

The Prayer Of The Righteous

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[0 : 00] A prayer of David. Hear a just cause, O Lord. Attend to my cry. Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.

From your presence let my vindication come. Let your eyes behold the right. You have tried my heart. You have visited me by night. You have tested me and you will find nothing.

I have purpose that my mouth will not transgress. With regard to the works of man, 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. I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God. Incline your ear to me.

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

[1 : 00] 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. They close their hearts to pity.

With their mouths they speak arrogantly. They've now surrounded our steps. They've set their eyes to cast us to the ground. He is like a lion eager to tear as a young lion lurking in ambush.

Arise, O Lord. Confront him. Subdue him. Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword. From men by your hand, O Lord.

From men of the world whose portion is in this life. You fill their womb with treasure. And they are satisfied with children. And they leave their abundance to their infant.

But as for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness. When I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

[2 : 01] Amen. Psalm 17 is one of only five psalms. Whose superscription explicitly notes it as a prayer.

Now if you care to research the other ones. It's Psalm 86. Psalm 90. Psalm 102. And Psalm 142. Three of the five psalms are attributed to David.

One of them, Psalm 90, is attributed to Moses. And the fifth one does not have a designated author. But what all of them have in common is the element of lament.

Each of them include grief and mourning and sorrow in some place, in some fashion. Now we understand all of the psalms, the entire book, is prayerful in some sense.

Whether that be a prayer of praise or a song of praise to the Lord. That's a kind of prayer, isn't it? Maybe it's one of the psalms that does a lot of teaching. Teaching doctrine to the congregation of the righteous.

[3 : 09] But it's still prayerful in some sense. We are singing to God about God. We are praying to God about God in some way. But there is a uniqueness to these five psalms that are specifically designated as prayers.

They are meant to be understood with a certain picture in mind. And this particular vision of prayer is often associated with lamentation in our minds.

Sorrow. Grief. Of course, many of you know what it's like to be in such a state of grief or distress.

That the only thing you know to do is to get on your face before God and cry out to Him.

Surely you've been there at some point in your life. All you can do is pray. And there's this picture here in this psalm, in the psalms that are like it, the other four.

There's this picture that we can envision as we read through it of David almost prostrate before the Lord. In grief, in urgency, crying out to God to intervene in the situation that he's found himself in.

[4 : 19] David's prayer in Psalm 17 is a plea for justice. It's a plea for vindication. His situation is such that a fierce enemy has unjustly accused him of wrongdoing and is actively seeking to kill him.

But David, as we've just read, insisted upon his own righteousness. He pleaded to God on the basis of that righteousness, asking that God would clear his good name and that he would do so by dealing a decisive blow to his enemies.

And by the end of the prayer, when we get to verse 15, we find David expressing this confident assurance. What begins as urgent lament concludes with confidence, assurance, comfort, and peace.

And what is it that he's comforted by? What is it that he's confident in? That one way or another, God will indeed accomplish both his vindication and his enemy's destruction, the destruction of the wicked.

And of course, righteousness is what immediately comes to the forefront of our thoughts in this psalm. First, David pleading his own righteousness.

[5 : 43] Now, of course, David's righteousness is relative. It's not absolute here. As it relates to the specific accusation of his enemy, David pleads total innocence.

But that's not to say that David understood himself to be altogether righteous. We know that's not actually the case. We can read some of his other psalms, his psalms of confession, like Psalm 51, where David acknowledges that not only has he sinned against God, but his very nature that he's born with is in set in rebellion to God.

Not only that, we know enough of David's life to know that there's no way that David could pray this prayer and mean it in an absolute sense.

David sometimes, as we know, behaved with extreme wickedness. And yet, when we get to the end of the psalm and he's contemplating these things and he's moving beyond just this immediate scenario to this bigger picture of life and death and eternity, we find that David still lived completely assured of an eternal future in God's presence.

So what begins as a plea and a claim of righteousness for the specific situation ends with this kind of understanding that his righteousness isn't just relative, but it is absolute in some sense.

[7 : 10] But how could he mean that? How could that be? How could that be? How could that be? Like Psalm 16, only Jesus could pray this prayer in the truest sense.

The psalm is pointing to something, or even better, someone beyond David and the immediate situation that prompted the prayer.

