

The Morning Prayer of Expectation

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Date: 09 March 2025

Preacher: Rev Calum M Smith

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 30.! Let's sing Psalm 30.! We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 8.

Let's sing from verse 1 to 8, and the tune is St. Minvar.

St. Minvar.

St. Minvar.

St. Minvar. St. Minvar. St. Minvar.

[2 : 20] St. Minvar. St. Minvar.

St. Minvar. St. Minvar.

St. Minvar. St. Minvar.

St. Minvar. St. Minvar. St. Minvar.

Let's come to God in prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, as we have been singing these words, we are reminded of every reason that we have to give thanks to you.

[3 : 52] We are reminded of all that you have done for us, all that you are doing for us, and indeed all that you will do for us. For you are a God of salvation, one who we can exalt, for you have rescued us.

When you bring us from darkness to light, we know that that great work has been done, that you have rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into that kingdom of light.

And so as we know you, Lord, and as we put our trust in you, we thank you that that is our cry to you, that we exalt your name, that we praise you for all that you have done, that you have heard our cry, and that you have listened to us in our cries for mercy, and that you have been gracious towards us.

And so we thank you for everyone here who can testify to these words this evening, for everyone who knows what it has been and even is at this time to cry unto you and to know that you are a God who is mighty and awesome in power, the one who is above all rule and authority of this world, the one who has power in the heavens high, and yet who looks down upon us so graciously in so many ways.

But you have not dealt with us as we deserve, oh Lord, but that you have been merciful to us and even patient and compassionate. You have, oh Lord, not given us what we deserve, but yet you remember us.

[5 : 21] And we thank you that your favour is upon us still, and that we know a day of grace and mercy. But in that we know too that other days come, and a final day will come, when a day of judgment will be upon us.

And we know, Lord, that it is what we hear now and what we do in these days that's so important for us. And so we pray for maybe any who haven't listened to your voice as yet, for any who have not cried out for mercy as yet.

That this evening, Lord, we would realise the great privilege that we have in prayer, the blessing that is ours to be able to call upon you as one who hears and answers according to your will.

We do thank you, Lord, for the blessing that prayer is to us as a people. We are surrounded by prayer, and we thank you for that.

But we pray, Lord, that we will see prayer far and wide throughout our nation and throughout the world. We do thank you that you have your people to all ends of the earth. But we remember those in particular who rule over us, and we thank you for them, Lord, and we pray for kings and queens throughout the world.

[6 : 40] We pray for presidents and prime ministers. We pray for those who have that sense of authority and power, and yet, oh Lord, not recognising that it comes from you, not depending upon

you in prayer, but seeking to do things according to their own ways and their own wisdom.

We pray, Lord, that you will humble, that you will humble them under your mighty hand, and that they would come to recognise that all authority and power is from you, and that they would cry out to you, that they would call upon your name, even for mercy for themselves and for all our nations of the world, that we would be a people who would see our great need for you.

And we thank you, Lord, that as we call, that you are able to show us your ways and to teach us your paths, just as you have done through all the generations.

When we see even the psalmist, as he cries out, Lord, he knew direction. When we see your people throughout the Old Testament in times of great need and anxiety and fear, yet being able to call upon you and to know that you are with them.

When we think of the Gospels, when we think of Jesus in them, as he taught his disciples how to pray, and even as we repeat that prayer so often here, the Lord's Prayer, we thank you for its simplicity and yet its depth.

[8 : 09] We thank you that it teaches us about our relationship with you, that you are our Father in heaven, and that we depend on you for all things, that with you is forgiveness, that with you is all that we need for life and for eternity.

And so we thank you for the teaching we have in prayer. We thank you for the way we see prayer answered, even as the disciples and Paul on his missionary journeys as they went out with the Gospel.

We thank you for the way that you brought them through so many different places and among so many different people by the power of prayer and the movement of your Spirit.

And we thank you that today we still have that power, we still have that access to you and through your Holy Spirit that we are guided in all that we do.

