

A Pattern of Prayer for People in Peril

Intro

*The last three years have been a journey for Dave and I akin to Sam and Frodo's trek to Mordor (at least on an emotional and spiritual level...no orcs or giant spiders thank goodness). PTSD, depression, health problems, and mourning the dying dream of having our own biological children. But **we stand triumphant in Christ and are so thankful to God for bringing us through the pain, the fears, and the nightmares stronger as a couple than we were before** and **understanding God's love on a whole other level.** We praise Him also because **He is healing our broken hearts** and has led us to joyfully choose adoption as the path to build our family.*

Elements of Psalm 13:

- 1) People in peril
- 2) Emotional questions: How long will we have to wait? How long will we watch others?
- 3) Logical requests: Please give us a child lest depression overcome us, lest our dream dies.
- 4) Trustful declarations

PSALM 13

TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID.

1 HOW LONG, O LORD? WILL YOU FORGET ME FOREVER?

HOW LONG WILL YOU HIDE YOUR FACE FROM ME?

2 HOW LONG MUST I TAKE COUNSEL IN MY SOUL

AND HAVE SORROW IN MY HEART ALL THE DAY?

HOW LONG SHALL MY ENEMY BE EXALTED OVER ME?

3 CONSIDER AND ANSWER ME, O LORD MY GOD;

LIGHT UP MY EYES, LEST I SLEEP THE SLEEP OF DEATH,

4 LEST MY ENEMY SAY, "I HAVE PREVAILED OVER HIM,"

LEST MY FOES REJOICE BECAUSE I AM SHAKEN.

5 BUT I HAVE TRUSTED IN YOUR STEADFAST LOVE;

MY HEART SHALL REJOICE IN YOUR SALVATION.

6 I WILL SING TO THE LORD,

BECAUSE HE HAS DEALT BOUNTIFULLY WITH ME.

This psalm gives us a patten for prayer but it also delivers us a clear message:

physically *spiritually - anything that might cause us to shipwreck our faith*
IN PERILOUS TIMES BELIEVERS SHOULD PRAYERFULLY AND WHOLE-HEARTEDLY TRUST THE LOVE OF GOD BECAUSE HE HAS LOVED THEM STEADFASTLY.

Psalm begins with the question "How long?" directed towards God in regards to difficulties. But before we look at the "How long?" the psalmist questions God with, I think it appropriate to consider another "How long?" aimed at us. The "How long?" in the psalm is asked by someone who is one of God's people, one of God's family. But there are no doubt some here, and perhaps here for a long time, who despite admonitions to the contrary, refuse and resist to submit themselves to God. To those I ask,

How long will you resist coming to God?

How long will you ignore the pleading of God's Word?

How long will you disregard the encouragement of God's people to come to Christ?

2 Corinthians 6:2 ESV Behold, now is the favorable time; behold now is the day of salvation

You know what coming to God in faith entails. Repent. Believe

How long?

Let's look at the "How long?" questions in Psalm 13, questions which come from a place of faith and trust in God.

Emotional Questions *V 1+2*

5 questions dominate this opening section of this prayerful psalm
This section displays an anguish of the soul, and anguish is seldom simple

The first issue is in regards to a sense of divine remoteness, an absence of God

- HOW LONG, O LORD? A broken off, rhetorical question indicating strong emotion, can't even get the question out
- The whole first section is highly emotional
- There SEEMS to be a problem with God, a theological problem: WILL YOU FORGET ME FOREVER? HOW LONG WILL YOU HIDE YOUR FACE FROM ME?
- Does God even remember me? Why does God not show me his favour (HIDE YOUR FACE)?
- There is a feeling that God is absent!

Are you asking this question right now?

The second issue is in regards to personal uncertainty and internal pain, anxiety in the soul

- HOW LONG MUST I TAKE COUNSEL IN MY SOUL AND HAVE SORROW IN MY HEART ALL THE DAY?
- David is making contingency plans and the result of this planning is sorrow continually
- Literally "set plan after plan before myself" – this leads to anxiety
 - A bad habit of playing out my plans-in regards to difficult things-in the theatre of my mind
 - It always turns out badly; raises anxiety; discourages faith

The third issue is in regards to the enmity of other people, circumstantial problems with feeling of defeat and despair

- HOW LONG SHALL MY ENEMY BE EXALTED OVER ME?
- David feels the internal, emotional pain of the gloating of his enemies

How long? This is often a question that is at the forefront of our minds in the midst of trying times. Broken leg – How long will this pain continue? Life issues can have this type of urgency. Asking the questions to God may help us move on from the pain: morphine.

Prayer:

We can ask questions.

- David asks these questions but he asks them with faith: Requests. Yahweh. Declarations.
- Questions asked from a place of pain but also from a place a faith will help us move towards to God.