The immediate situation of Psalm 17 points us to an ultimate fulfillment. In the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

Jesus alone fulfills the psalm to perfection. And that has significant implications for you and me. It's one thing for us to plead our own righteousness in one situation or another.

It's a completely other thing for us to recognize that we have a Savior and a Lord who is perfectly righteous and extends that righteousness to be a credit to our account by faith alone.

[8 : 12] That is a completely different thing. It's a wondrous thing. And I think that's the biggest takeaway that we get from this psalm. So as we look to David and his prayer, we want to look also beyond David to see how his prayer points us to Jesus and our righteousness through him.

But to do that well, we have to deal with the psalm in its initial context, don't we? We have to examine it the way that David understood it. And so I want to break it down in four parts.

I see here three appeals, three distinct appeals of prayer that David is making to God. And then there, of course, is a final conclusion, assurance here at the very end.

I want to present those four sections to you and then show you how it points us to Jesus. Number one, I want you to see an appeal to God's righteous judgment. An appeal to God's righteous judgment.

Look at verses one through five again. Notice what he says now.

[9 : 26] From your presence, let my vindication come. Let your eyes behold the right. 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. With regard to the works of man, 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. Two kinds of righteousness at work here in these first five verses.

First there is David's plea of his own righteousness. But immediately that turns to a focus on God's righteousness as the righteous judge. The opening plea here, it's urgent.

And that urgency is born not only of a dire circumstance. That's certainly a part of it. Someone's trying to kill him. That's an urgent prayer. That's an urgent plea.

[10:28] But it's not just that. That's causing this urgency in David's prayer. It's also this unquestionable injustice. It's actually the reality of injustice that David's enemy has falsely accused him and is thereby pursuing his life.

It's that reality that pervades the first five verses here. Now it would be one thing to plead for God's mercy when facing the consequences of some sin.

It would be one thing we see David doing this in other places where he has sinned and he's now dealing with the consequences of that sin. And his prayer is not to plead righteousness.

His prayer is to plead for God's mercy. Right? That's not what he's doing here. This is another thing entirely. David is convinced of his own righteousness.

In fact, the opening imperative here that we read as, Hear a just cause, O Lord. Literally, a wooden translation of this would be, Hear, O Lord, righteousness.

[11:33] Hear, O Lord, righteousness. And of course, by righteousness, David means his own righteousness. His own blamelessness in the present circumstance.

And David is so sure that his righteousness will stand. That he submits his calls to the righteous judge of all the earth.

God himself. Think about that. David knows God to be the omniscient one who knows everything there is to know about him.

He has seen everything David has done outwardly. And he knows the very recesses of David's heart. Every thought. Every word he's ever spoken. God knows it all.

And David is so convinced of his righteousness in this circumstance. That he turns to that judge. The one who knows it all. And he submits his calls entirely to him.

[12:30] It's bold. He even tells us. God has tried his heart regarding the enemy's accusation. And has found no transgression.

An extraordinarily bold statement. In every way, David had obeyed God's word. And held fast to God's paths. That's the phrase here.

Jim Hamilton points out that the word that's used there. It's meant to give us a word picture. It's meant to picture the grooves that are worked into the ground like wagon tracks.

Where over and over and over a wagon will follow a particular path. And it wears grooves into the roadway or into the pathway. That's the word picture that's associated with this. In other words, David is saying, I have found myself in the grooves of God's word.

In the grooves of God's law. And I haven't left them. My feet haven't slipped. I haven't turned from the right hand or to the left hand. I have stayed secure and steadfast on God's paths.

[13:35] He set out to walk in the ways of God's righteousness. And insisting that his feet had not slipped. He called on God to vindicate him from the throne of heaven.

That's the essence of the prayer in verse 2, isn't it? Notice what he says. From your presence. From your throne, O righteous judge. Let my vindication come.

He submits himself to God's judgment. He appeals to it. Knowing that God is righteous and he's convinced of his own righteousness. That God will do it.

Now someone may look at this and may think, Well, this is really arrogant. Arrogant. I suppose in most cases it would be arrogant. Remember Job's friends accused him of the same thing.

He goes through tremendous suffering. He doesn't understand why. Neither do his friends. And yet his friends, those miserable comforters as he called them, gather around him. And they begin to accuse him.

