddenly.

- I have to confess that I've really been looking forward to Psalm 6, for a number of reasons, chief of which is it's meaning to me.
- God has used still uses and doubtless will continue to use this Psalm in my life to bring me both encouragement and strength.
- The reason being is that it contains a powerful promise that God, though he seems to delay, will always be kind and merciful.

- It should be noted that Psalm 6 is one of the seven penitential Psalms in that it's a Psalm that expresses sorrow for one's sin.
- I suppose you could say that this Psalm is a Psalm of repentance and a cry for forgiveness for David sinning against the Lord.
- I find it interesting that we're not told the specific sin that David is repenting of, which I believe is so we can fill in our own sin.

- I think we do err greatly when we're dismissive of a certain passage in God's Word under the banner of it not applying to us.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 says all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.
- The next verse tells us the reason why as being so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- One of the reasons this Psalm has meant so much to me over the years is because it addresses three important issues in life.
- First, concerning the belief that God is angry with me, second the feeling God is distant from me, and third, God's love for me.
- It's for this reason David cries out for mercy and pleads with the Lord to return to him as he cries all night and doesn't sleep.

Charles Spurgeon - "Is it not sweet to believe that our tears are understood even when words fail! Let us learn to think of tears as liquid prayers [that need no interpretation]."

- Another reason this Psalm has meant so much to me over the years is because David's heart changes but his situation doesn't.
- The Psalm starts out with David in despair and by the time you get to verse nine, he's no longer in despair but has the victory.
- So much so that he confidently declares that God has heard his prayers and will now act on his behalf against all his enemies.

- The take away from this Psalm is that of taking everything to the Lord in prayer, especially when you find yourself in despair.

1 Peter 5:7 - casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- I'm sure you've noticed that as of late, our emphasis as a church has been on the importance of praying together as a church.
- One of the reasons for this is that the Lord has been ministering to me just how high the stakes are when it comes to prayer.
- By that I mean, if we as a church, especially in the times that we are in, do not pray, we will not survive not to mention thrive.

E.M. Bounds, in "Possibilities of Prayer" said it this way: "Defeat awaits a non-praying church. Success is sure to follow a church given to much prayer. The supernatural element in the church, without which it must fail, comes only through prayer".

- I'll bring it to a close by simply suggesting that this is true not only for us as a church, but so too is this true for us as Christians.
- I'm reminded of a hymn of old, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," which was written in 1820 by a man named Joseph Scriven.
- The numerous tragedies this man had experienced in his life inspired the writing of this hymn, which is all about our prayer life.

- What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer!
- Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry, Everything to God in prayer!
- Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
- Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer.
- 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.
- Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised, Thou wilt all our burdens bear; May we ever, Lord, be bringing All to Thee in earnest prayer.
- Soon in glory bright, unclouded, There will be no need for prayer— Rapture, praise, and endless worship Will be our sweet portion there.