

- Introduction: One of the most fundamental duties and privileges of the Christian life is that of prayer. Prayer, an act of worship and expressing to God our desires with the hope of His answering them for His glory and our good, literally saturates the Scriptures.
- We have many examples of specific prayers, found most densely in the Psalms. But we also have examples of prayers from men like Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, the prophets, the Apostle Paul, and of the Lord Jesus Himself. It is not an overstatement that being in a relationship with God assumes that one prays.
- Notwithstanding this, it is one of the greatest laments in the mostly godly people that I have known personally, as well as my own experienced, that the life of prayer life is frequently weak, or even nearly non-existent.
- In one sense there is some comfort in light of this that prayer is not a "natural" or "automatic" thing. This is seen in such passages as Luke 11:1 when the disciples ask the Lord to "teach us to pray." We are told in multiple places to pray (Romans 12:12 Ephesians 6:18 Colossians 4:2 1Thessalonians 5:17).
- Yet with this comes the sobering warning that it is the mark of the ungodly that they "do not call upon God" Psalm 53:4
- I hope you, like myself, desire a more effective prayer life. To instruct us in this area, we turn this morning to Psalm 5
- We know little about the setting of the Psalm, which in one sense helps us to be more general in the application of it.

### I. HIS AWARENESS OF WHO HE IS PRAYING TO

- 1.) God – Creator, sustainer, provider for all His creation; but not merely "generic" unknown God
- 2.) LORD – covenant Name; in special relationship above Creator/creature
- 3.) My King – sovereign ruler, his being submissive to His will; "consider" sort through what he brings before Him. While this might at first seem to put us off, Spurgeon reminds us:  
*Kings are expected to hear the appeals of their own people. (C.H.S)*
  - The God who is, who hears, who works, and so is based on a saving and submissive relationship
  - Hebrews 11:6 – Faith is the embrace of the reality of this God, and moves one to seek God diligently.

Application: prayer should begin not with what we want, but with who God is. We should direct our mind, and spend time in worship. To think on who we are approaching, the relationship that we have with him, His power and ability.

### II. THE HEART-FELT NATURE OF HIS PRAYER

- 1.) They included words – they were verbalized, not just thinking about things, but talking to God. Language is an aid (in thinking through and presenting our arguments), and a real challenge as to how real we believe God is.
- 2.) They were more than words – "meditation" (groaning). They were things thought about deeply and that had created an inward burden and tension. Prayer is not just going through forms of prayer, but expressing those things we feel.
  - The ability of God to know these inward things is especially encouraging when we realize there are those times when the burdens are so great that words cannot express them. - Romans 8:26  
*Coming from our heart, it reaches God's heart. (C.H.S)*  
*To a loving father his children's cries are music, and they have a magic influence which his heart cannot resist. (C.H.S)*
  - Illustration: meditation is like the loading of a weapon, and prayer the firing of it. (George Swinnock)
- 3.) They were more than polite petitions – "voice of my cry"; they broke out in earnest pleas  
*Prayer without fervency is like hunting with a dead dog. (C.H.S)*

Application: One reason for lack of earnestness is often due to distractions of unnecessary trivialities, lack of feeling weight of importance. Trying to have a time of prayer while doing other things. An aid to this is trying to find a place in which deep thought can take place, prefacing our prayers by the reading of Scriptures and other material.

### III. HIS RESOLUTIONS REGARDING PRAYER

- 1.) That he would pray – "I will pray"; not merely a hope, but commitment and resolution. We will accomplish very little without resolution and plan. Prayer is not unlike other things, but is the same in that what we plan for is what we actually do.
- 2.) That he would pray to God – God is the recipient of His prayers. How much time do we spend speaking to our problems and concerns to others? How much time do we spend being anxious, fearful, and worrisome over things? How much time do we take to bring those things before the Lord and ask for help, strength, and direction.
- 3.) That prayer would be a daily priority – "you will hear in the morning" (2x). There is no absolute rule that one must rise early to have a time of prayer but long Christian experience and history demonstrates that this ordinarily the most appropriate time. How many have plans to do it during the day, or in the evening, but find themselves to be distracted or tired?
- 4.) That his prayer would be purposeful and ordered – The word for "directed" is a specific term used in the laying out of the wood and sacrifice on the altar. He is likening his prayer to a morning sacrifice, not heap of miscellaneous thoughts that come to mind, but arranged and then lit on fire from heaven. It is helpful for some to have a list that they use to remind them of the various things (church prayer guide).
- 5.) He would pray with expectancy – "I will look up" With expectation and continue until answered.

- The Scriptures speak of the effective nature of the righteous pray-er (James 5:16)
- Illustrations: a merchant who sends his ship and eagerly waits for return. A letter sent and waiting for answer (engage children).  
*For a lack of looking up many a prayer is lost. If you do not believe, why do you pray? And if you believe, why do you not expect? By praying you seem to depend on God; by not expecting, you again renounce your confidence. (William Gurnall)*

Application:

- This specifically addresses focused times of prayer offered before the Lord. This does not negate the call to pray without ceasing (1Thessalonians 5:7).  
*We should begin to pray before we kneel down, and we should not cease when we rise up. (C.H.S)*
- We are not to just know about prayer, but be about prayer