[14:37] They don't know what he's done wrong. They just believe that he has done something wrong. How could you suffer in this way and not have done something wrong to offend God? Which of course is not why Job is suffering at all.

It's actually on account of his righteousness that Job is suffering. But he doesn't understand that.

What he does understand though is that he's innocent. There is no sin in his life that he can turn and say, This is what I must confess in order to get relief from God in this suffering in this moment.

He understands that. And what is it that his friends do in response to his claim of innocence? You're arrogant. You're full of pride. But he wasn't. He was being honest.

Truly he was the righteous one in that situation. His suffering was on account of the righteousness, not on account of unrighteousness in that moment. David's in a similar place here. David's suffering

is not on account of some sin in his life.

Not at this moment. It's actually on account of the fact that he is righteous that he's suffering at the hand of the enemy. It would be wrong for him to falsely confess some sin just hoping to find relief.

[15:47] That would be sinful. But what was right for David was to acknowledge his righteousness but then to submit his calls to the Lord. Let my vindication come from your throne because you are the righteous judge.

And if there is something that I don't see, I trust that you will expose it, God. And I submit my calls to you. So his first appeal is an appeal to God's righteousness.

An appeal to God's judgment in this situation. Look at the second appeal though. It's an appeal to God's covenant affection. God's covenant love.

Verses 6 through 9. I call upon you. Why? For you will answer me. He's certain of it. You will answer me, O God.

Incline your ear to me and hear my words. Wondrously show your steadfast love, O Savior, of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand.

[16:48] Keep me as the apple of your eye. Not make me the apple of your eye. 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. It's a different kind of appeal now, isn't it? First he appeals to God's righteous judgment for vindication.

But now he makes an appeal based on God's covenant character. His covenant love. The urgency is still there. But the picture is different.

In the first appeal, David is in a courtroom of God, so to speak. He's the righteous one that is pleading his case and submitting his calls to the righteous judge.

That's not the picture in this appeal. Here. Here, David is like the distressed child crying for his father to rescue him.

[17:50] From danger. Those of you who are parents understand what that's like. Your child falls or falls themselves to be in a place that's unsafe.

And what do they do? They cry out, Mom! Dad, help! You know the tone, right? When the tone switches, mothers in particular. They get it, right? I don't know how many times something has happened.

We've heard Charlie or Harper or Ashlyn cry at some place in the house. And immediately it's that tone of cry, right? And immediately Julie and I are up. We're off the couch. We're off the chair. We're to find what's wrong.

Why? Because out of our covenant love for them, we want to get to where they are. And we want to rescue them from whatever has put them in danger. That's the picture in this appeal.

David is like that child. He's in a dangerous position now. He's not pleading righteousness. He's pleading help! Help! Help! And what is it based on?

[18:48] Oh, it's all based on the expectation that God will hear him based on his covenant affection for his chosen son. The covenant language comes especially in verse 7 where David calls on God to wondrously show your steadfast love.

I would encourage you to trace that language through the scriptures one day. Just sit down and just find all the places in the Old Testament especially where you see that phrase, steadfast love, over and over and over.

Why? Why is it there? It's God's self-revelation. To Moses in Exodus 34, 6 and 7, you remember that Moses begs for God, let me see your glory.

And God hides him in the cleft of the rock and he passes by him so that he could see his backside, so to speak. He sees the glory. And as he passes by, what is it that God says? A God merciful and gracious, full of steadfast love.

It's his own self-revelation to his people. David's picking up on that here. It's ascribed to the Lord repeatedly through the scriptures and it's emphasizing his unimpeachable covenant faithfulness to his people.

[20:05] This characteristic of God, this self-revelation from God is God's way of telling us, I have made you a promise and I will not fail to keep that promise. I am full of steadfast love.

Covenant affection. And then we see this refuge motif again, surfacing here as David refers to the Lord as the Savior for all who will trust in him.

But God's covenant character is expressed as divine affection in verses 8 and 9. It's odd language, at least in the first phrase.

Keep me as the apple of your eye. What does David mean? He means that God has set his loving gaze on his people.

His loving, protective gaze. He's ready to usher them beneath the shadow of his protective wings.

