

Psalm Sundays

Text
Psalm 5

Topic
David asks God to "give ear"
to his morning prayer

Title
"Ear Ye! Ear Ye!"

You Dr Pepper lovers should know the answer to this question... *When are you supposed to drink it?*

At 10, 2 & 4 (of course).

In the 1920's Dr. Walter Eddy at Columbia University studied the body's metabolism.

He discovered that a natural drop in energy occurs about 10:30am, 2:30pm and 4:30pm.

He also discovered that if the people in his research study had something to eat or drink at 10, 2 & 4, the energy slump could be avoided. Drink Dr Pepper.

It probably had nothing to do with a slump in spiritual 'energy,' but **Jews developed a habit of praying three times a day - evening, morning and afternoon** (each within specific determined hours).



- Daniel famously was thrown into the lion's den when he defied the King's edict by praying three times daily as he always had done.
- The apostles Peter and John were used to heal the lame man as they "went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer..." (Acts 3:1).
- King David prayed three times daily. He said of himself, in Psalm 55:17, "**Evening** and **morning** and at **noon** I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.

Psalm five is a morning prayer of David's. It reveals how he started at least one day in his long life of seeking after God.

We'll see as we get into it that he was asking the Lord to lead him on a path of righteousness through the perils posed by his many enemies.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Your Righteous Path is Plotted By Prayer**, and **#2 Your Righteous Path Is Imperiled By The Profane.**

#1 - Your Righteous Path Is Plotted By Prayer (v1-3; 11-12)

While I was typing-out this study on my iPad, an e-mail notification popped-up. It said - no kidding - "Pray more powerfully; *Save up to 31%.*"

I know it wasn't meant this way, but it comes across as if I've been really wanting to pray more powerfully, but I cannot afford it.

With the 31% discount on the book they are peddling, however, I could start praying more powerfully... In maybe a week - once I receive the book and read it.

Or... I could just pray.

Psa 5:1 To the Chief Musician. With Flutes. A Psalm of David. Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my meditation.



David was a musician himself (First Samuel 16:16-23), a maker and inventor of musical instruments (First Chronicles 23:5), and a prolific composer.

He organized the worship of God in the Tabernacle. His three chief musicians were Asaph, Hemen, and Jeduthun. He delivered this song to one or all of them, and told them he wrote it for flute accompaniment.

Do you ever get excited when a favorite musical artist drops a new song? Imagine the thrill of receiving one of the seventy-five psalms of David, to arrange and perform.

Psalm 4 ended with David going to sleep, saying, "I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety." Next morning, he remained in an attitude of prayer, and looked forward to his morning prayer time.

This prayer was put to flute. It was meant to be sung. We sing a lot here, corporately praising God. Do you ever sing your prayers in private? Maybe you should try it.

"Give ear to my words, O Lord." As I mentioned, David is credited with penning seventy-five of the psalms. I read a few of them, and noticed he had no 'standard' opening. You can, if you want, look quickly at the opening words of Psalms 4, 5, 6 & 7.

How do you start your prayers? Is it always the same? It's easy to fall into religious habits.

"Consider my meditation" was a way of asking the Lord to understand more than the words David sang to Him. By his words David could only hope to represent his deeper thoughts and perceptions - his inner "meditations." David recognized that his words did not always adequately express the longings, the loneliness, the joys, the jubinations, of the heart.



Most of us struggle at some level to communicate. Thankfully, we have emoticons to help us. Now whatever I say, if I put a happy face next to it - I'm good.

Psa 5:2 Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray.

David didn't put all his prayers to music. But this one deserved that "voice." It more effectively communicated his heart.

His prayer was a "cry." That might suggest urgency.

Or it might be he was having trouble expressing his heart. A song could communicate more than mere words.

Jim Croce sang, *I'll have to say 'I love you' in a song*. Numerous artist have covered *Your Song* - singing, *My gift is my song, and this one's for you*. Sometimes we need more than the mere words, and somehow music enhances our communication.

BTW - This is as good a time as any to remind ourselves that God sings to us:

Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet *you* with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

Sometimes it may seem like God is humming a lullaby.

Other times, the song seems more like a tragic opera. Regardless your blessings or buffeting, you have the Lord as a mighty minstrel.

Psa 5:3 My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct *it* to You, And I will look up.



Should we have morning devotions? Yes. We qualify that for those who are on shift work, whose morning is in the night.

