

Prayer

A Look At Psalm 25:8-22

January 16, 2011

- I. Review of Previous Teaching on Prayer
 - A. Last Sunday we continued looking at Psalm 25, and specifically verses 6-7, to see what we could learn about prayer when asking for mercy in relation to our sin, when admitting what we deserve because of our sin, and when doing all this with a humble mindset and attitude. One of the points I made is that if God dealt with us according to our sin, we would be eternally separated from Him and damned to eternal hell. This is why we humble ourselves before God and ask for His mercy.
 - B. Prayer
- II. **Psalm 25: 8-22** . . . Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. [9] He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. [10] All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. [11] For Your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. [12] Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. [13] His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. [14] The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. [15] My eyes are continually toward the LORD, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. [16] Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. [17] The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. [18] Look upon my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. [19] Look upon my enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with violent hatred. [20] Guard my soul and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You. [21] Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. [22] Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.
- III. **Psalm 25:8-22**
 - A. **Psalm 25:8-10** . . . Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. [9] He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. [10] All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

1. These three verses are a reminder that we are wise to review and contemplate – again and again – God’s attributes, acts, and ways during our times of prayer.
 - a. Whether we actually see God as described in these verses or want to see Him this way – we reinforce in our own thinking who He is and what He is like when we review such truths about Him.
 - b. Now I said “want to see Him this way” because we may be going through a time when we are being sorely tempted to distrust God or to be angry with God or to think of God as having failed us. It is during these times that reminding ourselves of the truth about God helps re-align our thinking and our faith with that truth.
2. Now you may wonder why we should do this during our prayer time. I have just given you one reason – which is to build and nurture right thinking about God. And here is a second. Reviewing God’s attributes, acts and ways in prayer is talking to God about Himself – which changes our praying from being need based to being fellowship based. And the more you enter into fellowship based praying the more you will come to know and enjoy the intimacy and companionship with Him.
3. Finally, notice that it is **because God is good and righteous** that He instructs sinners in the right way to live, that He shows the humble how to be meek in the execution of justice, that He teaches the humble – not the proud or the angry or the controlling or the people pleasers or the selfish, but the humble – His ways. And here again, we see that God does these things because all of His dealings with us are based on the twin foundations or character qualities of lovingkindness and truth.

B. **Psalm 25:11** . . . For Your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

1. This word iniquity has a general meaning of sin or evil doing, but it specifically refers to sins of injustice. We might paraphrase this verse this way: “For Your name’s sake, O Lord, forgive my acts of injustice toward others, for they are many.”
2. Two important points are reinforced by this verse:
 - a. First, it requires honesty and humility to see our own unjust treatment of others – from judging them more harshly than we judge ourselves to outright meanness.
 - b. Second, forgiveness is from God on the basis of His character and for His sake far more than for our sake. **Isaiah 43:25** . . . I, even

I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins. This truth ought to humble us.

C. **Psalm 25:12-14** . . . Who is the man who fears the LORD? He (the Lord) will instruct him in the way he should choose. [13] His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. [14] The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant.

1. This section starts with a question – and the answer is made up of what those who fear God can expect from God.
2. But first, let's look at what it means to fear God.
 - a. To fear God is to take our personal and intimate relationship with Him seriously – just as we take a relationship with a parent or a spouse or a best friend seriously. And to fear God means taking His holiness seriously.
 - b. When we take our relationship with Him and His holiness seriously, we want to stay away from all that hinders or damages our relationship with Him, and from all that is contrary to His character. In other words, **those who fear God, value and protect their relationship with God by living according to the will and Word of God.**
3. So what can we expect if we protect our relationship with God by living according to the will and Word of God? Consider these **four** things:
 - a. First, we can expect God to speak to us through a variety of means, including His Holy Spirit, His word, and other believers, concerning how we are to live (**John 16:12-15; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 3:12-13, 7:13,15**).
 - b. Second, we can expect God to bless us and our children in this life – spiritually as well as physically (**Psalm 103:17-18**).
 - c. Third, we can expect God to reveal more and more of His truth to us so that we can continue to grow in faith and advance in godly living (**Colossians 1:9-10; II Peter 3:14-18**).
 - d. Fourth, we can expect God to give us an inner assurance that we are His children in good standing with Him (**Romans 8:16-17**).

D. **Psalm 25:15-18** . . . My eyes are continually toward the LORD, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. [16] Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. [17] The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. [18] Look upon my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.