And so we pray, Lord, teach us to pray and to look to you and to wait upon you. Remember us in our homes and our families, we pray, Lord, that you would have mercy upon us.

[9 : 10] We thank you that even as we pray together this evening, we all have our individual prayers being offered up to you as well. The things that go on in our own lives and experiences that maybe we only know ourselves.

We thank you that they are already revealed to you and that you are with us in every situation. And we do thank you, Lord, that your peace and blessing is over us in these ways that we know that you have blessed us so much with the Gospel, with the peace that we enjoy, with the way of life that we have.

Lord, we have so much to be thankful for and yet we take so much for granted. And we just pray, Lord, that you would just come in a day of your power.

Come and restore to us days of great blessing, days of revival, days of your Spirit working powerfully in our midst. We pray that for our churches throughout our island.

We pray it to know it in the preaching of the Gospel in these days and times of communion season, that there would be times of refreshment and blessing to us. But we pray to know it, Lord, throughout our communities as well.

[10 : 25] In our homes, that there would be peace in families and among parents and children and all relationships like that. We pray for our workplaces, Lord, places where there can be so many challenges to us when we can feel resentment or anger in different ways, when we feel hurt or used in different ways.

We pray, Lord, for peace and for your goodness and mercy upon us there. We pray for it in our schools and among our young people. We think of those who are growing up in a different generation to what we have known, with all the different pressures and worries that they bring in terms of technology and so many other different pressures weighing heavily upon our young people.

We do pray, Lord, for your protection, your blessing on children, upon teachers, upon all the staff in our schools and the Nicholson and the primary schools and throughout our communities, that we would see your blessing poured out upon us.

We do thank you, Lord, that the things that seem impossible for us, the things that seem outwith our control, the things that we seem to only ask, maybe thinking, is it ever possible that these things might be?

We thank you that we come to the one through whom all things are possible. For you are God and you are Lord of all. You have power, you have authority over all things.

[11 : 56] And so help us, Lord, to have faith as we pray and that we would wait upon you and wait upon you with that great expectation that you are able to do abundantly more than all that we ask or imagine.

So hear our prayers, Lord, and look down upon us. Continue with us as we open up your word this evening. Guide us through it and may your spirit work in our hearts and go with us in the week ahead, Lord, in all that we do and all the places that we go that your hand would guide us and uphold us and keep us and forgive us all our sins as we come anew this evening confessing before you that we are a people who fall short of your glory, that we can never meet your standards, that your ways are so far above our ways and your thoughts above ours.

And yet, O Lord, we thank you for your mercy. We thank you for your grace towards us and we thank you for the forgiveness that we know as we confess in the name above every name, the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

So hear our prayers through him as we ask it all, seeking your favour upon us anew. In Jesus' name, Amen. Well, we're going to sing again to God's praise this time in the Scottish Psalter, singing in Psalm 86, page 341 of the psalm books.

Psalm 86, we're going to sing from verse 6 down to verse 11. Psalm 86, at verse 6, page 341, Hear, Lord, my prayer and to my voice of my request attend.

[13 : 37] In troublous times I'll call on thee, for thou wilt answer send. The tune is Earshire and we sing from verse 6 down to verse 11. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. ■ ■ ■ Let us pray.

Let us pray. which God has come, not any word is there.

All nations, new the nations shall come and worship reverently before thy face and day, O Lord, thy name shall glorify.

Cause the heart exceeding great and words by thee are done, which are to thee admire not the heart of thyself alone.

[15 : 49] Be thy way, I'm delighted, O Lord, and what will I?

Good night, my heart, as I live with thee for January.

Amen. We turn to read God's word together and we're reading in the book of Psalms.

I'm going to read in Psalm 5, the whole of this Psalm. Psalm 5. You'll find it around page 538 of the church Bibles, if you're using them.

Psalm 5. And we can read the whole of this Psalm together. It's a Psalm of David. Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my groaning.

[16 : 58] Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God. For to you do I pray. O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice.

