

Praying in Predicaments

Intro

Favourite sports movie?

Hoosiers: Coach, there are two kinds of dumb. One is when a guy will take off all his close, run outside in the snow and howl at the moon. The second is a guy who does the same thing in your living room. "First one don't matter, the second one you're kinda forced to deal with."

The urgency of the situation is determined by the proximity of the situation. A situation that is close and therefore urgent must be dealt with in a certain kind of way.

Psalm 16 and 17 work well together. Both deal with David and difficult situations. In Psalm 16, the difficulty is far off: God is a refuge, David will not be shaken, his flesh dwells secure, he won't be abandoned in death; the generalities speak to the distance of the trouble. In Psalm 17, the difficult circumstances are no longer far off, they are in David's livingroom. And Psalm 17 shows us how ^{to} deal with the situation in light of its closeness and urgency.

Psalm 17

A Prayer of David.

MAIN IDEA: God hears, protects, and saves his people. Therefore, we should pray to him in times of urgent difficulty ⇒ For everyone!

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry!

Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit!

² From your presence let my vindication come!

Let your eyes behold the right!

³ You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night,
you have tested me, and you will find nothing;

I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

⁴ With regard to the works of man, by the word of your lips

I have avoided the ways of the violent.

⁵ My steps have held fast to your paths;

my feet have not slipped.

⁶ I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me; hear my words.

⁷ Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O Savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

⁸ Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,

⁹ from the wicked who do me violence,
my deadly enemies who surround me.

¹⁰ They close their hearts to pity;
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.

¹¹ They have now surrounded our steps;
they set their eyes to cast us to the ground.

¹² He is like a lion eager to tear,
as a young lion lurking in ambush.

¹³ Arise, O Lord! Confront him, subdue him!
Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword,

¹⁴ from men by your hand, O Lord,
from men of the world whose portion is in this life.

You fill their womb with treasure;
they are satisfied with children,
and they leave their abundance to their infants.

¹⁵ As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;
when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

Within this psalm of prayer there are 3 petitions

3 Petitions: prayer of the faithful, prayer for protection, prayer for deliverance

Instruction for prayer, application for life

Prayer of the Faithful -- v1-5

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I have avoided the ways of the violent.

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my feet have not slipped.

Instruction for Prayer

Sense of urgency/closeness of danger: Hear me! Attend to me! Listen to me!

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - First Responder Communication Strategies
 - Immediately seek to provide a sense of hope, safety, calm, and connectedness,
 - Look the person in the eye, remain calm, and avoid expressing any shock or panic
 - Seek to build trust by showing you care and by listening
- American Psychological Association – How to help in an emotional crisis
 - “Lend an ear”

The psalmist requests God's attention; this rises from our urgency

Communicate our urgency to God

- “Hear me” “Incline your ear” “Attend to me” – 50+ in the Psalms
- Urgency ≠ unbelief, emotion ≠ error
- *I do not do this well - prayers are emotionless, apathetic, indifferent*
** personality*

We can learn something about prayer because
 David anticipates being heard and vindicated based on his
 faithfulness/steadfastness/integrity

- ³You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night,
 you have tested me, and you will find nothing;
 I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.
- ⁴With regard to the works of man, by the word of your lips
 I have avoided the ways of the violent.
- ⁵My steps have held fast to your paths;
 my feet have not slipped.
- **1 Peter 3:12a ESV** – [quoting Ps 34] For the eyes of the Lord are on the
 righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.
- **James 5:16b ESV** - The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is
 working.

*the faithfulness
 & integrity of the
 one who prays
 matters*

Application for Living

Be faithful. Have integrity. Remain steadfast.

