

The Value of Persistent Praying

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning again. So good to be with everyone. We are going to be in Psalm 55 this morning and looking at the value of persistent praying, praying continually, praying over and over for something that is important to us and that we want God to hear.

In this Psalm, we find a man that's in great trouble. We see this is a contemplation of David. This is a Psalm that David is praying to God and is something that he has been going through for some time.

He has fear in his heart. The Psalm is recording David's experience of persecution through the betrayal of a very, very close friend.

Now, we're not exactly sure as to who this is or what this event is, but there are many commentators who believe that it was his close friend Ahithophel.

And we see that in 2 Samuel 15 31. So when you have time to go to 2 Samuel chapter 15, we see that he was betrayed by a very close friend.

[1 : 19] And in this Psalm, David is calling upon God to to enable him to escape this. We won't read the beginning portions of this Psalm, but in verse four, he says his heart is severely pained.

He says that terrors of death have fallen upon him. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon him and horror has overwhelmed him.

I mean, can you imagine the anguish that David is feeling because of his choice of words as he is praying and opening up his heart to God? And he is saying that he is fearful. He is being oppressed, that there's anguish and he's trembling.

But even throughout all of this, David is able to say that he has confidence that God will take care of him. Confidence in the God who redeems. As a matter of fact, it even says in verse number six that he wanted to fly away from all his troubles.

So I said, oh, Lord, that I had wings like a dove that I would fly away and be at rest. Have you ever been there where you just want to fly away from your problems? You just want to be able to just get on a jet plane or just take up wings and just just leave, just fly and soar above all of it.

[2 : 36] Just get away. So that's what David says where he is. He said, indeed, I would wander far off and remain in the wilderness. Ever just want to go to the woods, become a hermit, go to the woods and just be a few of you ever watched History Channel, the mountain men.

You know, they just live in the woods and they're there. They're not even around anybody. They have to fend for themselves. David says this is so bad. There's so much anguish. I don't even want to be around people. I just want to be able to go to the woods and just stay there away from it all, away from all my problems.

But ultimately, what David does is he chooses to call on God. He chooses to let God know what he's feeling. And I believe that we can learn a valuable lesson from David's experience in this psalm from the betrayal that he experiences and his dependence and trust in God through prayer.

And that he has the faith that God will, in fact, deliver him. So let's take a look this morning. We will be looking at verses 16 and verse 17 of Psalm 55.

So David says, as for me, I will call upon God and the Lord shall save me. Do you hear David's confidence? I'm in fear and anguish and trembling.

[3 : 58] I just want to fly away from all my problems. I want to go to the woods and hide. But the Lord God shall save me. As for me, I'll call on God.

Verse 17. When is he praying? How often? He says evening, morning, and at noon. All during the day. He says, I will pray. And not only that, he says, I will cry aloud.

And he shall hear my voice. So what kind of praying is this? Well, this is continual praying. This is continuous prayer. He is praying over and over and over again.

He says, evening and morning and noon. I will pray and cry aloud. Like the Apostle Paul. He says he is praying without ceasing. We see that in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 17.

Pray without ceasing. Without getting into a dry period of prayer. Just continually be. And not only that attitude of prayer, but as you go through the day, pray.

[5 : 02] And as you continue through the day, pray. If it's something that's on your heart, he says he is going to pray. And he wanted his prayers to be continually before God, before the throne of grace.

Matter of fact, we're told in the New Testament that we can come boldly before the throne of grace. Find the help that we need when we are in that time of need.

He wanted his prayers to always be before the throne of grace. And he knows that God, in his unfailing love, in his unfailing resources, that he would provide in this great time of need.

And I believe that's why David sees this as a time for persistent praying. That God has resources beyond him. That God is able to provide what David cannot produce within himself.

And I think that's exactly where we need to understand we are. We don't have the resources. We don't have the resources to forgive someone who's grievously hurt us. We don't have the resources to truly forgive someone who has hurt our family.

[6 : 09] We don't have the resources within us to get beyond profound grief. We don't have what it takes. But God does. God has the resources. So that's why I believe David continually wanted his prayer before the throne of grace, where God would be able to provide his unfailing resources when David truly needed it.