In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. For you are not a God who delights in wickedness. Evil may not dwell with you.

The boastful shall not stand before your eyes. You hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down towards your holy temple in the fear of you.

Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies. Make your way straight before me. For there is no truth in their mouth.

[17 : 59] Their inmost self is destruction. Their throat is an open grave. They flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God.

Let them fall by their own counsels. Because of the abundance of their transgressions, cast them out. For they are rebelled against you. But let all who take refuge in you rejoice.

Let them ever sing for joy and spread your protection over them. That those who love your name may exult in you. For you bless the righteous, O Lord.

You cover him with favour as with a shield. Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. We're going to sing in the Psalms again.

Singing in Psalm 116. In the Sing Psalms version. Page 154. Psalm 116. Page 154. Psalm 116.

Page 154. All our Psalms this evening have this theme of prayer being heard and answered by God in amazing ways.

[19 : 10] And of course, Psalm 116 is that prayer of love towards the Lord because he's heard the voice of the Psalmist.

Psalm 116 at verse 1. I love the Lord because he heard my voice. He listened when I cried to him for aid. I'll call on him as long as I shall live because he turned to hear me when I prayed.

We're going to sing from verse 1 down to verse 9 to God's praise and the tune is Eventide. I love the Lord because he heard my voice.

He listened when I cried to him for aid. I'll call on him as long as I shall live because he turned to hear me when I prayed.

In the hearts of death, breathed and eternal thee, Half on became free, languish of the grave, With grief and trouble I was overcome, Then on the name of God I call, Lord, sing.

[21 : 00] The Lord the Lord is kind and full of grace. O righteous and compassionate is he.

The Lord protects all those of childlike faith. When I was in great need, he rescued me.

O my soul, God has been good to you. For you, O Lord, have saved my soul from death.

My feet from stumbling and my eyes from tears. That I may live for you while I am afraid.

Amen. Well, we can turn back together to our reading in the book of Psalms and Psalm 5.

[22 : 26] And we can read again at the beginning of the psalm, the first three verses there. Give ear to my words, O Lord.

Consider my groaning. Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God. For to you do I pray. O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice.

In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. And then at the end of the psalm, at verse 9, it says, The Lord has heard my plea.

The Lord accepts my prayer. Sorry, wrong psalm. But let all who take refuge in you rejoice. Let them ever sing for joy and spread your protection over them.

For those who love your name may exult in you. For you bless the righteous, O Lord. You cover him with favor as with a shield. The title for this evening's sermon is The Morning Prayer of Expectation.

[23 : 35] And it may not seem to make sense to have it in the evening. But it's just a reminder to us of the importance of prayer. And that's going to be the theme of our service this evening, the importance of prayer.

And as you look at Psalm 5, you find here David beginning the day in prayer. And he's going on throughout the day, then looking and watching to God who he has prayed to and waiting with that sense of expectation.

So that's why we call it the morning prayer of expectation. And prayer is such an important part of church life. It's an important part of the Christian life.

Prayer is our relationship with God. Both in a congregational sense as we gather together, prayer is important. Every sermon, you hear every service, you come to, there's prayer in it.

Every time we have a prayer meeting, it is about prayer, praying to God. There are times in our denomination once a year when we have a national day of prayer.

[24 : 46] A day that's set aside for that very purpose. But every day is a day of prayer. We have prayer meetings throughout the week. There's a monthly meeting on a Monday evening.

There's prayer meetings in Laxdale on Tuesday. The English in the Seminary on Wednesday and the Gaelic on Thursday and the Seminary. There's the Saturday evening prayer meeting. Prayer is just part of our life and our routines.

It's such an important thing. But how do we approach it? It can sometimes become just a habit. It can become something of just going through a routine.

And that's something we always have to guard against. Do we have a sense of expectation as we come to prayer? Yeah. I think it's good to remind ourselves that that is the way that we should come.

We should always come with a sense of expectation that we are praying not to ourselves, not to a people who we see around us, but that we are lifting up our voice to God, the God of heaven and earth.