And what's wonderful about this is that God's faithfulness is not born of obligation.

[21 : 16] He is not faithful to us because he has to be. He owes nothing to his creatures. Why is he faithful? Because it's who he is.

It arises out of his steadfast love. In other words, God is faithful to those who seek refuge in him because he wants them to find refuge in him.

Jesus used the same picture, didn't he? It's recorded for us in Matthew 23. I think Luke also records it. Remember, as Jesus gets close to the city of Jerusalem and he gazes on it, what does he say?

Old Jerusalem, Jerusalem. The city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it. How often I would have gathered you and your children together as hens gather her brood under her wings.

But you were not willing. What is Jesus showing? The divine love of God. His desire to rescue.

[22 : 23] His desire to save. And he will provide that safety to all who come to him for refuge. David understood the wonder of God's covenant affection.

And he anchored his prayer in the reality of divine love here. He's in a difficult circumstance. And he says, first, you are righteous and I leave my cause with you. But I also know that you love me, God. And that you are faithful. And that's why I cry to you. I think it's worth considering at this point how God-centered David's prayer is.

He believes himself to be guiltless of the accusations. But his appeal is focused primarily on God as the righteous judge who will always do what's right.

Who will always do what's just. But his appeal here is also meant to magnify God's love. His entire prayer. In the next section, we'll see God's power.

[23 : 25] His entire prayer. It's informed. It's governed by who God is. And we do well to follow that very pattern in our own prayer. To ensure our prayers are informed and governed.

Not by who we think we are. But who we know God to be. That's what David does. That brings us to his third appeal. The third appeal is to God's saving action.

God's saving action. Look at verses 10 to 14. They close their hearts to pity. With their mouths they speak arrogantly. They've now surrounded our steps.

They set their eyes to cast us to the ground. He's like a lion eager to tear. As a young lion lurking in ambush. Arise, O Lord. Confront him. Subdue him.

Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword. From men by your hand, O Lord. From men of the world whose portion is in this life. You fill their womb with treasure.

[24 : 28] They're satisfied with children. They leave their abundance. To their infants. This is an appeal to God's saving action. First, he describes the character and aggression of his enemies.

It's useless to seek their compassion. Because their hardened hearts are closed off from pity. He says in verse 10. In their arrogance, they speak against God and his anointed king.

Showing us again that David suffers at their hand. Not because of some unrighteousness. But because of his righteousness. Because he is God's king. He suffers at the hand of this enemy.

But then we skip to verse 14. And we find that David describes his enemies as worldly men. Whose portion is in this life only. Now remember last week in Psalm 16.

David declared that God was his portion. And inheritance. But these individuals has no inheritance in God. These individuals have no portion with God.

[25 : 35] Now we don't know exactly. We're not told in the Psalm exactly what historical context that David was in. It fits well with the years that Saul was chasing him and trying to kill him though, doesn't it?

And let's presume for just a moment that that is the case. That David is making this plea to God at a time when Saul is seeking his life. David has been nothing but loyal to Saul.

He fights Saul's battles. When Saul is plagued by depression, David plays a song to soothe him.

And what does Saul do in return? He launches his spear.

Tries to take his head off. Out of envy, Saul hears the songs of the people. Says Saul has killed his thousands, David his ten thousands. And what is it that Saul does?

He takes the favor of God as if it's disloyalty from David. And he chases him. He tries to kill him. And every step of the way, David is upright. Despite opportunities that he's had to take Saul's life. [26 : 38] Remember in the cave as Saul relieves himself. David even goes and cuts off part of his robe so that he can later show him, I could have taken your life and I didn't. And I didn't do it because it would have been sinful for me to do it, David says.

He's upright in terms of his relationship to Saul. Now think about this. David looks at perhaps Saul or whatever enemy this was.

And if it's Saul, it's another Hebrew, another Jew. And he says, Saul has no portion in God. He has no inheritance in God.

His portion, the good that he will receive, it's in this life only. The wicked that surround me, the good that they receive, the good that they experience, it's in this life only.

They have no portion in God. Do you see what David's doing? He's seeing the bigger picture now. Yes, there's a threat. Yes, there's an enemy. But there's something greater than this circumstance in David's mind.