But having said that... **This prayer is not David's morning devotion.** David was praying his morning prayer, at a prescribed time when morning prayers were offered in the Tabernacle. This one he put to music - to be sung during morning prayer.

Devotions are great; but they aren't anything by themselves. It's not 'Devotions & Done.' We must have a sense of God's presence at all times, and be listening for Him as well as conversing with Him.

David said that, in the morning, he would "look up." It is the equivalent of the apostle Paul's saying, "Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind [affections] on things above... (Colossians 3:1-2).

We talk about having a 'mindset,' meaning an approach to life. You might call it a philosophy of life. In fact, all of the world's so-called wisdom in philosophy or religion or psychology is a mindset based on the assumptions of their adherents.

More than a mindset, we who are in Christ, we are to **set** our minds by what is above - by Jesus, risen and returning. Not assumptions - facts. Setting our mind sets us, and keeps us, on the righteous path.

There are perils along that path. They are described next. But before we walk with David through them, let's see how he approached his day.

Psa 5:11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.



First thing we notice is David's repetition of "rejoice," "joy," and "joyful." Setting his mind above was a kind of tilling the ground so that the fruit of joy could flourish.

- First - It is always possible for a believer - someone who trusts the Lord - to "rejoice." We don't always; but we can.
- Second - Our "joy" can be strong, like a shout rather than a whisper. We shout "because [God] defends" us.
- Third - and perhaps this should be listed first to our way of thinking - as those who love Jesus, we are "joyful in Him."

Often, in this life, on this earth, it can seem as though God is doing anything but defending you, or His people.

Many among us have died; more have diseases. Around the world, Christians are more persecuted than all other groups.

Yet we can rejoice, have joy, be joyful:

- We know why there is suffering; it's on account of sin. Satan is the god of, the ruler of, this world.
- We know that Jesus has conquered sin, Satan, and death.
- We know that the Lord is coming to complete His conquering.
- We know that His longsuffering waits because He wants more to come to repentance rather than perish in eternity.

We love the Lord, and are joyful in Him - for Who He is, and for what He is doing, and for what He will do.

Psa 5:12 For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as *with* a shield.



A "shield" presupposes warfare. A boy once said to Achilles, "They say you're a god. They say you can't be killed." The warrior responded, "Then I wouldn't be bothering with this armor, would I?"

David was a warrior. Although later in his life much of his trouble was self-caused, early-on in his career he was engaged in much spiritual warfare. His king, Saul, hurled spears at him. He was hunted as a fugitive for quite some time. Caves were his dwelling places. He was often betrayed.

Regardless these attacks, he considered God his "shield." When it seems the weapons of the enemy have penetrated our shield, we must believe that the penetration need not be into our spirit. Any number of things can ruin our mortal lives; but our spirit can always rejoice.

Let's return to this idea of mindset vs. setting your mind. There is a Christian mindset that, because I'm saved, nothing too horrible is going to happen. If something does, it is just a test, and it will soon pass.

Not realistic; not at all. We need to set our minds by looking up, by looking forward, by seeing ourselves raised or raptured. Then whatever befalls us in our journey can be endured with the grace God supplies. A great life verse for each of us would be Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

#2 - Your Path Is Imperiled By The Profane (v4-10)

Journeying along a path fraught with peril is one of the most common themes in storytelling. Whether it's the yellow brick road, or getting through the Mines of Moria, enemies abound.

Look at verse eight: "Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face."



God's "righteousness" are the things He has revealed to us that are right and good. They are "whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy" (Philippians 4:8).

David wanted to walk in these things - in righteousness - on his daily path. But he found, as we do, profane people whose dedication was to hinder him.

Psa 5:4 For You *are* not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You.

This is more than something obvious.

It is stating unequivocally that God is **never** to be thought of as causing, or held responsible for, sin. He is absolutely holy and good. He never determines "wickedness" or "evil." They are the result of the free will fall (let's call it the 'free fall') of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God, for His part, has worked, and is working, to redeem and restore what our free will ruined.

Psa 5:5 The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity.

"Boasting" is the byproduct of pride. The proud that opposed David would be dealt with in due time. David's declaration that they "shall not stand in [His] sight" tells us that in the restoration of all things, there will be no pride, and no possibility of pride.

