

O LORD. We join together in asking that truth would be free to make her sorties upon us all, which way You please. Guide our minds for your designs. We ask that, nothing smothers truth's golden beams. (Spurgeon)

Intro

- ① The first acrostic or alphabetical song in the Bible.
- ② Probably written in David's later days, because he mentions the *sins of his youth*.
- ③ It's safe to say it was written when Absalom began his rebellion against David.
- ④ *Spurgeon writes: This has been styled the second of the seven Penitential Psalms. It is the mark of a true saint that his sorrows remind him of his sins, and his sorrow for sin drives him to his God.*
- ⑤ It is important to note that, no matter the circumstances and the restlessness of his soul, David's **prayers** and **meditations** were offered in belief, just as it should be with the believer. Because, while these two are so vital to the Christian, he has a parasitic inability to execute. The world demands results now, and the Church has gotten swept along by this thinking. But it cannot be so with spiritual things. A good example is **prayer** and **meditation**. These demand much heart-time, and often without any perceived results. Yet, God tells us to *pray without ceasing*.

Divisions

- I Prayer:** 1-7 **II Meditation:** 8-10
III Prayer: 11 **IV Meditation:** 12-15
V Prayer: 16-22

- !** Why is such a message on *prayer* and *meditation* so important? *Because the believer is squeezed in a vice. On one side is the jaw of our sensed need to pray and meditate, and on the other is the jaw of our natural allergy towards prayer and meditation.*
- Q** How often has your heart taken you in zeal to your prayer closet, but once there something happens? Your zeal has flitted away, your heart now struggling to execute. So many have most to do with being cast on the sea of despair because they never took up these tools at their fingertips. In my perception, *prayer* and *meditation* for Christian's journey to the Celestial City are so indispensable and vital that I've chosen to earmark two messages on the subject.

Of David.

Prayer Part I: David was *anxious and troubled about many things*

A Two **acknowledgments** hidden within **two avowals**, followed by a **personal reminder**

1 *To you, **O LORD**¹, **I lift**¹ up my soul.*

Q What hidden acknowledgment can we sift out of this avowal?

A Before one thought morphs into the spoken word, we should confirm that we understand our place in relation to God's place. Notice the word *lift*.

2 ***O my God**², in you **I trust**²; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.*

! If we are not cautious, our attention will be drawn to scaffolding of these verses and not to what gives the "building" its strength. Without minimizing the what, of David's prayers in these two verses, their strength lies not so much in their content as in *the gracious condition of David's heart*.

! What do the two phrases *I lift* and *I trust* tell us about David and biblical prayer. They are a hint; a pattern. The moment these thoughts **formed** in his heart, even before it escapes his lips, its rarity and value find themselves in that part of him that is **quietly acknowledging his place before the throne of grace**.

! We may quickly assume that to make these prayers our own is what we're shooting for, yet be oblivious to what gave them unction was a **suppliant who had a deep sense of his position before God**.

3 *Indeed, none who **wait** for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.*

! One writer writes, *We spend too much time talking 'about' ourselves, when we should be talking 'to' ourselves*. You see. David was reminding himself, by talking to himself.

! The confidence David exhibited in this verse found its source in the work of the Holy Spirit, **causing him to know his place**. For this simple reason his was not a presumptuous prayer.

Prayer Part II: *choosing the good portion*

Notice now with me the following change from vv 1-3. In vv. 1-3, *earthly David* was seeking God's intervention in the trials of life, and there is nothing wrong with that. In fact, it's what he, as well as us, should do. But notice the sudden ascension from the *earthly* to the *Heavenly*, beginning in v. 4 on to the end of v.11.

A few moments ago he was *anxious and troubled about many earthly* trials, and no one could blame him. But now his prayer blooms into something *spiritual*. He was *choosing the good portion*. A *Heavenly David* was entreating God for his spiritual well being, without minimizing his earthly trials.

How often have our earthly trials been used of the Lord to expose us to the greater trial of our spiritual needs. By the help of the Holy Spirit we should train ourselves to quickly use our earthly trials as a springboard to bring our attention to our spiritual needs. Look at this gracious change in the following verses.

4 *Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.*

Isn't it remarkable, the sudden ascension from a focus on his earthly anxiety to a focus on his heart's need and desire. He was *choosing the good portion*. The untaught would perhaps call this verse and beyond, "the round peg lying next to the square hole" of vv. 1-3. If we are not careful, the sudden change from *let not my enemies exult over me* and *they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous*, could very well derail our little train of thought, with our railcars lying in a jumbled mess beside the rails of this Psalm.