[25 : 54] And that we remember who it is that we are praying to. That then helps us to have that sense of expectation and anticipation of what God can do.

Because there may be times when we sense that coming to God and we feel that things are beyond our reach, beyond change, beyond our capabilities, beyond recovery.

There are things that are just totally outwith our control. And in a way, it's good that we would come like that. Because that then reminds us that is why we come to God in prayer.

Because what is impossible with man, it is possible with God. And so it's that dependence that we have. And that's what we see with David in this psalm.

When we think of prayer and its importance, it is our lifeblood, our relationship with God. And we see it with David in the psalms again and again.

[26 : 53] In his own life, we see it again and again. And with all God's people in the scriptures, you see it as so vital, so important. And does it make a difference?

Well, of course it does. When you look at David in this psalm, he's beginning his day with that sense of expectation, praying to God, I'm crying to you, my enemies are all around me.

And yet he concludes this psalm with that, you cover him with favor as with a shield. So he knows that God has been with him. He knows that God is looking after him.

And you see it again and again through the scriptures, how God answers prayer in amazing ways. But it's not just in the scriptures. Many of us can testify to it in our own lives.

The way God has answered prayer. The way God has helped us in different situations. The way God, maybe even today, you've been praying about someone or something or yourself.

[27 : 53] And you've seen God do something remarkable, something amazing. That God is able to answer prayer. And we can all look back, I'm sure, and see answered prayer in so many different ways.

And I'm sure many of us can look back and not just see answered prayer, but see how many of us are tokens to answered prayer. The people who prayed for us when we seemed maybe beyond the reach of God.

When we seemed so far away from God that salvation was the last thing on our mind. And yet people were praying. And by God's grace, he brought us to himself. That many of us are tokens to answered prayers.

Faithful prayers. People who wouldn't give up in prayer. Who kept praying. Always believing that this God who we are praying to, the God of heaven and earth.

He is able to save. He is able to do so much more than all that we ask or imagine. And the scripture is full of people who are faithful in prayer.

[28 : 57] David here we're seeing, but there's others too. You think maybe names might come to mind immediately. You think maybe of Daniel. Daniel was a man of prayer.

And a man of prayer no matter what. Didn't matter what was going on around him or what the threat was. He still prayed to God. That's what you read of in Daniel chapter 6.

When they decided, the wise men around Nebuchadnezzar decided that all prayer was to be made to him as king.

Not to God. So they said, anyone who prays to any God or man during the next 30 days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lion's den.

The lion's den was the threat for anyone who would pray to any other God or man apart from Nebuchadnezzar. And it was a real threat. It wasn't just they were saying something they weren't going to do.

[29 : 54] We know because they were thrown into the lion's den. But what was Daniel's response? Was he terrified of this? Was he afraid of this and said, I better stop praying?

No. Daniel's response was when he learned about the decree that had been published in verse 10. He went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem.

And three times a day, he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. He was faithful in prayer.

And God heard and answered his prayers in amazing ways. And so you see it throughout the scripture, this relationship of God with his people.

And even Jesus himself is a reminder to us of the importance of prayer. Jesus spent time in prayer with his Father.

[30 : 55] And it was often at times when things were busy. In the Gospel of Luke chapter 5, for example, you read there that there were large crowds who were hearing about him and starting to come and follow him.

But in verse 16 of Luke 5, it says, But he, that's Jesus, would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

So you see there, it wasn't just once. It was his habit, his routine. He would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

He would find his quiet place to pray. And down through history, there's so many examples given to us of people who were faithful in prayer.

People who put us to shame as you read about them and the kind of prayer life that they had. For example, Matthew Henry, who wrote a commentary on the whole Bible.

[31 : 54] It's said of him that he would spend eight hours a day in pure study and prayer. Eight hours a day in pure study and prayer.

And so many of the Puritan theologians of the 16th, 17th century, the same was true of them. They were people of prayer. And so we are reminded again and again of the importance of prayer.

