

TBC – 1/3/2010 a.m.

## A MORNING PRAYER IN A DAY OF TROUBLE

Psalm 5

**Intro:** I feel sure that I express the sentiments of many of you who are here this morning when I say that the Psalms are one of my favorite books of the Bible. For a long time it has been my habit to read the morning reading from the Old Testament found in our Daily Bible Reading Calendar which you received from me this week. I follow that with the evening reading from the New Testament (although I usually read it in the morning. Then I read a Psalm and conclude with a chapter from Proverbs. I love to read the Word. Taking a Psalm a day, you can easily figure out that I read the Psalms over twice in a year. I wish I had kept a record of the many times in reading my Psalm for the day, I have had the feeling that the particular Psalm I read had been written just for me on that particular day.

A psalm is a song, a song sung in worship to the Lord. The book of Psalms is called the Psalter. And although they were written by people chosen by God for that purpose, they are actually, like the rest of the Bible, the Word of God. They were used in public worship, but they were also written for individual worship. They exalt and extolled God Himself. They humble us when we use them in our times of fellowship with the Lord, while at the same time we find great encouragement and spiritual strength in reading and meditating on each Psalm. I am sure that many of you could say the same thing. Yesterday I overslept and just had time to make it to the men's prayer meeting when I got up, so I did not get my Bible reading done before leaving home. When that happens I feel a little like I would if I were driving my car with a flat tire. The morning times for me, reading the Word, are some of my best hours in the day. And that is especially true of reading the Psalms.

We all know that the Psalms are very God-centered. If we want to know Him, there is no better place to go in the Word than in the Psalms. But the Psalms are also very practical. I don't think that there is a phase in any of our lives that we could not find its parallel in the Psalms. In the Psalms we soar into heaven, but we can also see where we are in the trials and failures and sorrows of life. Its size speaks volumes of its importance. As you know in the twelve weeks that we take at the beginning of each year for our Bible memory groups, this year we are concentrating on the Psalms. That guarantees special blessing, and we hope that you all will plan to join us. We all make mistakes, but those mistakes get correc-

ted, and we keep going with our memory work.

Lucille and I really got our start in Scripture memory with the Navigators, the Christian organization which Jerry Bridges has been connected with for many years. They had what is still called, the Topical Memory System which was a memory plan of about 108 verses, which you would learn at the rate of three a week dealing with various Bible subjects. When we finished those verses, we were encouraged to go on, but choosing our own verses at the same rate of three verses a week. And we did that for many years. After Trinity Bible Church got started, and possibly a little before that, some of us got involved in the Bible Memory Association which also has helped thousands of people memorize the Word. And we have found Bible memory work an excellent help in meditating on the Word.

I mention this to encourage many of you who have not done much, if any, memorization of Scripture, to do so, but also to explain why I have chosen Psalm 5 for my message this morning. One of the verses I chose after finishing the TMS as the Topical Memory System was nicknamed, Psalm 5:11 was one of the verses I chose to memorize. And verse 3 was another verse I chose. Lucille and I did not always choose the same verses, but it may have been that these were two of her choices too. And I am not sure of this, but I may have been the one who put this memory book on the Psalms together, and, if so, this is why it is in the first lesson. It's a happy verse, isn't it? It speaks of where true happiness can be found, doesn't it? Rejoicing in the Lord! And when you take verse 3 with it, you can see the commitment that David, King David, made to the Lord: "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up." He didn't mean by that, that the Lord would just hear from him the next morning, but he meant every morning!

Now the Holy Spirit led David to write that, not just so we would know what he did every morning, but so we would know that the Lord waits each morning to hear from us. I know that David was greater than any of us ever hope to be. He was the King of Israel. You and I are, or at least I am, insignificant in comparison with David. But let me tell you something, the Lord waits to hear from you and me just like He waited to hear from King David. And you and I need to ask ourselves, How long has He been waiting to hear your voice, or mine? Has He heard from us this morning? How about yesterday morning? You see, we need to read the

Psalms as though we had written it.

But now let us look at the Psalm and try to bring it all together. All we know about it is that David wrote it. We don't know when he wrote it. We don't know what experiences caused him to write it. The Psalm clearly indicates that from a human perspective this particular day when David penned the words of this Psalm was not an especially good day, but was many like David had with opposition from his enemies. But while the beginning of his day was cloudy, the sun was coming out and shining in all its glory as David moved through the Psalm to the end.

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Now notice these five divisions in the Psalm. The first three verses go together. The second three verses go together. And then the last six verses are divided into groups of two verses each.

In verses 1, 2, and 3 we have David's voice as He calls out to the Lord in prayer.

In verses 4, 5, and 6 David dwells on the holy character of God.

In verses 7 and 8 David prayed for himself.

In verses 9 and 10 he prayed against his enemies.

In verses 11 and 12 his prayer is expanded to include all that were in situations like his, that they would find their joy in the Lord as he had found his joy there.

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When you consider the Psalm as a whole, you realize that this, like the Psalms generally, is a prayer. The best way to learn to pray is by studying the prayers recorded for us in Scripture. While the Psalms are songs, they are also prayers.