[27 : 36] He's looking forward. He's looking to the inheritance of God, the blessing of God in eternity now. And he looks at these enemies and he says, they have no portion with God. Everything that they get, they get in this life.

They're living for this life and for this life alone, he says. Paul would later describe God's enemies in a similar way, saying, their God is their belly.

They glory in their shame with the mind set on earthly things. That's really all they care about. They care about gaining in this life, getting the most that they can out of this life.

And David says, that's fitting because they have no portion in the next life. They have only judgment. And so David calls on God to pour out that judgment.

Look at what he says, verse 13. Arise, O Lord. Confront him, subdue him. Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword.

[28 : 41] Save me, God, by destroying them, he says. There's an interesting change.

Perhaps you noticed it in verse 12. We're told up to this point that David's enemies are plural. He speaks with the plural pronoun, our. Right? When he gets to verse 12, that changes, though, doesn't it? They have surrounded our steps.

But verse 12. He is like a lion, eager to tear. A young lion lurking in ambush. Confront him, Lord. Subdue him, Lord. That's interesting, isn't it? I don't want to read too much into it, but I do think there's a significance here. David sees that those who have surrounded him do so under the direction of a greater enemy who is at war with God.

[29 : 45] Now, let's say that it is Saul. Perhaps he means he, as in Saul, and the rest of the enemies that are working with Saul. But even then, we understand that the narrative of the Old Testament is constantly contrasting the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent all the way back to Genesis 3.

Saul, even in his greatest moments, not the seed of the woman. He's the seed of the serpent. I think David has that in mind here.

What is he crying for God to do? Save me, God, by destroying him. Conquering him. Peter picks up on this language, doesn't he?

You probably know the verse well. 1 Peter 5.8. Be sober-minded. Be watchful. Because your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

That's where David finds himself. And what is it that he does? He understands that he's powerless against this enemy. He can do nothing. He needs God to act on his behalf.

[30 : 53] He needs God's saving action to come into play. So what does he do? He pleads for it. Save me, God, by destroying him. That brings us to the fourth and final section, which is an assurance of God's final vindication.

An assurance of God's final vindication. Look at verse 15. Now remember, this is right on the heels of David saying, their portion is in this life. They have no portion in God. But notice what he affirms in verse 15.

But as for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness. When I awake, I shall be satisfied with you. Satisfied with your likeness. Their portion is in this life. And God even gives them what they want in this life. But I have something far greater and it's coming in the next life.

I will awake and be satisfied with God. He is my portion. David says, it's amazing, isn't it? It's an amazing confidence here. In the end, David's urgency gives way to confidence of final vindication. [32 : 02] He's sure that God will hear and answer his pleas. But notice that his assurance comes only after he rehearses the righteousness, covenant love, and saving power of God.

It's because he knows and believes these things to be true of the Lord that David finds comfort in his present distress. In your distress, you do well to meditate first and foremost on the Lord himself. Is that not what ultimately brings comfort? And that's what we see here with David. Because we must also notice that his expectation is not limited to immediate vindication.

He's certain that vindication will come. He does not say it will come now. In fact, he insists it's opposite. He desires for God to answer now, but he knows the timing is uncertain.

In fact, his confidence in vindication in verse 15 is after death. When I awake, he says, I shall be satisfied. This is a euphemism for life after death.

[33 : 19] Even if his situation results in his death and his enemies conquer him, David is confident that his vindication will come in resurrection to eternal life.

Isn't that amazing? Does that not point us to the Savior? Who for a few days seemed the enemy had conquered, and yet God vindicates him in resurrection.

David can't comprehend all of that at this point in his life. He sees it in shadowy form. We talked about that last week. It's a mystery in some sense to him. But he's at least acknowledging here that, yes, I'm not absolutely righteous, but God is righteous, and God has promised to love me.

He's made covenant with me, and I know he will save me, and he's greater than the enemy, and I know that my vindication will come in resurrection. Yes, my life will soon be over, but when I awake, I will be satisfied with him.

This is the ultimate vindication. And for David, it's enough to find comfort in his present moment. It's enough for him, even if his circumstance doesn't change.

[34 : 44] It's enough for him to know that God will be faithful to the very end, and in the end, he will be vindicated. Now, Psalm 17 is helpful on a number of levels.