And as somebody once put it, if you are too busy to pray, you are too busy. If you don't have time to pray, you're not using your time right.

That's the challenge to us all the time, is it not? Our relationship with God in prayer. And I'm saying this to myself first. And the situation with David here in Psalm 5 is one, when we see him in a situation where there's so much going on around him.

There's so much that's going on that's weighing heavy upon him. He's surrounded by enemies. He's surrounded by those who are out to get him.

[33 : 05] Those who are looking for an opportunity to bring him down. Making him out to be an enemy of the people. And yet, who is David?

Who is this David we read of in the Psalms? Who is this David we read of in the Scriptures? He is the king who was chosen by God.

He is the one through whom the line of Jesus would come. So he is appointed by God. He is a man after God's own heart, as the word describes him.

He is someone who has this closeness with God. And yet, here he is under attack. Here he is with his troubles are never far away, as it were.

And what we see him again and again is reminding us of the need to cry out to God. And how real this cry is. How real this prayer is.

[34 : 05] The example we are given by David here is to begin each day in prayer with God. And look with that expectation to him.

The God who shields and watches over his people. Prayer is so important. Spurgeon, Charles Spurgeon, in his book entitled Only a Prayer Meeting, he speaks about the importance of prayer in that sense of togetherness.

And in his first chapter, there's two points that kind of stand out for me. He said this, how could we expect a blessing if we're too idle to ask for it?

How can we expect a blessing if we're too idle to ask for it? The importance of having that time of prayer with God. But also of that collective nature of prayer, being together in prayer.

He said, how could we look for a Pentecost if we're never met with one accord in one place to wait upon the Lord? How can we expect the blessing of God to be poured out if we're not meeting together with one accord in one place to wait upon the Lord?

[35 : 19] To have that sense of watching and waiting expectantly on God. And so there's lessons for us to learn from this psalm. And the first thing is I want to see is David's approach is to God.

And it sounds obvious, doesn't it? David's approach is to God. But it's key because he doesn't start to deal with things by himself.

He has God with him. And prayer has been much in the news recently. And not for the reasons we would want it as such. But it highlights that even in a negative sense it can highlight how important prayer is to people.

For example, just in the last month there has been a call by some to scrap Christian prayers at the start of every session of the House of Commons. We don't need prayer today.

We've moved on, was what some were saying. And yet it was met with a pushback. That there are still those who see the importance of prayer.

[36 : 29] But it's just a reminder to us that that's the mindset of so many. We don't need prayer. We've seen it too in the news recently with talk of exclusion zones around health clinics.

Now without going into the details of why they're set, it's the challenge that it's bringing towards those who would seek to be a praying people. Where the threat is seen not just in the zones around, but even in the homes around them as being under threat if you're praying.

Even in your own home. That there could be a challenge against you. And so there's all these things that are being highlighted for us about the challenge that's being made against prayer. Let's get rid of prayer. Instead of seeing the gift and power that there is in prayer. And who it is that we're praying to and what he's able to do for us.

And David reminds us in this psalm that in these days, even our own days today, it is such a time to see prayer and its importance. And to see that it is only by seeking God in these days that we will know days of blessing and days of peace.

[37 : 41] And so David's approach is to God. And his approach is in the morning. C.S. Lewis said, What was he saying?

He was saying, We wake up in the morning and we can immediately be faced with, I need to do this, that, and the next thing. It's all such a rush. And yet he's saying it's time, that time in the morning is that time to make sure we push back on all these things that will come as a first priority to us and just make sure that we let that voice of the Lord come in.

That time with the Lord come in. And so there's the challenge. David is approaching God, and he's approaching him in the morning. Is that our priority at the beginning of the day?

To have that time with God. Because the temptation would have been there for David here as well. That same temptation coming under attack from those around him.

It would be so easy for him to turn on the offense, to go on the attack against them. But what he does is he approaches his Lord, his God, and his King.