Dale Ralph Davis: “Verses 3-5 give some readers a case of the jitters. They fear David is 'tooting his own horn' here, perhaps stroking and polishing up his own righteousness. Psalm writers are aware that there is a sense in which no one can stand up to the full blaze of God's scrutiny (see Pss. 130:3; 143:2). But David is playing in a more minor key here. He is not claiming sinlessness but steadfastness; he is not boasting of his perfection but arguing for his consistency; he is saying he has been loyal, not impeccable.” *⇒ This is what we are called to!*

Flavel: “Let not humility appear in some actions, and pride in others; holy seriousness in some companies, and vain frothiness in others. Suffer not the fountain of corruption to mingle with, or pollute the streams of grace. Write as exactly as you can, after your copy, Christ. O let there not be here a line, and there are a blank; here a word, and there a blot. One word of God, and two of the world. Now a spiritual rapture, and then a fleshly frolic. This day an advance towards heaven, and tomorrow a slide back again towards Hell.”

*What word would characterize your relationship with God?
 Faithful? faithless? steadfast? wishy-washy?*

- work
- home
- school

How do we do this?

- v4b-5 **by the word of your lips** I have avoided the ways of the violent. My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped.
- **Psalm 119:105 ESV** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Let's be people who go to God's Word, so that we might be faithful and steadfast so that we might pray effectively!

Prayer for Protection – v6-12

⁶ I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me; hear my words.

⁷ Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O Savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

⁸ Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,

⁹ from the wicked who do me violence,
my deadly enemies who surround me.

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they set their eyes to cast us to the ground.

¹² He is like a lion eager to tear,
as a young lion lurking in ambush.

Instruction for Prayer

Pray because God hears you, not so that he will hear you: v6 I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God

Why can we be sure of this?

- God's love precedes his action: v7 Wondrously show your steadfast love
- *this is the proper posture for prayer*

- *faith*
- *love*
- *hope*

Pray for protection from enemies, and in emergencies: **v8-9** Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings, from the wicked who do me violence, my deadly enemies who surround me.

- Eye surgery – ^{speculum} remove ability to protect the eye, God is vigilant in protecting his people from their enemies
- Satan, sin, world

Application for Living

Pray for those who face real, physical enemies

- Open Doors is a non-profit organization focused on serving persecuted Christians: every month 322 Christians are killed for their faith, 214 churches and Christian properties are destroyed, 722 forms of violence (rapes, beatings, abductions) are committed against Christians
- Prayer in regards to the murder of Egyptian Christians: 21 Egyptian Christian captured in Libya, video of 12 being beheaded and the rest were surely murdered
- See insert

Prayer For Deliverance – v13-15

¹³ Arise, O Lord! Confront him, subdue him!

Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword,

¹⁴ from men by your hand, O Lord,

from men of the world whose portion is in this life.

You fill their womb with treasure;

they are satisfied with children,

and they leave their abundance to their infants.

¹⁵ As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;

when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

Instruction for Prayer

Pray with realistic perspective

- Sometimes the wicked prosper: **v14** from men of the world whose portion is in this life. You fill their womb with treasure; they are satisfied with children, and they leave their abundance to their infants.

Pray with a futuristic perspective

- Keep your eyes on the prize: **v15** As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

Application for Living

Pray. Pray when you face an urgent, difficult situation. Pray for others when the trials and tribulations are in their livingroom. Pray for persecuted Christians around the world. Pray because God hears you. Pray because God. Pray with an eye on the here and now, and pray with an eye on the there and then. Pray.

How Psalm 17 Points to Christ

Prayer of the Faithful

Only Christ is entirely faithful: **2 Timothy 2:8-13 ESV** 8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

12 if we endure, we will also reign with him;

if we deny him, he also will deny us;

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—

for he cannot deny himself.

Though we are called to be faithful, and though we will endeavour to be faithful, if my hope to be heard and my hope to be answered ULTIMATELY rests in my faithfulness, I'm in trouble. But it doesn't. It rests on Christ's faithfulness. In him, I can pray the prayer of the faithful

Prayer for Protection

Christ is our protection from Satan, sin, and the world:

John 12:31-33 ESV 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Colossians 1:13-14 ESV 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

John 16:33 ESV 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

If we have Christ, we are protected!

Prayer For Deliverance

Salvation is found in Him: **Romans 1:16 ESV** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

What is the gospel?

<i>GOD</i>
<i>MAN</i>
<i>CHRIST</i>
<i>RESPONSE</i>

But, it is the power of salvation to those who believe!