## **I. DAVID'S HABIT OF PRAYER (Psa. 3:1-3).**

As we read these words we ought to think of ourselves as, through the Word, being able to hear how David addressed the Lord. He was a King addressing a greater King. Notice his dependence, his humility, his faith, his expectation in the words, "and will look up." He was approaching the

Lord with the possibility that the Lord was one possible source of help for him in his need, but *the only Source!* Note: “my words . . . my meditation . . . my cry . . . my King . . . my God . . . my voice . . . my prayer” (understood).

David prayed in the full confidence that the Lord would hear him.

## **II. DAVID’S FOCUS UPON THE CHARACTER OF GOD (Psa. 5: 4-6).**

Basically as David came to the Lord he reviewed before God, God’s hatred of sin and sinners. We often forget this. In verse 4 David reviewed God’s attitude toward sin; in 5 and 6 it is His stand against sinners.

“Foolish” in verse 5 could be translated *boastful*, or *arrogant*. Sinners have no fear of God (even if they believe in God), but have the idea that they can do what they want to do, and that not even God can stop them. Such are sinners, “foolish.”

“Leasing” in verse 6 means *deceitful liars*. They will go to any length to accomplish their goals which is the elimination of the truth.

Our greatest comfort in our conflict with sin in any and every form is that God *abhors* “the bloody and deceitful man.” He loathes such a person. He detests him. The bloody and deceitful are an abomination to God. Don’t put that bumper sticker on your car that says, “God loves you.” You don’t know that person. God may despise him. Our approach to sinners is not that “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” It is that you are a sinner, under divine judgment, and you need to plead with God for mercy and the forgiveness of your sins in granting you faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior of sin.

## **III. DAVID’S FOR HIMSELF (Psa. 5:7-8).**

Notice David’s emphasis on God’s mercy, and that he would worship the Lord in the fear of the Lord.

Verse 8 gives us his petition to God for himself. There is nothing boastful or prideful in his prayer, but utter dependence upon God for guidance for himself. When he asked for guidance in verse 8 he was placing him-

self under the sovereign governing hand of God. It pictures what God did in leading His people by the cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Or like Jehoshaphat prayed when he was so greatly outnumbered by the Moabites, the Ammonites, and others, he prayed and we find his prayer in 2 Chronicles 20:12:

12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

We are often guilty of telling the Lord what to do, but true dependence upon the Lord is expressed by asking Him to do what He deems best. That is the prayer that pleases God.

#### **IV. DAVID PRAYS AGAINST HIS ENEMIES (Psa. 5:9-10).**

But it is important to notice that David recognized that the wicked who were attacking him, or ready to, were actually God's enemies. His prayer ends in verse 10 with the words, "for they have rebelled against Thee."

David's words are very strong here because he was comparing his enemies with what he knew about the righteousness and holiness of God. Notice that he emphasized how they were using their mouths to create fear in David's heart.

The request, "Let them fall by their own counsel" is a principle that appears repeatedly in Scripture. For example, in the days of Esther when the wicked Haman had succeeded in getting King Ahasuerus to decree the destruction of the Jews, but ultimately he was hanged on the very scaffold that Haman had built for Modecai.

This way of God is clearly stated in Proverbs 26:27:

27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

Also we read in Proverbs 28:10:

10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

In Psalm 10:2 are these words:

2 The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

David prayed in Psalm 141:10,

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal

escape.

Finally, we come to the conclusion of Psalm 5 in the words of verses 11 and 12.

#### **V. DAVID’S PRAYER FOR ALL OF THE LORD’S PEOPLE (Psa. 5:11-12).**

These words of David are his words for us. They are words for the people of God in any generation who find themselves surrounded by the wicked with no apparent means of deliverance. Notice every word in these last two verses, and let us apply them to our circumstances personally and even nationally. We know the Lord. We love Him. But are we putting our trust in Him day by day as we meet with Him in the morning. If we are, then let us rejoice. In this verse King David sounds like the way the Apostle Paul would write to the believers in Philippi: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” And to emphasize how much he meant those words, he added, “And again I say, Rejoice.”

We can’t always rejoice in our circumstances, but we can always rejoice in the Lord because as we trust Him we find that He is Lord over our circumstances, working all things together for our good because we seek first to glorify Him.

**Concl:** As a parting word of blessing, Derek Kidner pointed out in his commentary on the Psalms that the word “compass” here in the last part of the last verse of the Psalm means “to cover.” And he pointed out that this word is used in 1 Samuel 23:26 “where it describes a hostile force closing in on David, only to find itself quietly deflected by God’s encircling, providential care of him” (p. 60). This is the situation that Kidner was referring to:

26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth (which means *the rock of division, or escape*).

29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at

En-gedi (1 Sam 23:26-29).

In Psalm 103:4 we have the same Hebrew verb where it is translated, “crowneth”:

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth  
(covereth) thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

What the Lord has done over and over again with and for His people, He continues to do the same for us today. So let us trust Him. The reason for the joy in verse 11 is “because Thou defendest them.” Notice that it is not just David whom the Lord defends, but “all those who put their trust” in Him.

Notice the certainty with which David closed this Psalm in verse 12. Let us be assured that our God is the same as David’s God, and that what the Lord has done in the past, He is still able to do now. So let us not be discouraged, but “trust in” Him, and in Him alone.