[39 : 17] David, a king, a royal king in this world, still sees his dependence upon the Lord, the Lord of all.

And so David is a great example to us of the need for ourselves to pray as well. And he approaches God in an honest way. Look at how he comes to him.

Give ear to my words, O Lord. Consider my groaning. Give attention to the sound of my cry. So he comes honestly.

He comes with words. It's obvious as we pray that we use words. But then he says, Consider my groaning. And hear my cries.

The sound of my cry. And so he's coming, just bearing his heart to God in every way. It's not a case of approaching God depending on how you feel.

[40 : 19] It's not a case of saying, I don't feel close to God just now. I shouldn't come and pray. It's coming whatever our situation, whatever our circumstances.

Yes, when there are times when we can express our prayers in words, but other times our prayers are just a groan. They're just a noise that maybe comes out of us.

The groaning of our heart. Or the cries of anguish that sometimes come. They're still prayers that God hears. And so we are to approach God with all our burdens, all our cares.

And you notice too how he approaches God in such a personal way. Give ear to my words, O Lord. He is coming in that sense of knowing who he is coming to.

And then at the end of verse 2, he says, My King and my God, for to you do I pray. So there's this personal nature of coming to God.

[41 : 24] My Lord, my King, my God. And that's the relationship that's open to us. Every one of us can come and approach the Lord, the King, my God, in that same way.

He is the one who is there for us. He is the one alone who is able to help. We can approach God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

What a wonderful privilege it is to be able to approach God, the same God as David prayed to, the same God that Daniel was praying to, the same God down through all the generations, the only God who is able to help.

Somebody once said this, Prayer is man's greatest means of tapping the infinite resources of God, invoking by prayer the mercy and might of God as our most effective means of guaranteeing peace and security for the harassed and helpless people of this earth.

Invoking by prayer the mercy and might of God. That is what we have in prayer. We have that access.

[42 : 43] We approach the God who is able to do so much more than we can ask of him. So much more than we can even imagine in our own minds.

He is able to do it. So David's approach is to God and so is ours. Second thing we see is David's approach is a priority.

It's a priority. And again, we see it just here how he just comes to him in this sense of it's the most important and the most precious thing he could do.

Martin Luther, the reformer, again, who we're studying in the Bible study on Wednesday evenings, the Reformation, and it was Martin Luther who was at the heart of that.

He did so much to bring the truths of the gospel to the people of God. And he would spend at least two hours a day in private prayer.

[43 : 45] And he once said to a friend of his, he said, I've got so much to do tomorrow. I need to spend an extra day, an extra hour in prayer.

Now, is that the kind of response we would have to the busyness of life? I've got so much to do tomorrow that I'll add an extra hour of prayer into my schedule.

We would probably go the other way. We would think, I've got so much to do tomorrow, I'll need to cut back on my time in prayer. And yet, for Martin Luther, the priority was that prayerful relationship.

The priority with David here is that prayer with God. That morning prayer with God, even though there's so much going on. It was John Bunyan who once said, he who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find him the rest of the day.

And again, it's just that reminder for ourselves that in our prayer life, it is so important to begin the day in prayer. That priority of beginning the day in prayer with God is set the day before him.

[44 : 57] We depend on him. Jesus' prayer life was there to see us as well as we saw in Luke's gospel, how he would go away to a quiet place and pray.

But you also see that so often it was in the early hours of the morning, in that quiet time of the day. And that's again a lesson to us.

When we are fresh, when we have just had our night's sleep, when we are about to go into the busyness of a day, that we give that quality time to God.

Because we have every reason to. because you see in the scriptures how often it tells us that the blessings of God are new each morning. Lamentation speaks of it in chapter 3, verse 22, because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassion never fail.

So there's that reminder of his great love towards us. So what other reason do we need to come and pray than we know the Lord's great love.

[46 : 09] We are not consumed, we don't get what we deserve because of his compassions that never fail. So we have all of these reasons, but then in the next verse it says they are new every morning.

