

Psalm 5 • Give Ear to My Words, O Lord

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Psalm chapter 5. Again, you'll probably hear a song here.

"¹ Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my groaning.

² Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray." (ESV)

Once again, we don't have to get far into this Psalm at all to find out what is going on here. Notice the psalmist speaks of words, groanings, and cries. All offered up to the Lord, words, groanings, and cries.

And then he says to the Lord, *"give ear."* It's just a way of saying, please listen. And he says, consider them. Isn't that interesting to say that to the Lord? I want You to consider what I'm saying to You. I want You to consider all the words that I'm laying before You because they come from my heart that is crying out to You.

I want You to consider my moaning. I want You to consider my cry. I want You to consider my words. And then I want you to notice the last words of verse two. These are important. In the ESV it goes like this, *"for to you I pray."* And I read those and you might be thinking, well, duh, who else is he going to pray to?" Well, you might be surprised.

I've been in a lot of prayer meetings over the years where I have heard prayer that was directed more to the people who are in the room than to the Lord above. Have you ever heard teaching prayers? Instructional prayers? Somebody knows something else is going on in so and so's life. And so they're praying just so they'll hear. I don't think they're even cognizant of the fact that God is even listening. They're just praying so the other people are going to hear.

It is possible to also to pray even when you're alone and not really pray. Because we go through the motions of the concept or the idea of praying, but we've never really entered into any kind of intimate fellowship with the Lord. We're just offering up words.

And I want you to... I found a quote that really challenged me that from R. A. Torrey, you may have heard of him. It goes like this,

“Very much of so-called prayer, both public and private, is not unto God. In order that a prayer should be really unto God, there must be a definite and conscious approach to God when we pray; we must have a definite and vivid realization that God is bending over us and listening as we pray.”

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Isn't that a great quote? Do you know, there have been times when I've been praying. And suddenly I become aware, but God is listening. And that may sound really wacky, but it's true. And it's kind of like shakes me a little bit. And I stop caring about the words and I start thinking more about just my heart before the Lord. Because words can be many and mean nothing. But God sees the heart. And I know that. I know God sees the heart.

Sometimes I catch myself (excuse me) saying things that really don't reflect my heart. They're just words that coming out of my head. And suddenly I'll have this sense that I'm talking to Him. I'm actually talking to Him. And it's kind of like, I want to make sure I'm doing this right because I'm talking to the God of the universe. And He sees through me, like you and I see through a pane of glass. And He's going to know if I'm trying to pull His leg or say something, some platitudes of stupidity, or something like that. And I just want to, be real before God. Like David's talking about in this Psalm. Groanings, praying with groanings.

Have you ever been just so hurt, so distressed that all you could do is groan before the Lord? The words don't even come out. The words don't even form in your heart or through your lips. You just groan before God. Just, oh, and I've heard of things where I've had things happen where I just, I don't know what to say. I don't have a clue and it just goes, oh Lord. That's all you can say.

Those are the real prayers. You know what I mean? Those are the real prayers. In other words, it's when we suddenly become aware of God's presence, by faith, our prayers begin to take on a sense of reality rather than just these word filled platitudes.

And there's something behind that. Let me show you from Hebrews chapter 11. It says,

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

"...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must first of all believe that he exists but also that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

"...without faith (first of all) it's impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must first of all believe that he exists (and that's a given) but also that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

God is looking for you and I to believe that our prayers, our earnest prayers, are going to make a difference. He's looking for that, right? Or He's looking for that attitude, that half-baked attitude...

You remember that father of the young boy when Jesus was up on the Mount of Transfiguration? It says He came down the hill and there was some argument going on. And He says, what's happening here? And this man came to Him and said, my son has had this demon for a while that has been tormenting him. And I brought him to Your disciples but they couldn't cast it out.

And the man said, if You can do something, please help him. And you remember what the Lord said? If? If I can do something? Now, that's an interesting kind of confrontational response, isn't it? But that's the heart of God. Remember the words of Jesus are reflecting the heart of God for you and I.

