

“To God be the Victory”
Psalm 20
(Preached at Trinity, February 21, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The Psalms are filled with wonderful encouragements to prayer. When you pray do you pray with confidence and expectation? Do you pray with assurance that God hears you and that He answers your prayers according to His good pleasure? Does this drive you to persevere in prayer and to wait upon the Lord with patience?
 2. David begins **Psalm 20** with an encouragement to prayer.
Psalm 20:1 – “The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;”
 3. In the setting of this Psalm David is the general of Israel’s military forces and their king. The people have gathered to pray for their leader that God would show favor. They are acknowledging their dependence upon God for the victory.
Spurgeon calls it a “National Anthem, fitted to be sung at the outbreak of war.”
 4. Psalm 20 is divided into three brief sections:
Verses 1-5 – Israel’s prayer of confidence for their king
Verses 6-8 – The king responds in his own prayer of confidence
Verse 9 – An affirmation of their dependence upon their king
 6. It begins with a superscription that we are becoming familiar with – a simple statement of authorship and presentation to the chief musician; a reminder once again that the psalms were meant to be sung.
 7. There is a connection between **Psalm 20** and **Psalm 21**. Psalm 20 is written as a prayer for deliverance *before* the battle and Psalm 21 is a psalm of thanksgiving *after* the battle.
 8. Psalm 20 is also prophetic pointing to our great King, Jesus Christ, God’s Anointed who has accomplished our final victory. It is truly a Psalm of Christ. May our hearts be turned to our King and His Kingdom tonight.
- I. **Verses 1-5** – Israel’s prayer of confidence for their king
- A. Israel had an interest in the success of the kingdom
 1. These verses are both a prayer *for* their king as well as words directed *to* their king
 2. They prayed that God would hear the prayers of their king
Verse 1 – “The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble”
 - a. The word for “hear” actually means to “answer” which is the way most translations put it.
 - b. Not only were they praying, their king was also praying
Verse 5 – “the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.”
 - c. What a glorious thing it is when a nation has a Godly king
Proverbs 29:2 – “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”

3. They prayed for God's great defense of their king
Verse 1 – "the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;"
 - a. God's name is the full expression of His divine being
 - b. Israel is praying for God to manifest Himself in the fullness of His divine power and glory in defense of His king**Verse 2** – "Send thee help from the sanctuary"
 Israel is praying that God would leave His throne to come in defense of their king
 4. They prayed that God would receive the worship of their king
Verse 3 - "Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice"
Verse 4 – "Grant thee according to thine own heart"
 5. They concluded their prayer by stating their rejoicing over the victory
Verse 5 – "We will rejoice in thy salvation"
 6. They had a personal interest in the success of their king – it meant *their* peace
1 Timothy 2:1-2 – "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; ² For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."
 7. We need to be a praying people, praying with confidence for our great God to defend us.
- B. We have to see that this passage also has Messianic features – we can see Christ in them
1. Israel had an interest in their kingdom and in their king
 2. As Christians we should have an interest in our Lord's Kingdom
 3. We should pray for our King and his Kingdom
 4. On one hand Jesus has infinite power and rules with absolute authority. His enemies are falling beneath His feet.
 5. On the other hand our Lord's Kingdom hasn't yet come to its ultimate fulfillment
 - a. This means the Kingdom is in the process of being built
 - b. As Christians we have not yet been perfected
 - c. Our Lord's enemies are in the process of defeat
Psalm 110:1-2 – "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. ² The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."
 6. We should pray for the advancement of our Lord's Kingdom – that all of His enemies would fall before His feet
 - a. Listen to the Lord's Prayer
Matthew 6:9-10 – "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven."
 - (1) The very fact that we are to pray for the Kingdom tells us that it hasn't yet reached its ultimate fullness
 - (2) Our Lord's Kingdom expands through the proclamation of the glory of the King.

- b. Our moment in history should be spent building the Kingdom, praying for the Kingdom and its King.
2 Thessalonians 3:1 – “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:”
 - c. We should be praying for Christ to establish His rule around the earth.
Psalm 20:5 – “in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners”
A “banner” is a flag designating dominion and victory. We desire all men to come under the banner of the cross.
7. We should also seek to bring every aspect of our own life under His reign – even the common activities of daily life
- a. When we tie our shoes, mow the grass, drive to work, change a diaper or snap the lid on a sippy-cup we are manifesting His Kingdom and doing Kingdom work – as long as we are doing it all under submission to Christ’s rule and in a manner that reveals His glory.
 - b. This is our great desire—that every aspect of life on this earth would come under obedience to Christ.
Psalm 20:5 – “We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners . . .”

II. Verses 6-8 – The king responds with his own prayer of confidence

- A. David speaks with confidence
Psalm 20:6 – “Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed”
 - 1. David was the chosen of God – God’s anointed. David saw himself as chosen by God to be king just as Saul was chosen. This is why David refused to lay a hand on Saul.
1 Samuel 24:6-7 – “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD’S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD. ⁷ So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul.”
 - 2. Those chosen to lead God’s people are anointed by God
- B. Again, we find assurance in prayer.
 - 1. Israel was praying for her king but the king was also praying.
Verse 1 – “he LORD hear thee”
Verse 5 – “the LORD fulfil all thy petitions”
 - 2. David had full assurance that God would honor his prayer
Verse 6 – “he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.”
“Right hand” speaks of God’s power and dominion.
 - 3. David had his armies and his swords but these were not the source of his confidence
Psalm 20:7 – “Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.”
 - 4. In Christ we renounce all worldly, carnal confidences.

- C. Again, we find our Lord in these verses
1. The King of kings prayed for Himself
John 17:5 – “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”
Matthew 26:38-39 – “Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. ³⁹ And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.”
 2. And the Father heard His prayer
Psalm 20:6 – “Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.”
 - a. Jesus is God’s Anointed. The word “Christ” means anointed. Peter’s confession:
Matthew 16:16 – “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
 - b. This is truly the heart of Christianity
John 20:30-31 – “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
1 John 5:1 – “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”
 - c. We read in Isaiah
Isaiah 61:1 – “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*;”
 - He was anointed prophet to preach glad tidings to the meek
 - He was anointed priest to bind up the broken hearted
 - He was anointed king to deliver the captives
 - d. As the Anointed and beloved of the Father and has been exalted
Acts 2:36 – “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
 3. We bow before our Christ and King.
“Thou art the Christ!”

- III. **Verse 9** – An affirmation of their dependence upon their king
 “Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.”
- A. The psalm ends the way it begins – a great prayer of confidence before God
1. The ESV: “O LORD, save the king! May he answer us when we call.”
 - a. The CSV and NIV translate it similarly
 - b. It is a possible translation - a prayer of Israel for the prosperity of their king
 2. But it can also be translated as the KJV and NAS
 “Save, LORD”
 - a. It is a confidence in Jehovah God
 - b. “Save” is from a word that points to victory
 - c. Let our king be there for us! – may he always be present to defend us when we cry out to him.
- B. What a glorious ending of the psalm for those who follow the true King
1. Our hearts and minds are turned to our King
 2. We are praying for His success – the success of His Kingdom
 We long to see His churches full
 We long to see all rebellion brought to a crushing end.
 3. May our glorious King hear us when we call.
 May His Kingdom continue to flourish – may multitudes be swept into the Kingdom under His rule in our generation.

Conclusion:

1. Do you pray with confidence with an eye to Christ and His Kingdom
2. We can pray for all things, but how often are our prayers self-centered for our self-interests.
3. May God grant us to be Christ-centered. May we pray for His Kingdom, for His glory upon the earth. May we pray with great confidence.