5 *Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.*

David was not praying for the *availability* of the Lord's *ways* and His *paths*. Since the dawn of mankind, God's ways and paths have been and continue to be available to the world. But that by itself has never saved a single soul, just as the *availability of the cross* can save no one. No. David was praying for *Divine efficacy*. Notice the word *make* in v. 4. Within the wrapping of this word is the sense of Creator. Paraphrasing the above two verses, perhaps we could say, *Make me to know your ways, teach me your paths, lead me in your truth, and teach me in such a way that I get it, and can never lose it again.*

A healthy and happy heart and mind is not one that finally squirts out of the long dark tunnel of a particular trial, but rather one

which now *effectually knows*, has been *taught*, and has been *lead* in God's *ways* and *truth*. It is something he always prays for.

Q An important question remains. *If God were to ask us, "On what merit should I grant your wish,"* how will you reply? Wouldn't we reply the following with David?

1 *for you are the God of my salvation*

The evidence of Scripture strongly suggests, *God doesn't need to be reminded, but He sure likes to be*. And those moments you're reminding God of His vast treasures of salvation, if you listen to what you're saying, you'll hear that little word, *my*.

Many waters would drown me, yet I will look to no other, especially myself, to deliver. Remember. David, as king, along with the centurion could have said to his Lord, *For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.* Yet he says, *you are the God of my salvation*

2 *for you I wait all the day long*

Luke 18.17: And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night?

Remember. You're not praying for a new car or home, but yours is a much better prayer; *to know your Lord's ways, to discern His paths, to be guided in and by His truth, and to sit at the feet of the Divine Teacher.*

6 *Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.*

remember- bring into your consciousness from the storehouse of your memory

Q Have you recently visited *that throne of grace*, which opens up to those ancient doors of God's storehouse? Just a crumb may suffice, or perhaps you're in need of a boatload. Ask, dear saint. Ask to your heart's desire. His storehouse will suffer no loss. You cannot use up your allotted portion. Just go.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

The twin brother of *remember* asks, *remember not*. Wherever one goes the other goes also. Perhaps one of the greatest trials that will drive believers to their knees is the shame of sins committed in youthful folly. They are not remembrances unto death, but rather humbling monuments.

But notice how David prays for himself. After casting himself on the *steadfast love of God*, there exists yet a very active work of grace upon his heart, though he may trudge through the valley of shame. How else could the following flower bloom if it were not for grace?!

for the sake of your goodness

Grace and none other, can cause the saint pressed and squeezed by earthly trials to look heavenward with a new and invigorated desire that all blessings from above would be for the *sake of God's goodness*; *That all God's good intentions for me might find their motivation in Him. And through His work in me the world might get a clear picture of His goodness.*

Such prayers as verse 7 may very well begin with a fixation on deliverance from the shaming thoughts of past sins, but NOTICE What David does before he places the period at the sentence of his petition. It is the believer's prayer pattern. Perhaps we've experienced this same principle; when the Holy Spirit gently places his hand under our drooping chins, lifting them to the new focus of, *for the sake of your goodness*. We then, no longer see ourselves as the ultimate target, but that through it all God's goodness might be witnessed. Now, with David, we are ready to place the period at the end of such petitions.

II Meditation

In my perception, understanding the difference between *penitential* prayer and *meditation*, accompanied by a putting into practice, is vital. *Penitential*, or prayers of *entreaty*, our directed *inward*. For example, "Lord help *me*, or, do this and that for *me*, etc."

David defines the *outward* nature of *meditation*. Notice that David has temporarily placed prayers for himself (*inward*) on the shelf, and now he is focusing is on declaring God. This *outward* kind of praying, with God as its target is *meditation*. He is primarily telling God Who God is, and in the same breath telling himself the same. *Meditation* is always about God. It is not a mixture of me and God. For it to maintain its unction it cannot stand on *feet of*

iron and clay. Pagan meditation is always about self or, at best, a conjured up God.

Before we go on let's define what I perceive to be the act of meditation through the roughly 150 ruminants, animals that chew the cud.

Watch, listen and sing along with the 7 stanza crescendo of the David's Choir as he meditates on the character of God. Oh! How the believer would be helped if he developed this habit!

8 Good¹ and upright² is the LORD; therefore he instructs³ sinners in the way.

9 He leads⁴ the humble (*miserable and afflicted*) in what is right, and teaches⁵ the humble (*miserable and afflicted*) his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love⁶ and faithfulness⁷, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Remember! David was singing this crescendo in the depth of his trials.

III Prayer

11 For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great.

Another flower of the same species as found in v. 7. God needs no other motivation than the motivation of *His good name* in order to pardon our great guilt. *He has never needed to wait patiently in line* for us to jump through some hoops. A suppliant that understands this, in a sense touches the face of God with his prayers.

The two attendants of *prayer* and *meditation* cannot be over emphasized. For this reason, Lord willing, this evening, we'll look at the second half of *Two Indispensable Attendants for the Journey* with a look at vv. 12-15 and 22.