Of course, in the mean time as we see God moving providentially towards His prophesied end, the proud, and pride, remain a great peril to righteousness. Does God really "hate all workers of iniquity?" Does God hate sinners?

God hating is a struggle for commentators. This is where some quickly say, "God hates the sin, but loves the sinner." But that isn't what David said.



Then there are those whose answer is to blame this on the generally curmudgeonly nature of the One they call, "The God of the Old Testament." That's problematic, because Jesus said, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father."

There is a group of folks for whom God hating sinners is not a problem. Those who adhere to Reformed doctrine that believe in double-predestination think God hating sinners is normal. They say that before creation, God chose a select group of humans whom He would save. They are predestined to be saved. But that means He passed over multitudes of sinners, predestining them to Hell.

So His hatred of sinners is holy, they would say, because they are getting what they deserve. Totally unbiblical. Most of those who believe this terrible doctrine honestly admit it is not directly taught in the Bible, but is a necessary corollary.

Evangelicals point out that "hate" can mean "to love less." Jesus, for example, said you were to love Him, but hate your family. That might be true in passages that contrast love and hate. David didn't contrast them, he simply said God hates sinners.

I'm not gonna solve this but here is what I believe today. One problem we have is that our hatred is mostly selfish and sinful, so we don't want to think of God as hating. If God loves, He can hate.

God hates sinners. We read it here, and elsewhere. In Proverbs 6:16-19, there is a list of seven things God hates, and several of them are the sinner, not just the sin.

What does God's hatred of sinners look like? Look to the original human sinners. If God hates sinners, He must have hated them. He came to Adam and Eve and decreed for them both temporal and eternal punishment:



- They died spiritually.
- They began to die physically.
- And eternal death in the form of conscious torment separated from God in Hell was their future.

But then He promised to come, as one of them, to save them, because God so loved the world.

I'm not quite ready to modify a familiar phrase, and say, "God hates you, but has a wonderful plan for your life," but it isn't wrong.

Psa 5:6 You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

These were things that imperiled David along his path:

- "Falsehood" - People flat-out lied to and about him.
- "Bloodthirsty" - People wanted him dead.
- "Deceitful" - Worse than lies, because you don't see the betrayal coming.

Psa 5:7 But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.

God dwelt among His people, Israel, in the Tabernacle, and later, the Temple. Something David would have undoubtedly written psalms about is that, today, believers ARE God's Temple - both individually, and corporately.

"Worship toward Your holy temple" is the direction Jews faced when praying three times daily. Note as well that there was no Temple when David sung this. Only the Tabernacle. He knew it would be built.

Psa 5:8 Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face.



Psa 5:9 For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part *is* destruction; Their throat *is* an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue.

David recognized that all manner of evil and destruction proceeded out of “their inward part.” The apostle Paul quoted from this in Romans 3:13, when talking about the total depravity of mankind.

Pick almost any recent film or television show or series about a catastrophe causing some kind of apocalypse. The hero or heroes are always trying to travel somewhere; to get somewhere safe. They are imperiled at every turn by all manner of the worst of humanity.

David could have starred in *The Walking Dead*. Zombies would be easier for him to deal with than the people he describes.

I hate to overuse it, but you and I should realize we are imperiled by those who *are* the walking dead, spiritually speaking. And, sadly, we are sometimes imperiled by fellow believers.

As a believer in Christ, you should expect peril. Everyday you get through mostly shielded is an anomaly.

Psa 5:10 Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, For they have rebelled against You.

Something else we encounter in the psalms quite often are statements of judgment, even curses, upon God's enemies. These are called “imprecatory.” Seems wrong... Is it?

Again, there are many schools of thought. A place we might want to start in putting this into biblical perspective is with our desire for the Lord to come. When Jesus comes again, there will be final judgment for God's enemies.



Every time we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," we are, in one sense, praying a judgment on God's enemies.

Our proper longing for Christ's return and final judgment is tempered by our desire that as His longsuffering waits, many sinners would come to repentance and faith.

If you feel moved to pray an imprecatory prayer, you should pray that the Lord would come, rather than cursing His enemies. After all, the person you curse might be a Saul who becomes a Paul.

The psalms, whether written to be sung or not, are considered poetry. Poetry is not propositional. It is meant to be emotional; it gives us a feeling. We will try to be careful to not ruin a psalm by treating it as prose. For your part, let yourself be moved as you hear God singing over you.