So it's not just a one-off. It's not just we pray on the Monday for the whole week ahead and don't come back again until the next Monday.

Our relationship with God is on a daily basis. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness it says in laments. So we have that reminder every day we have reason to give thanks to God, to make it our priority to come to him and especially in the morning.

Zephaniah has the same thing. Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 5 The Lord within her is righteous. He does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice and every new day he does not fail. Again there's this reminder it's every new day morning by morning he dispenses his justice. So every day you wouldn't miss breakfast or you wouldn't miss a meal in the day that's going to keep you going.

[47 : 31] And so we see here morning by morning we are reminded of his great faithfulness. And so we are to make it that priority to come to him.

Are we giving the best to God in terms of our prayers and beginning each day with him? In many ways and you see it here in David what he says in the morning you hear my voice in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you.

And so there's this sense of prayer it is a sacrifice. We don't prepare a sacrifice maybe in the same way that was done in the Old Testament but prayer is still a sacrifice.

It is still something costly something that takes time for us to prepare and to come to God with. And it's pleasing to God.

So let us make it our priority to pray. Each new day to be as David was coming to the Lord in the morning in the freshness of the day thankful for the Lord's mercies that are new each day, for his faithfulness each day, for all that he gives us day by day, coming with thankfulness to him, to commit that day ahead to him, asking for blessings anew in it.

[49 : 00] So it's a priority. The final thing we see here is David's approach is with confidence. And you see that just in these two words at the end of verse 3.

And watch. O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice. In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

As David offers his morning prayer to God, he does so in a way where he leaves it with the Lord and waits expectantly on him. How often are you guilty of praying, committing something to God in prayer, but you can't wait.

You can't wait for an answer. You can't wait to see if God is going to work. You start to take the situation into your own hands. You'll do something about it yourself.

We all do it. We all lose patience. We all try and do things in our own way instead of waiting on God. But here's another reminder to us that God is never idle.

[50 : 13] God is never not listening to our prayers. He doesn't always give us what we want as we were thinking this morning, but he does give us what we need. And he doesn't turn any prayer away.

He hears our prayer, and we are to pray that prayer in his will to be done. And that's what David is saying here in these words. He offers up his prayer and his sacrifice in the morning and watches. watches. And the word there for watch has that great sense of expectation behind it, where he's looking to God, where he's looking to see what is God going to do today.

There's a sense of excitement, anticipation in praying to God. And again, we think of our own prayer life. Do we have that sense of expectation, anticipation as we pray to God?

What is he going to do? How is he going to work in our midst? And we just think of things that we have prayed for as a congregation. What have we prayed for when we've seen God answer prayer?

[51 : 25] When we've prayed for conversions, have we prayed expectantly and watched and waited and say, God, you are going to do it? Well, we've seen it.

We've seen people come to faith. Praise God, he has heard, prayers. We think of different things going on in our congregation.

Whether it's Friday at the Free, as people have prayed for that, and we've prayed, Lord, let us see people come in. Let us see people show an interest in the gospel here.

Praise God, we've seen prayer answered. We've been able to watch and wait on God and see amazing ways that he has answered prayer. Think of prayers for holiday clubs or youth work, praying for young people to come.

Praise God they're here tonight. They're here, you're here with us. The gospel is being heard and we see it in the mornings as they go out to Sunday school. We see it week by week.

[52 : 27] Praise God, he has answered prayer. And has that been because of our confidence? confidence. Well, sometimes it's despite our lack of confidence.

But we are reminded here that as we pray to God, we pray and watch. That sense of expectation, God is able. So that whatever it is that we're asking for, he is able.

You see it with the prophets in the Old Testament as well. The prophet Isaiah in chapter 30. verse 18. Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.

For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are those who wait for him. There is blessing in waiting on the Lord. Micah the prophet, he had the same experience.

And you can often go through so many of the Lord's people in the scriptures waiting on God. Micah 7 verse 7. But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord.