And so sometimes I think the Lord would speak to us in our prayers and say, If? I mean, are you on this thing? Are you, do you have an expectation? Are you believing that there will be a reward for the earnest seeking of My face? Or are you coming to Me just because it's time to pray? Or it's like, well, we ought to be praying about this or whatever. Or is there a genuine something happening here in your heart?

See that genuine something is faith. It's faith. In fact, David even talks about it in the very next verse. Look at verse 3. He says,

"O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you (look at this) and watch."

That denotes waiting.

Let me show you the same verse in the, in the NIV. This is interesting,

Psalm 5:3 (NIV1984)

"In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my request before you and wait in expectation."

"In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my request before you and wait in expectation."

That's very different by the way, from waiting in unbelief, which probably won't make you wait at all. But to wait in expectation; to wait. You get almost the picture of someone sitting there by the telephone waiting for the thing to ring so we can hear some good news. I'm waiting. I've laid my requests before the Lord and I'm waiting. But I have an expectant heart. Right?

I think there's, again we're seeing this element or this aspect of faith that accompanies our prayers. Right?

Verse 4,

"For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you."

"5 The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers."

6 You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man."

And here the psalmist punctuates the idea biblically of God's justice, God's holiness. Emphasizing the fact that God cannot tolerate sin in any form. Did you get that? God cannot tolerate sin in any form. I'm going to say it one more time. God cannot tolerate sin in any form.

You know what our natural response is? Good grief, then how can I stand before Him? If He cannot tolerate sin in any form, I am sin in just about every form. And David knew that too. David knew that he was a sinner.

Look at verse 7 because he speaks of it here. He says,

"But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house."
(See, that's how I'm going to get in there in Your presence. I'm going to come

because of You. It's not going to be because of me or even that I'm kept out. He goes on to say,) *I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.*"

David is writing here that the key to his acceptance in the presence of the Lord is, *"the abundance of God's steadfast love."*

But let me show you the same verse in the New King James Version. I like this.

Psalm 5:7 (NKJV)

"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple."

"But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple."

How am I going to come into Your house? In the multitude of Your mercy. In the multitude of Your mercy. What is David saying here to you and I? He's saying very simply, that we're all sinners but there are some who can find acceptance in the presence of the Lord.

But it comes when we come, as David came before the Lord. And that is by the mercy of God. A mercy by which God receives, even sinners like you and me. Why? Because we're trusting in His forgiveness. We know that forgiveness is through Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. In David's heart and mind, it was a, still, a future event when God would deal ultimately and finally with sin at the cross. For you and I, it's a past event.

The point is, he was putting his faith in the same mercy that you and I are. He was looking... Let me say it this way. He was putting his faith in the same mercy looking forward that you and I are seeing as we look back. The mercy of God.

When I see Jesus on the cross, I see God's mercy, right? I don't earn salvation. I don't deserve to be in His presence, but I am there by His mercy. David knew too, I am here by Your mercy. I'm just looking forward to Your mercy being confirmed through Your ultimate sacrifice.

And so here's David's petition in verse 8. Look with me in your Bible,

"Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me."

9 For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue."

He prays and says,

"10 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 have rebelled against you."

But look at verse 11,

"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 (or rejoice) in you."

12 For you bless the righteous, O Lord; you cover him with favor as with a shield."

And these last 2 verses, these are really beautiful. David highlights the blessed condition of those who put their trust in the Lord and make him their refuge. Guys, that's us.

You are blessed. You are blessed of God. Why? Because you're not trusting in yourself, you're trusting in Him. You've made Him your refuge. You've made Him your deliverer.

And David says, there's a great blessing for those people because You spread your protection over them. And they can sing. They can sing for joy even in the midst of their difficulties because your protection is over them. He says, You bless them. You're blessing their lives and covering them with favor as with a shield.

And we come back to that same message that we saw back in Psalm 3, "...you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. (Psalm 3:3)