

Psalm 28

Introduction – Prayer is work, prayer is tiring, prayer takes effort. And this brings all kinds of questions and temptations with it. We should never be satisfied with unanswered prayer. In fact, we should be careful not to pray in order to be pleased with the sound of our prayers. Prayer is practical; we are seeking answers, deliverance, and blessing.

When Prayers Aren't Answered (vv1-2) – In times of desperation, we cry out to the Lord. The Psalm-singer does not doubt that God is His Rock, but he does complain that if God remains silent, he might as well be in the place of those undelivered. And so, again he lifts his hands in prayer. That he does so “*toward Your holy sanctuary*” means he does so “*in Jesus’ name*.” This is because the sanctuary could only be approached with sacrifice, atonement, and permission from God who would judge as to whether you were dressed in the righteousness of another.

Do Not Cease (Luke 18:1-8) – In Psalm 27:14 we were told to “*wait on the Lord*,” and we recalled that God’s timing in answering us is perfect but not necessarily our timing. Jesus teaches us to persist in prayer “*and not lose heart*.” Persistence ought to characterize our prayers because “*God will avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him*,” that is His promise and our confidence. Our faith is in God who has ordained the trial, ordained the prayers, ordained the persistence, ordained His delays and His perfectly timed answers.

Praying Specifically – While the prayer is written generally, the Psalm-singer has something specific in mind. Our prayers ought to be specific and we should avoid praying “*if it be thy will*” in some kind of escape-clause mentality. Instead, our specific prayers and His specific answers should lead us to greater obedience of mind and will. “*Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart*” (Psalm 37:4). The Psalm-singer wants God to cease remaining silent – he wants answers and he wants God’s answers.

When Enemies Entice (vv3-5) – “*Do not take me away with the wicked*” he cries, for God has not yet answered him but these workers of iniquity “*speak peace*.” So much of temptation mimics what happened in the Garden – the enemy promises pleasure and false-deliverance faster than God will provide. “Why wait for God; what’s so perfect about His timing...” he whispers. “*We must avoid them in their pleasures if we would not be confounded with them in their miseries*” – Spurgeon.

Imprecatory Praying – These are War Songs of the Prince of Peace and so we must only sing or pray this way in Christ, not to settle personal scores. Praying in Christ, and considering that we were once enemies of God as well (Eph 2:1-3), we are asking first that He would “give to them” in Christ, destroying them in the death of Christ and raising them to life again in Him. This is the trajectory of scripture: Christ came to save the world, not condemn it (John 3:17). But if the plan of God in a specific instance is not to save, then we want to pray in line with His will. Hell is strict justice and our gospel declares that God will judge all men according to their works (Rom 2:3-10). “*Kiss the Son, lest He be angry*” (Psalm 2:12).

When He Answers (vv6-7) – In anticipation of answered prayer, we may sing with hope. Let us not forget to sing with praise and blessing over the answers He has given. Has He saved you? Has He delivered you? Have you been healed, built up, encouraged, revived, instructed, led, protected, gifted, or strengthened? “*The heart that truly believes shall in due time greatly rejoice*” – Henry. When we see Christ in this psalm and in these verses, we remember how He wrestled and submitted for the joy before Him to His Father’s will (Heb 12:1-2) and we learn to give thanks for past deliverances and strengthen our hope for future ones.

Why He Should Answer (vv8-9) – And if we remember Christ sings these psalms, consider verse 8 – “*The LORD is their strength*,” to which we might respond, “*And He is the saving refuge of His Messiah*.” The Triune God may join together in chorus, interceding for us: “*Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance; Shepherd them also, and bear them up forever*.” These are good reasons that God should answer our prayers, and good reasons to bring up before Him. He has given us His Son. We are His people, His children; we are to call Him heavenly Father. We are His Son’s inheritance. He is our Shepherd and so He must shepherd us. He has promised to bear us up, to never leave or forsake us, and He is good to His Word. As we sing/pray/plead our concerns before God, these are the reasons we should use as to why He should answer.