1. [15] *My eyes are continually toward the LORD, for He will pluck my feet out of the net.* Who or what do you look to for safety, security, help in times of trouble, relief or rescue when life seems too hard?
 - a. It is faith and wisdom that looks to God, first and foremost, to be our rock, our fortress, our only dependable source of security, our provider, and our only constant and therefore reliable source of love. It is meekness and patience that continues to wait for God to bring the help we need – even if it doesn't come in this life.
 - b. Now here is an important truth – if we do not make God our first and foremost source of security, if we want relief right now so that we are unwilling to patiently wait for God to bring about His resolution and the good He deems best, if we do not rely on God as our only constant source of love, if we do not find our sense of well-being from being rightly related to God, we will look to other people and other things to get us through life.
 - c. And though other people and things seem to provide fast relief or at least immediate help and comfort, the best they can do is put a band aid on the problem or numb us to the pain or help us live in denial. Only God has true solutions and real relief.
2. When God is our all in all, as we sing, we will boldly and confidently pray the next three verses.
3. [16] *Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.* Who hasn't felt alone at some time or another? Who hasn't experienced continued or repeated pain, grief or distress, either of body or mind? That is what it means to feel afflicted.
 - a. So what are we to do when life seems too hard or it seems bad things keep happening to us? PRAY!!
 - b. Pray for the comfort of God's presence and the strength to endure so that you won't turn away from God or against God.
 - (1) And here is another area of life where humility ought to enter in. The truth is, we already have all we need from God, yet in times like these we feel needy and hence ask Him for more.
 - (2) That is okay – for God is our loving Heavenly Father. However, when you are asking for more, don't ask as if He hasn't done enough for you up to now, or as if it is owed to you, or as if this is what God must do to prove He is worthy of your trust and love. Instead, pray as one who recognizes that God will never allow you to be tempted or tried beyond what you can bear. Pray as one who knows God has already made your way of escape and has already made a sufficient amount of His grace and power

available to you for dealing with what is happening to you. And pray as one who humbly recognizes it is your weakness made evident by the circumstances and not the circumstances themselves that is driving you to ask for more.

- c. Now hear me on this. I am not saying we shouldn't ask for the comfort of His presence or the strength to endure when facing hard times. I am just reminding us that we are asking out of our own perceived weakness and not out of true weakness. So pray, but pray humbly. And if you humbly pray, God will, out of His compassion and lovingkindness, give and give, again and again.
4. [17] *The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.* Who hasn't felt like the current circumstances are not just bad, they continue to get worse with no end in sight? I suspect we have all gone through times like that. And here again, we are exhorted to turn to God in prayer and lay our burdens on Him while we wait for Him to bring us out of our trials and tribulations. And again, the example here is one of honesty in prayer, while also being humble, respectful and trusting toward God – which leads us to the next verse.
5. [18] *Look upon my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.*
 - a. Notice – this is the third time in this single prayer that David has asked for mercy and forgiveness in regard to his sin. Does this mean David is morbidly fixated on his sin? Not at all. It means he realizes his true condition before God and he understands that many of the troubles and tribulations he is experiencing are self-inflicted.
 - b. And notice that he doesn't ask God to look at the behavior of those who are troubling him (vs. 19) without first acknowledging the truth concerning his own part.
 - (1) Who do you blame for your troubles when you are part of the problem? Do you look honestly at yourself first, or do you look at others first.
 - (2) When we are both honest and humble before God, we will see our part as clearly as we see whatever part others may have in our troubles, and we will feel as strong about the evil of our part as we feel about their part.

E. **Psalm 25:19** . . . Look upon my enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with violent hatred.

1. God never asks us to live in denial about the sinful behavior of others. What He does require is that we make no room for sinful anger, bitterness, and getting even. And He requires us to treat our those

who are afflicting us as we want to be treated, to avoid gossip or slander in relation to them, and to wait for God to bring true justice.

2. So yes, we can ask talk to God about those who are afflicting us, but we ought to do so with honesty and humility. And seeking their good before God – just as we want God to bring about our good – is proof of our honesty and humility.

F. **Psalm 25:20-21** . . . Guard my soul and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You. [21] Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You.

1. David returns to his longing to become more of what God intended him to be. In New Testament language he is saying: “Do not lead me into temptation, but deliver me from evil – so that those around me will see my good deeds and glorify You (God).”
2. And then he adds: “I will wait for You to resolve things rather than return evil for evil or take my own revenge or respond sinfully.” But he knows that meekness and humility in the face of adversity will cost him, so he asks God to use these very qualities to bring him safely through his time of trial and tribulation.

G. **Psalm 25:22** . . . Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. We could put this request this way: “Save Christians everywhere out of all their troubles.” Or, do for every believer what You are doing for me.

IV. Conclusion – Use this Psalm a model for your praying!