

Psalm 69: 1-15, "The Prayer of David and the Sufferings of Christ", A Communion Sermon Delivered on September 3rd, 2006, by Pastor Paul Rendall in the Morning Worship. Part of the Communion Series - Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection as Noted in the Psalms and Remembered.

This Psalm is written by David and describes for us his sufferings and his prayers concerning his sufferings. But we must understand it as a Psalm which is also prophetic of Christ; His sufferings and His prayers as well. In fact it is quite astonishing how many of these verses seem to apply more directly to Christ Himself than to David who penned it. It is as if Christ has taken the pen from David's hand and said to him, "Let me write this for you, because the only way that you will be able to have an answer to your prayers in your afflictions is if I will undergo greater sufferings for you, on your behalf." And that is exactly what our Lord Jesus did. Whenever we are suffering afflictions, difficulties, distresses, or persecutions, let us remember that Jesus has undergone deeper, far deeper sufferings in His soul than we will ever go through. The Lord Jesus bore the sins of the world, the sins of all His Elect people upon Himself, so that we would be able to be forgiven. We, then, go on to endure the things that God would have us to go through, the things that the Father thinks will help us to become more conformed to the image of His Son. How good it is to approach this table this morning, and to think of whatever sufferings and problems that we have, or will have, with this in mind. We are looking at a prayer here and it is a prayer of no small importance. We will look at this prayer, the first 15 verses of it, in 4 parts. 1st- An Urgent Request; 2nd- A Sad Report; 3rd- A Revealing Confession; and 4th- An Acceptable Time.

1st- This Prayer is an Urgent Request-

These are great sufferings that David is undergoing. And he cries out in prayer to God, "Save me, O God!" "For the waters have come up to my neck." "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, where the waters overflow me." In David's case the time of suffering was probably when he was driven out of the city of Jerusalem by his own son Absalom's rebellion against him. So many people in his kingdom had turned against him. Their hearts had been stolen by Absalom and they were trying to throw off David's rule and get rid of him. His prayers are like those of a drowning man. "Save me, O God!" "For the waters have come up to my neck." The word "neck" there is literally the word "soul," and I think that we should read it as such. "For the waters have come into my soul." The "waters" are the great troubles and sorrows that were leaking into his soul just like water coming into a proud sea vessel's hull after she has struck a rock. The ship is taking on water and you are going to sink down to the bottom of the sea, and there is nothing apparently that you can do to stop it. Well David was in just this position. Absalom had declared himself to be king and he now had to flee from Jerusalem. "Arise and let us flee," says David, "or we shall not escape from Absalom." "Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." God was the only one who could rescue David from these deep waters which threatened to overwhelm David.

You and I, as we think of the reasons why we will partake of the Lord's Supper this morning, know that there was a point in our lives when we cried out to God in the same way as David did, but for a different reason. We had come to see that sin was something that was not only draining the life out of us, but that it was going to bring our soul down to destruction in hell. We came to fear God. We came to see that we desperately needed God. A sinner who has been awakened to his sin and the consequences of it, does the same thing as David did, whether he is a believer under God's shepherding care, or whether he is coming for the first time to beg for mercy from the hand of God. We cry, "Save me, O Lord, for the waters have come up to my neck." The experience of our sinfulness like "sinking into the deep mire." It is like quick-sand where we are sinking so fast that we must have someone come and help us out, because we cannot help ourselves. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing." This is where Christ comes in. He rescued David and He rescued you and I who have believed, by His actually stepping into our place and our situation and pulling us out, even as He goes in. How does He do it? He is the One who was willing to take upon Himself the waters of God's wrath against sin. He was willing to sink into the deep mire of the punishment which was due our sins. He was the One who came into deep waters, where He would feel and receive to Himself the floods of the waves and billows of God's righteous and holy anger against our sin. Was David weary with His crying over the affliction that he was going through? Was His throat dry and did his eyes fail while he waited for God to help him? Christ went below him and beyond him in His sufferings. He under girded David in his sufferings. Psalm 18: 16 says, "He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters." "He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me." This is why David calls God his rock, his fortress, his deliverer, and other names such as this. David was rescued, but Christ was not. Charles Spurgeon says, "Christ had prayed till he sweat great drops of blood, and well might physical weariness intervene." "My throat is dried, parched and inflamed." "Long pleading with awful fervor had scorched his throat as with flames of fire." "Few, very few, of his saints follow their Lord in prayer as far as this." "We are, it is to be feared, more likely to be hoarse with talking frivolities to men than by pleading with God; yet our sinful nature demands more prayer than his perfect humanity might seem to need." "His prayers should shame us into fervor." Our Lord's supplications were salted with fire, they were hot with agony; and hence they weakened his system, and made him a weary man and full of woes." This is what Christ did for David so that His prayers could be answered and he rescued. This is what Christ has done for us so that our prayers could be answered as well. Ponder it well O my soul!