[53 : 37] I wait for God my Savior. My God will hear me. There's confidence. God will deal with this. And surely there's a sense of excitement in that.

That God is able to deal with this. For David, he had offered his prayer, he had offered his sacrifice, and watch. He is able to wait for God.

In Psalm 116, as we sang there, the second half of verse 5, the Lord protects all those of childlike faith.

When I was in great need, he rescued me. The Psalm is all about crying out to God. Do we have that childlike faith? That childlike faith, that dependence on him.

We need to be like that child, but a child with that sense of expectation, childlike faith, where we trust that God is able.

[54 : 46] Dr. Helen Rosevear, she was a missionary in Africa, and she tells some amazing stories of how she saw prayer answered. I wanted to finish with this one.

It's a story of a time when they had had a great tragedy where they were. She was working in a mission station, and she was working among young mothers, and she said this day a mother at her mission station died giving birth to a premature baby.

So obviously it was a difficult time, and they didn't have the medical facilities that we have today. And she was saying we tried to improvise an incubator to keep the infant alive, to keep the baby warm.

But the only hot water bottle we had was beyond repair. And so we asked the children to pray for the baby and for her sister.

And she goes on to say one of the girls responded and prayed like this, dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late, because by then the baby will have died.

[56 : 01] And dear Lord, please send a doll for the sister so she won't feel lonely. It's such a simple prayer, a child prayer.

Well, that afternoon she said a large package arrived from England. And the children watched eagerly, she said, as we opened it. And much to their surprise, under some clothing, was a hot water bottle.

The prayer was answered. But the little girl who had prayed, what did she start doing? Ellen Rosevear says immediately she started digging into the package and exclaiming with great excitement, well, if God sent that hot water bottle, I'm sure he sent a doll too.

And there in the bottom of the box was a doll. And what was so amazing about it was God's timing. It was five months previous that that package had been made up and sent from England and sent over to this mission station in Africa to arrive on that very day that it was needed.

God had known that prayer even before it was offered up. They'd known, he had known their need. That childlike faith was rewarded.

[57 : 24] And God has promised to hear his praying people. And that's what we have to remind ourselves of too. We are to come and approach God who is able, God who is Lord of all.

And we are to make it our priority to come. God and we are to wait and watch with that expectation as we do so that he is able to hear and answer prayer.

And again, somebody wants prayer like this, when we pray we are to remember three things. First, the love of God that wants the best for us.

Secondly, the wisdom of God that knows what is best for us. And thirdly, the power of God that can accomplish it.

And so as we think of David here, reminding us of the importance of prayer, let us have that confidence, that boldness to come and approach God with all our cares, with all our prayers, making it our priority and knowing that he is able, that we can watch and wait for him to do more than we ever ask or imagine.

[58 : 48] Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, we do thank you that we have such great power in prayer, not from ourselves, but in the one to whom we offer our prayers up to.

We thank you that the way is opened up for us through Jesus Christ, our Lord, that we come in his name, the name above every name, acknowledging their dependence upon you and thankful for every blessing that you give to us.

Your blessings new each morning, great is your faithfulness, and may you make us a faithful people to keep on praying and not to lose heart, and to remember that we can watch and wait with expectation, for you are God who is able.

So continue to hear our prayers, continue to answer according to your will, and teach us always to pray as a priority in our lives. We ask it with the forgiveness of our sin, in Jesus' name, Amen.

We're going to conclude by singing from this psalm that we've been looking at, Psalm 5. In the Sing Psalms version, the first two stanzas, Psalm 5 on page 4, the tune is Arlington, O Lord, give ear to what I say.

[60 : 10] Think on me as I sigh, and listen, O my King and God, as I plead earnestly for help, because to you I cry. We'll sing the first two stanzas to God's praise.

Amen. singing, As morning light returns again

I lay before you my request And with expectation here After the benediction I'll go to the door to my left We'll close with the benediction Now may grace, mercy and peace from God Father, Son and

Holy Spirit Rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore Amen Amen Amen Thank you.