As a matter of fact, Spurgeon said, Seasons of great need call for frequent seasons of prayer. Have a pleading heart, and God will have a plenteous hand.

Have a pleading heart, and God will have a plenteous hand. In Hebrews 14, we know that God's ear is always open to our prayer.

We see that. Let us therefore come, how? With boldness, boldly, to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

So not only did David continually go before the throne of grace because he felt the need, and he needed God's unfailing resources, but the writer of Hebrews said, Come to God.

[7 : 23] Go to God. Because we can have boldness because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross of Calvary. He tore down that dividing wall of partition between us, and we now can have access to God.

We don't have to go through a priest. We don't have to go through an intermediary. We can come directly to God, our Heavenly Father, and come boldly before Him, knowing that in the name of Jesus Christ, we have access, and we can find mercy and grace to help when we need it the most.

And that's where David was when he was praying. So what do we learn? Continual prayer.

Continuous prayer. If you ever think, Well, God, do I need to pray for this more than once?

David was. How often was David praying for the same thing? Morning, noon, and night. Over and over and over again, David was saying, God, this hurts.

God, I pray that you would take care of this. God, I pray that you would provide the forgiveness. I pray that you would provide the peace. I pray that you would provide the calm. I pray, and he might even have been praying for his physical, because there's this vicious cycle that we have.

[8 : 36] We have psychological stress that will cause physical stress. And when we are physically stressed, it causes more psychological stress. And so, and emotional stress.

So we need to break that cycle. And one way is through prayer. That's exactly what he did. So I think we need to learn. Continuously pray. Don't just lift up a prayer and forget about it.

Continually come before God. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. We learned that from David. I think we learned that from the Apostle Paul as well. Pray without ceasing. And then secondly, what we see in verse 17 is, I believe contagious praying.

That prayer that could become contagious. Let's read that again. And evening and morning and at noon, I will pray and do what? Cry out loud. He wasn't ashamed for others to hear him.

I will cry out loud, and he shall hear my voice. I think David might have even intended for others to hear his prayer. Not only God, but he was not afraid of others hearing his prayer.

[9 : 41] Maybe praying out loud so others could join him as well in his prayer. Now this is bold praying. This is fervent praying. Not enough to pray silently.

Not enough to pray whispering a prayer. But he says, crying it out loud, I will pray this prayer. It is prayer that holds nothing back.

Prayer that just opens it up before God and is not ashamed for others to hear. Now at times we might give an unspoken request. It might be extremely personal or extremely private.

Or someone says, I don't want anyone else to know about this, but I want you to pray. And so we engage others' prayer with an unspoken prayer request.

Meaning, just pray, but I'm praying for something, but just pray for what I'm praying. And God knows what we're praying about. But David in this instance was not ashamed of crying boldly.

[10:44] His voice is heard before God. He needs his voice to be heard before God. And he is expecting answers. And one thing he does is, he risks the ridicule of others.

Like, David, come on, just be quiet. That's a little bit too much. Too much information. Or, David, just quiet. We're trying to rest. We're trying to eat.

We're trying to whatever. No, David didn't mind. He says, I will cry out loud. Now this is the kind of praying, I believe, that Paul and Silas did in the dungeon in Acts chapter 16.

They were praying. The jailers heard them. Everybody else heard them. They weren't praying under their voice, under their breath. They were praying so others would hear them. And what did that prayer produce?

That praying produced an earthquake. And so we know that God is in the business of hearing our prayers, our continual prayers. And these contagious prayers, they prayed down an earthquake there in the dungeon.

[11:47] The other prisoners heard them. And what did that produce? The contagion of the gospel. They said, wow, that is awesome. We want to hear about what's going on and the jailer and on and on and on.

We see the results that were produced by this, not only continual, but this contagious praying. And so let us be bold enough to pray prayers that move the heart of God.

You see, it's powerful prayers that move the powerful hand of God. But if we pray timid prayers, well, God, I don't know if you're going to do this. God, I don't know if you want to do this.

Well, God, you know, I'm sorry to come to you and bother you about this. And I've heard people pray that way. Let's pray boldly because we're told to come boldly. And so if we pray bold prayers, we are going to see bold answers and miracles when we pray.