2ndly- This prayer of David's is a sad report-

David here relates to God the sad report of how he was being treated by his enemies. "Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they are mighty who would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully; though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it." It is a hard thing to be hated, but to be hated without a cause, without a reason, is worse yet. David was such a valiant warrior and such a wise and good king, and so loved by his people, that you would never think that so many would turn against him. His own son had turned into his enemy and his own trusted friend and counselor Ahithophel was advising Absalom as to how he could be overthrown. As bad as this was, David was delivered from this awful trial. But the Lord Jesus voluntarily went into an even worse situation than David had been in. He never

spoke an evil word and never did an evil deed; He always went about doing good and healing people and teaching them the truth of the way to have everlasting life. And yet, even so, He had many enemies and was hated. In John 15: 24 and 25 it says, "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father." "But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, "They hated me without a cause." And the Lord Jesus could not be delivered from their wicked schemes for he knew that He must die in the place of David and all the Elect. This hatred of men towards Him had no reasonable cause, but it would be a part of the Atonement in that the sufferings of Christ that He had to undergo. It would include unjust treatment at the hands of self-righteous and wicked men. Will you and I not remember this important truth? We need to remember this today because as we grow more into the likeness of Christ, a part of what we will have to experience is the unreasonable malice and possibly even the hatred of men. It is because Jesus bore this that you and I are able to bear it as well. Jesus stole nothing from men and yet He had to restore it. He did nothing to take anything good away from any man, and yet He was the only one who could restore to a man a relationship with God. This is the only way that His enemies and the enemies of God His Father could be saved.

3rdly- This prayer of David's has a revealing confession contained in it.

David says in verse 5, "O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You." David, as he went through these distressing things, no doubt thought back to some of the reasons that these things had come to pass. It was because of his sin with Bathsheba, and what the prophet Nathan had told him; that he had "despised the commandment of the Lord and had done evil in His sight." Nathan told him, "You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon." "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife." "Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight this sun.'" "For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun." "So David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'" "And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die." How could this be? How could David find forgiveness and eventual restoration? It is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is where David's prayer and the prayer of the Lord Jesus diverge from each other in this Psalm. There was no foolishness in our Lord to confess; there was no sin to be found in Him, and no sin done by Him at all. There was no need for any confession by Christ. The only question that we need to consider was one which came from His own lips. "Which one of you convicts Me of sin," was the question that He asked the Jews who did not believe His testimony to them that they were sinners by nature and practice. He had tried to convince them that He was their Messiah, but they did not understand the things that He was speaking to them. In John 8: 26 He said to them, "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true ; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him." "They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father." "Then Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself;

but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things." "And He who sent Me is with Me." "The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. This what we remember this day; that the Lord Jesus was always pleasing to the Father in order to work out a righteousness for us, before Him, that could be imputed to us. This righteousness would cover all of our sins past, present, and future and we receive it by faith. This we glory in this morning, not that we were righteous but that he was. We do not glory in what we have suffered or gone through for Him, but what he has suffered and gone through for us. David said, "Shame has covered my face." But he would glory in the shame that Christ faced for his sake at the cross if he would have known of it. "David was zealous for God's house and wanted to come back to Jerusalem and worship there if he could. But he would have gloried in Christ, if he could have seen Christ's zeal for God's worship and the temple when He took a whip made of cords and drove out the moneychangers and those who were doing business there, and said to them, "Take these things away!" "Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" "Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up." The Jews asked Jesus for a sign that He would show them, seeing that He had done these things. And He said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He was speaking of the temple of His body. This zeal is what we come to remember this morning when we think of the Lord Jesus, that He would be so willing to have the temple of His body destroyed for us who were foolish in our sin and destroyed our body and soul by our sin.

4thly- This prayer of David's was to the Lord in an acceptable time.

There is a time when prayer is acceptable to God. In Psalm 32: 5 and 6 after being under the Lord's discipline for his sin with Bathsheba for some time, David says, "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden." "I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." "For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him." It is when we have come to see the problem of our sinful heart that we come to realize the importance of prayer. That is the acceptable time to pray. When we refuse to come to terms with sin in our hearts and lives, then when the "flood of great waters" comes, we cannot find Him. But when we are acknowledging and confessing our sins, and not hiding them, it is then that we find mercy. Suffering times are more than acceptable times to pray. The true believer benefits in every way from the sufferings of Christ during such times. It is what sanctifies suffering to him, whether his is from persecution, or whether he is doing battle with his own indwelling sin and trying by the Spirit's power to put it to death. These are the necessary times to pray for a believer. Even with all of his sins, David still believed that some of his suffering was because of his zeal for the house of God, because all of his faith and hope were in God. He had "wept and chastened his soul with fasting," it says in verse 10, "and that became his reproach." In fact the "reproaches of those who reproach God had fallen on him," it says in verse 9, "because zeal for God's house had eaten him up." He became the "song of the drunkards" because they thought that God would not help him now that Absalom seemed so close to taking the throne away from him. But they did not understand the Christ who would die for David, or that His body and His blood would avail to deliver David's life from all distress. They did not understand that Christ's prayer to God would be at an acceptable time in a very much greater sense than David's. In Hebrews 5: 7 it says, "In the days of His flesh, when He

had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear." And even thought "He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." And so we see this morning that Jesus prayed and His prayer was answered, but it was answered in such a way that He would be able to die and accomplish redemption for us. He was heard by God and He knew that God would raise Him from the dead as it says in Psalm 16: 10, "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." This is the reason that we rejoice as we come to partake the Supper now. Our sufferings for His Name's sake will be bearable because of the grace that He purchased for us by His sufferings; His sufferings in both body and soul. This is why our prayers will be heard. Christ came into the deep waters, Christ sank into the mire, Christ bore reproach, Christ suffered, bled, and died so that our prayers for salvation would be heard. And He hears our prayers when we suffer as well.