Emotions are part of prayer.

- I struggle with robotic, unfeeling prayer.
- As I employ psalmic patterns and practices in my prayers, they have become more heartfelt: singing
- **Hebrews 5:7 ESV** In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

Logical Requests V 3-4

The second section introduces the requests that David brings to God in light of the despair he was feeling. He poured out his heart to God, and now he begins to use his mind in a more pronounced way.

There are 2 requests

First, CONSIDER AND ANSWER ME

- There is no “AND” in the original signifying that the consider and answer go together: consider-ing-ly answer me
- I recognize you are there, but I need a tangible experience of your favour...you can do that by answering my questions and answering my requests

Second, LIGHT UP MY EYES,

- Light up my eyes = revive my physical strength and moral energy
- **1 Samuel 14: 24-27 (ESV)** And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, so Saul had laid an oath on the people, saying, “Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies.” So none of the people had tasted food. 25 Now when all the people came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground. 26 And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. 27 But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright.
- Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed

The 2 request are mirrored by 2 reasons for the request

- David then presents God with a bit of logical reasoning
- The reasoning involved his own situation and his enemies situation
 - David would die – LEST I SLEEP THE SLEEP OF DEATH,
 - David’s enemies would gloat – LEST MY ENEMY SAY, “I HAVE PREVAILED OVER HIM,” LEST MY FOES REJOICE BECAUSE I AM SHAKEN.
- David’s death and his enemies gloating would detract from the glory of God because Yahweh is a covenant God
- Why? To convince God. More so to align his own thinking, and to inform his own heart.
 - **Spurgeon (in Effective Prayer):** so it is well to approach the seat of the King of Kings as much as possible with premeditation and preparation, knowing what we are about, where we are standing, and what it is which we desire to obtain.
 - **Piper:** Second, when you come to God, fill your mouth with arguments. Argue from your helpless crushed plight; argue from God's righteous character, that is, his faithfulness to uphold the honor of his name; and argue from your faith or your hope in God. Run into the arms of your Father and fill his ear with arguments.

Prayer:

Prayer is a thinking exercise. God encourages logic. God desires we look into his Word and bring his promises back to him in prayer.

When you ask God for things in prayer, can you point to his promises and precepts to support your request?

Trustful Declarations *vs 6*

The pattern of prayer that David follows results in his grasping on to God with faith. David latches on to God and his love for David. This grasping and latching looks like trust, and joy, and praise.

A picture of grasping on to God in faith:

- The power of an eagle's grip comes from its leg muscles, tendons and bones. The talons are closed by the muscles, anchored on the leg bones, by contracting the tendons. The tendons are contained in tendon sheaths. Both the tendons and tendon sheaths have tiny ridges. When the tendon is contracted the ridges on the tendons and the tendon sheaths interlock, creating a kind of "ratchet" effect, enabling the eagle to maintain tremendous pressure on the talons without continuously maintaining the tremendous contraction force on the muscle. As a result, a raptor is able to keep its talons closed over long periods of time while subduing relatively large prey. Sometimes, however, a raptor may become excited and unable to release "the ratchet," causing on occasion, the raptor's death.

That is the kind of grasping and grabbing hold of God in prayer that heartfelt and mindful interaction with God will lead to. Let's see how David grips on to God in faith through trustful declarations.

BUT I HAVE TRUSTED IN YOUR STEADFAST LOVE

It's one thing to believe this. Do you believe this?

It's another thing to declare this. You should declare it.

It's another thing to act on it.

Marriage:

Believe someone loves you and you love them-you decide to marry.

At your wedding you declare publicly your love to one another in your vows

Act on those vows that came out of the love for one another.

MY HEART SHALL REJOICE IN YOUR SALVATION

David celebrates his salvation while he is still in the midst of his peril

He can rejoice because he sees his salvation as secure despite his circumstances

This posture is very important for NT believers

- One way theologians have described this posture is the phrase inaugurated eschatology
- Inaugurate = initiate – Trump's inauguration was the initiating of his leadership as president of the US
- Eschatology = study of the end of things
- We are to have a posture of inaugurated eschatology meaning we understand that our salvation was initiated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but it has not yet been fully recognized.
- We need to trustfully declare our salvation that is assured in spite of our circumstances of peril

I WILL SING TO THE LORD, BECAUSE HE HAS DEALT BOUNTIFULLY WITH ME

Trust in God's love, and joy in his salvation results in praise for the grace of his favour towards us

We are going to do that right now: sing to the Lord because of his bounty towards us, particularly those of us in peril

But before we do, reconsider this pattern of prayer for people in peril:

- 1) Questions that include our emotions
- 2) Requests that involve our minds
- 3) Declarations that demonstrate our trust in God

Employ this pattern!

Liquid!