Timid prayers will neither move God nor men. So it's bold prayers that move the heart of God. So let's pray big, bold prayers as well as just the breathing, the silent like others did, like Daniel did, like others did.

[13:10] Lord, give me the words to say. Lord, help me. But there are times when dire circumstances require bold prayers and prayers for miracles that move the heart of God.

So let's be bold enough to pray big prayers and expect big answers. And so he's he's saying here in verses 16 and 17, he says, as for me, I will call upon the Lord.

In verse eight, he said, I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and the tempest. Destroy a Lord. Verse nine and divide their tongues. For I have seen violence and strife in the city day and night.

They go around. Go around it on its walls. And he's seeing all of this going on around him. And he is saying, verse 12, for it's not an enemy who reproaches me.

Then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me, who was exalted himself against me. Then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man, my equal, my companion, my acquaintance, who we took sweet counsel together and walk to the house of God in the throng.

[14:21] And he goes on and talks about how this friend he was equals with. And he said, we worshiped together. We walked to church together. And he says, we shared secrets together.

And he says, oh, that it were an enemy that did this to me. But it was a friend. We imagine the hurt when a friend deceives you or a friend turns their back on you or a friend, as it were, stabs you in the back.

And David is saying, this is horrible. This is terrible. This is something that I can't even begin to bear. So he continually prays before God.

And he is praying out loud, expecting bold answers. And then verse 17, we see that it is confident praying.

He says, evening and morning and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud. And what is his expectation? He'll hear me.

[15:27] He will answer my prayer. And that is what we need when we need encouragement. We need hope. And if there is hope, that we will receive an answer.

And that is what leads to much, that is what feeds the cycle of depression. We lose hope. We lose a future orientation. We lose the expectation that things can get better.

But David, in his prayer, is expecting God to hear him. So there is hope for this horrible situation he finds himself in. He shall hear my voice.

David expected God to hear. And he expected God to answer. We look at verse 18.

What is he looking at? He's looking at what God has done for him in the past. And we see this cycle throughout the Psalms.

[16:29] We see David saying, God, this is terrible. God, this is horrible. Even at times, God, why have you left me? Why don't you hear my prayer?

Why are the ceilings as brass? Why do my prayers not get higher than the ceiling? God, why are you doing this to me? But God, you've taken care of me in the past.

And God, you're going to take care of me in the future. So, Father, God, I trust you to take care of me this time. And so we see that common refrain. We see that common cycle of David's prayer in the Psalm.

And so what we see here is he is going back and he says, He has redeemed me. He is recollecting here. He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.

For there were many against me. So we not only should pray consistently, not only should we be willing to pray contagious prayers, prayers that we're not afraid others to hear so that others can join in with us, and then when God answers the prayer, they're going to know the prayer was prayed that God answered, but also pray with expectancy.

[17:46] Pray expecting God. It's like the person who prayed for rain and carried their umbrella in the morning. They prayed expecting. And so it's not, well, I hope it rains.

No, I'll pray for God to produce or to provide this answer, and then I go out expecting to get wet. And so we need to pray expectantly.

We can pray and believe and receive, I believe. We can pray. We can either pray and believe and receive, or we can pray and doubt and go without, as the saying goes.

So pray and believe. Because Paul says, the New Testament says, why don't we have what we're asking, why don't we have what we want? He says, because we're not asking for it.

Like, hello? You don't have it? Ask for it, and you will receive it. If you doubt, then we may be going without. And so we need to pray expectantly that God will answer.

[18:48] Answer. We go on in verse 19. God will hear and afflict them, even he who abides from old, because they do not change. Therefore, they do not fear God.

He has put forth his hands. Verse 21. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but warm was in his heart. His words were softer than oil, and yet they were drawn swords. Verse 22.

Cast your burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain you. He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

Love. That is one of my favorite, one of my favorite verses in the psalm. Psalm 55, 22. Cast your burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain you.

He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. It's like standing your ground firmly, and the winds, no one can push you off of where you are.

[19:43] You're firmly grounded, and when we're trusting God, and when we're trusting in him, he said he'll sustain us, and he'll never permit the righteous to be moved through adversity, never allow the righteous to be moved through anything else.