It certainly teaches us how to pray in situations like David's, where we feel some injustice has come, and we're crying for God's righteousness to vindicate us. It can be helpful in that.

It certainly reminds us of God's character, and of course, any time we are looking and meditating on God's character, it's going to bring assurance through that knowledge.

But the purpose of this psalm is more significant than a model prayer. That's not exactly why it's here. I'm convinced of that. James Johnson said this, If this psalm is simply a pattern for our prayer, then it is almost useless for us.

Why? Because which one of us can appeal to God on the basis of his or her innocence? We might be innocent of one thing or another, but the inspection of this psalm goes much further than that.

[35 : 57] As we've seen before, only one man could pray this way. Our Lord Jesus Christ. As I said in the beginning, David's righteousness was relative to a specific circumstance.

Jesus, the true and better David, his righteousness is absolute. David could appeal to God's perfect judgment in a given moment, but Jesus could truly entrust himself to the Father's judgment in all things, for he alone is absolutely righteous in every way.

That's what we read in 1 Peter 2. Jesus committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. And when he was reviled for it, he did not revile in return.

When he suffered for his righteousness, he did not threaten. What did he do? He continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

And entrusting his cause to the Father, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

[37 : 13] By his wounds, you have been healed. By the greatest injustice ever known, we receive blessing and life.

Jesus fulfills the psalm in ultimate vindication as well. After bearing our sins on the cross, the Father raised him from the dead, proving that he was truly righteous and that his death sufficiently appeased God's wrath against sinners.

And this has eternal implications for us. Why did Jesus come to do any of that? He wasn't forced to. God has no obligation to his creatures, remember.

Why does he come? So that the unrighteous, like you and me and David, might be counted as righteous by faith in him.

2 Corinthians 5.21, For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin. Why?

[38 : 25] So that in him, in Christ, we might become the righteousness of God. Paul speaks of this a number of times.

Another great one is Romans 4. Remember, Paul speaking of Abraham and Abraham's faith and how his faith was counted to him as righteousness. And Paul writes in Romans 4.22, That is why faith was counted to him as righteousness.

But the words it was counted to him were not written for Abraham's sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us.

Righteousness will be counted to us who are not righteous. How? To us who believe in him who raised from the dead, Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Therefore, Paul goes on to say, since we have been justified by faith, we now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[39 : 32] through him, we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, in which we can rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Think of it this way. What is David's situation? He has an enemy who has unjustly accused him and sought to kill him.

So what does he do? He pleads his righteousness and looked to God to vindicate him. And this is a means of pointing us to Jesus.

Because Jesus is the true and better David, who is absolutely righteous in a way that David was not. Jesus was then vindicated by resurrection from the dead and procures salvation for all who will trust in him for it.

And this has massive implications for us because what is our situation? Our situation is such that an enemy justly accuses us.

[40 : 38] For we are indeed guilty before God. And we stand condemned before the righteous judge. We have no righteousness of our own to plead.

We must plead for mercy. And we plead for God's mercy on account of the righteousness of another. The perfect son of God.

Think about the three appeals and the assurance. David appeals to God's righteous judgment. So do we. We appeal to God's righteous judgment of Christ in our place.

On the cross. He bears God's wrath for us. For our sin. Secondly, we appeal to God's covenant affection as shown in Christ.

Isn't that what Romans teaches us? That God has shown his love to us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us. Covenant love.

[41 : 49] We appeal to that. What about our third appeal? We appeal to God's saving action through Christ. As Acts tells us, there is salvation in no other name but the name of Jesus.

And what is our assurance? Our assurance is final vindication because of Christ's vindication and resurrection. Because he lives, so will all who rest in him.

As the old hymn says, I need no other argument. I need no other plea. It is enough that Jesus died and that he died for me.

So can we pray Psalm 17? Well, of course we can. It's certainly a pattern for prayer and we should consider it when dealing with injustices in our lives. There is plenty of there for us to take away as a prayer but it's so much more than that, isn't it?

We can pray Psalm 17 as a prayer of hope and a prayer of thanksgiving knowing that Jesus has fulfilled the psalm on our behalf.

[43 : 04] He is our plea. He is our righteousness. And in him alone we may have eternal life. Let's pray.