So we pray continually, pray contagious prayers, prayers that we know will move the heart of God, and pray expectantly.

How did Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemane? You remember? He prayed so fervently that he sweat drops of blood.

Now I've read medical articles on that, and how that could possibly have broken capillaries, and then he sweat. I mean, so it's talking about the anguish, and medical doctors saying that there's a possibility that that could happen, but that's how fervently Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

So consider the fervent prayers of Christ. If Jesus needed to pray prayers that strongly, then how much more do we need to pray when we feel the need, when something is going on, when maybe we feel that we're going to be in trouble, or maybe we feel that maybe financial trouble, or relationship trouble, or whatever else that we need.

[21 : 08] I mean, get on your face. Cry out before God. I mean, you might say, well, you know, real men don't cry. Well, that's not true. We can cry before God, because he created us.

He created our tears for a purpose. And David came before God. David, this warrior, cried before God.

And so if we can fall flat on our face and in anguish say, God, I need you. I need you to take care of this situation.

I need you to work a miracle. Then so be it. Let's be praying fervent prayers. When we pray and get answers, the world will take notice.

I really do believe we need to be praying, expecting God to answer. So as we look at our next steps, where do we go from here?

[22 : 07] Well, I believe we need to begin praying expectantly. And maybe you already have. And maybe we've fallen back into the timid praying of, well, God, maybe, I don't know if you want to do this, but if you do, if there's an outside chance, maybe that you, no.

Pray, God, I ask, I urge you now, I beg you, dear God, that you would work this miracle in my life. And pray with confidence. Pray expecting that you will receive.

And pray consistently. Don't just pray once and then wonder why God never answers. Because I believe there are times when, and I believe this is borne out in Scripture, that God just simply wants to know how serious we are.

Have you ever had your children ask you for something? And they asked you in passing? And what did you do? Now, God doesn't work this way necessarily.

But sometimes, as parents, we hope they will forget about it exactly. And so, if they never mention it again, we're off the hook.

[23 : 10] And so we don't have to do whatever it is. And maybe it's not anything bad, but maybe it's something that, you know, we're just not inclined to do. But, what if they ask, and ask, and ask, and ask, and ask?

And if it's something that's not bad for them, and if it's something that maybe we come to the point where, well, we believe that the time is right, and they obviously what? Still want it.

And so sometimes, we will provide that for which they're asking. And I think God just wants to know, how badly do you want this? How important is this to you?

Now, we have to be careful. Because God will only supply our what? Our needs. Now, sometimes, I believe He supplies our wants. And then does what?

Sits back and waits for us to hang ourselves with the rope that was given. Why? Because I think there are some times that God allows us to see that we don't always need what we think we need.

[24 : 19] Oh, well, maybe that wasn't the best idea. That wasn't the best thing. And so God does give us our desires. He does answer our prayer. But I believe that we need to temper that praying with God.

Your will be done, but still pray fervent, bold prayers. So how do we know what is fair game to pray? His word.

God's word tells us what His will is. So if it's something that, as Scripture says, well, we want it because we want to consume it upon our own lust, as Scripture says. We just want it because we want it.

Well, God won't be inclined to provide that because He knows which He knows is something that either might hurt us or something that we don't need. But if we know that it's something that is within the will of God, let's pray bold, fervent, continual prayers and when God answers, the world will know that God answers prayer.

Let's pray. Lord, this morning, we thank You for the example of David. We know that there were times when He was hurting.

[25 : 29] There were times when He sensed His profound need for You, for Your unfailing and Your abounding provision.

So, Father, we ask that You help us to learn from this prayer of David that we can pray continually, fervently and expectantly knowing that You hear us, knowing that You've redeemed us, knowing

that You want to work in our lives.

You want what's best for us. Father, I pray for each one here this morning. If there are any heavy hearts today, if there are any here this morning whose hearts are burdened for whatever it is, Lord, I pray that You would encourage each one of us, help us, dear God, to look to You, just to trust You, to, in humility and in full surrender, trust You to take care of our lives as we submit ourselves to Your will, to Your work in our lives, as You orchestrate things that we need, We thank You, Father, in advance for what You are going to supply.

We pray all of this this morning in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen.