

Biblical Supplication

Psalm 119

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Psalm 119:145-152
Preached On: Sunday, April 28, 2024

Crossroads Ministries
301 S. 8th Street
Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

This morning as you're being seated, I want to invite you to open your Bibles to the book of Psalms chapter 119. As you're turning to pretty much the middle of your Bible, Psalm 119, today we're going to begin in verse 145. If you're a guest, if you're a visitor with us, I want to welcome you to a very strategic study through what you and I know is the longest chapter of the Bible, 176 verses. Today we begin on verse 145, and if this is your first time with us, you may be thinking, "Well, I'm kind of Johnny-come-lately, I'm at the end of the game." No, no, no. Understand that even though there are 22 respective sections in Psalm 119, one of the things that we discover is there's only one primary theme and that is the importance of and the veracity that the Bible needs to have within our respective lives.

So why walk through this respective chapter? Two very simple reasons. The first one is this, and you may or may not be aware, but we as a church body, we as a family of faith, we're challenging ourselves to put the entirety of scripture to memory this calendar year, each individual reserving a respective chapter coming together corporately to make sure that the word of God is hidden in our hearts and is preserved from this generation forever in our lives. Secondly, each and every time we gather with a respective section of Psalm 119, we discover this, the practicality of the word of God. Yes, there are theological treatises. Yes, there are doctrinal distinctives. But each and every week we discover how practical and applicable the words of God are for our everyday lives. And today, we're going to deal with a subject matter that upon its announcement seems somewhat obscure. It's called biblical supplication. Think about that word supplication, one who supplies. Essentially today, here's what we're going to talk about, what does the Bible say about going before the Lord and asking him for something, requesting something, desiring him to meet a need or to provide a resource for our lives. In a moment, we're going to discover that there are two very important aspects to biblical supplication, the posture that we take and the position or the petition that we make.

Beginning at verse 145, here's what the word of God says,

145 I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes. 146 I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies. 147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy

word. 148 Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word. 149 Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment. 150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law. 151 Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth. 152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

Now if we're going to talk about biblical supplication, going before the Lord, requesting, asking, desiring him to supply or to meet a respective need in our life, there's a little bit of a preliminary discussion that we need to have. Now, I'm going to share with you an acronym that I know I've shared multiple times before. This was a teaching that I learned when I was nine years old. I was in the fourth grade, and if something sticks in the fourth grade until middle age, you know it must be good. I was told, I was communicated to that when we pray, when we go before the Lord, whatever it is that we're going to him with, that we should do so in such a manner. It's called the ACTS acronym. A-C-T-S. Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Essentially what it means is this, that when we get in our proverbial prayer closet, we begin by adoring God. We recognize him for who he is, the attributes he possesses, the qualities in which he embodies. And then we confess. I mean, he already knows anything and everything. We come clean before him. We acknowledge our shortcomings, our misgivings, our sin, and our failures. And then we thank him for the blessings, the favor in life in spite of what we just confessed to him. And then finally, there is supplication.

Now again, what this essentially means is this, that you don't go to the Lord first asking for what you need, you go to him first acknowledging who he is. But today when we talk about biblical supplication, I don't want you to get into a religious rut in thinking that if you need help on a certain issue, you somehow have to check off the box of adoration, confession, thanksgiving. The Bible says pray without ceasing. So hopefully we're adoring him all the day long. Hopefully we're confessing all the day long. Hopefully we're thanking him all the day long so that when it comes to those needs, those supplies, those big asks of God, it is an extension of a lifestyle of communication with the Lord, not just a quote unquote prayer meeting with the Lord.

So that is the preliminary thought. So let's deal with the posture. What is the posture that we must possess to ask the Lord or to request of him that which we so desperately need in our life. When you hear the word posture, obviously we think of the position of our body, but the term posture also means our attitude and our approach. So how do we approach the Lord? Well, first it begins with a position. Verse 145, "I cried with my whole heart." Now obviously that's a statement we see all throughout scripture, the entirety of my being, my whole heart, but what you need to understand there is that it's a very particular position. What that means is this, that God, and can I quote kind of the days in which I was raised, God does not ride second saddle to anybody or anything. In other words, one of the things that we are dreadfully guilty of is that we have our plans, we have our thoughts, we have our ways, we have our means of doing something, and basically we come to God with this, "God, if what I want to do doesn't work out, I need you to help me out." That's not what verse 145 says. Verse 145 says this, that God isn't just option or

plan A, he is the only plan. We come to him and we request of him saying, "Okay God, if you don't come through, then it's not gonna happen at all."

Now that's just the very first step when we talk about requesting or asking of God is we've got to put ourselves in a position, not where we're asking God to clean up the mess, but where we're asking God to be the author and the finisher of the entire scenario. When you do that, it puts you in a position of powerlessness. Notice what it says in verse 146, "I cried unto thee; save me." Now, I'm going to speak about this in kind of broad terms, and we're going to get a little more specific, so to speak. You know, the Bible speaks over and over and over again about the Lord as our Savior, he is our salvation, that we need to be, quote, saved. The Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord. will be saved. Now, I've entered into dialogue and discussion throughout time, and there are those, and I think they mean well, who often pose this thought, this quandary, this question to me. You know, the Bible says, for by grace we are saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. It is the gift of God, and one of the questions, one of the great discussion points is, if you pray, if you cry out for Jesus to save you, are you not doing a work? Well, it completely misses the intent of the word. When you make the statement, "save me," you know what you're essentially saying? "I have no works to bring. I have no ability. I have nothing to bring to the table. And if you, O God, do not reach down and save me, there is nothing I can do to ever make it happen."

Now let's put that in everyday practical life, that moment, that day as a believer where you hit your knees and you beg Jesus to forgive you and to save you, taking that same powerless position and applying it in everyday life. There's a verse tucked in Romans chapter 8 verse 26. I'm sure when I quote it many of you are familiar with it. I'm not a fan of it. You say, "What do you mean you're not a fan of it?" Now, don't get me wrong. I believe the Bible from beginning to end. It's inspired. It's preserved by God. But that doesn't mean I have to like what it says because oftentimes it says it the way that I would not have written it. What does it say in Romans chapter 8 verse 26? It says, when we do not know what to pray, we ask the Holy Spirit to intercede on our behalf. You say, "Well pastor, why wouldn't you like that verse? That's an incredible promise that God himself intercedes for you." Yes, it's not the promise of the Holy Spirit, it's the problem that got you into that position. Why or when is it that you find yourself in a place where you cannot articulate, you cannot communicate, you cannot even put your words together? Can I cut to the chase? It's those moments in life where you're at the end of your rope. You don't know what to do. You don't even know what to say. Maybe you've had those moments in life where you have laid prostrate before the Lord weeping, wailing, despondent about whatever it may be, and you don't even know what to say. You're in a position of powerlessness. You're saying, "O God, I've got nothing in my tank. I've got nothing to bring to the table. If you alone, God, do not intervene, if you alone, God, do not intersect yourself into this, then it will not be addressed and it will not be changed."

Now think about that posture. Here you are, here I am, believing that God and God alone is the one who will address the situation, allowing ourselves to be in a position where we are so destitute, we are so distraught that we don't even give suggestions to the Lord of how he should do it. You know what it leads to? It leads to an item that we love to talk

about but rarely understand. It's called being persistent. Notice what it says in verse 147, "I prevented the dawning of the morning." Verse 148, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches." Now there's a reason that both of those verses are there because it describes the two type of people that we have in life and in this room. On those situations, on those struggles, on those scenarios of life that you are begging the Lord to intervene as only he can, there are some of you, you prevent the dawning. You say, "What does that mean?" You wake up in the middle of the night. You're good going to bed, but you wake up at one in the morning, two in the morning, three in the morning because your heart is broken, your soul is stirred, and so long before the alarm clock goes off, you're up pleading and begging the Lord. Then the next verse describes folks like me. You don't get up in the night, you just don't go to bed at night, that's what it says. You prevent the night watches. What that means is this, that your heart is so stirred, your mind is so racing, you can't go to sleep at night. Essentially, what that is describing is an individual who is in a position of powerlessness, so much so, that whatever the scenario, whatever the situation, is so at the forefront of their life, they are either A) waking from sleep, or B) delaying sleep because of their petitioning before the Lord.

Allow me to illustrate in contemporary illustration what it means to be biblically persistent when it comes to prayer. Many moons ago, my wife and I lived in a little state west of here known as Texas. We had a neighbor by the name of Mike. Now, Mike was actually in a place in life where she and I are today, he had kids that were middle school, high school, and older and such, and we were in that B.C. era. You say, "B.C.?" Before children, otherwise known as the beautiful time. But nonetheless, so we had a natural neighborly kinship. We assisted each other on projects and such, and just the normal neighborly things. But there was something about Mike that made him not only special too, but unique in our lives, is Mike had spent his college days playing football for the University of Texas. Now, he was an electrical engineer who designed computer chips for a living. I know some of you joking around going, "An electrical engineer that played football for the University of Texas?" I didn't say he started. Nonetheless, because of his age and where he was in life, I'll never forget the conversation. We were in the backyard. We were doing some project together, as neighbors often do. And I said, "Mike, I've been putting two and two together and based on age such, there's a check. Did you play with Earl Campbell?" Now for those of you that are not of age to know the name Earl Campbell, okay, let me describe this man to you. Earl Campbell was a running back for the University of Texas who won the Heisman Trophy, was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 1991, and last year on the 100th anniversary of the NFL they put him in the running backs room for the all time great running backs.

Now there's a big debate about Earl Campbell. You say, "What do you mean there's a debate?" The debate is how big were his thighs? Now if you go look it up, most people will tell you Earl Campbell had 36 inch thighs. Now there are some that will dispute that and say they were only 35 inches. Now come on now, let's be serious. Do you realize that back in those days he had to take four normal thigh pads and tape them together just to get around his thighs? Earl Campbell is known for one and one and only thing, he didn't run past you, he didn't run around you, he ran through you, is what he did.

Well, my neighbor Mike, guess what position he played at the University of Texas? He was a middle linebacker. He was on the opposite side of the line. I'll never forget one day I said, "Mike," I said, "did y'all ever do live reps against Earl Campbell?" He said, "We didn't do it often because he hurt everybody." I said, "Well, that makes sense." I said, "but have you personally ever lined up across the line of scrimmage from Earl Campbell?" He said, "Yeah, I have." I said, "Did you ever have to tackle him?" He said, "Once." I said, "What happened?" "Well," he said, "the play broke down," obviously, people didn't do what they were supposed to do, "and," he said, "here came old Earl, right through the line." He said, "The only thing between him and the goal line was me." I said, "Well, Mike, what'd you do?" He said, "Man, I hit him with everything I had." I said, "What happened?" He said, "He ran right over me." I said, "He ran flat?" He said, "Oh, man." He said, "he flattened me like a pancake." I said, "Well, what did you do?" And he goes, "The only thing you can do." He said, "I just held on." I said, "You held on?" He said, "Yeah." He said, "He knocked me backwards." He said, "I just reached up and grabbed anything I could." I said, "What?" He said, "He drug me 30 yards." You remember the story in Genesis chapter 32 of a man by the name of Jacob? Oh, he prevented the night watches, did he not? He kept the dawn from coming. There in the midst of the night, you know, there's not a lot recorded about what he said to the angel of the Lord but you know what we do have? He held on and he wasn't going to let go.

When we talk about biblical supplication, if we put ourselves in a position where we're saying, "God, you're the only one who can do this," if we are powerless and saying, "God, I need you to be the one who acts in that case," you know what the persistence is? You just gotta hang on. Now I've got news for you. Like my neighbor, you might get drug for 30 yards. You might get drug for 30 years. You don't know how, when, or where that dragging is going to take you but what did we learn from Jacob? Just don't let go. Which leads to the petition. In fact, beginning in the next verse, verse 149, he begins with the position. He says, "Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness."

Now I want to clear up something here. I think we have very much of erroneous thinking that no matter how or what we're going through life, that somehow God is the great genie in the sky that if we just rub his belly he has to do what we ask him to do. You know in the book of Galatians chapter 4 it makes this statement, now that you know God or whether you are known of him. We all understand this, the way we're raised, the way we're raising children and grandchildren, there's a big difference between a stranger who asks something of you and your child that asks something of you. Why? Because a child is one that you have something vested in, you have an interest in, you have a heritage to go forth in. In other words, the Bible says in John 1:12, he says, those of us who believe on Jesus, we become the children of God. In other words, one of the things that we have to discover is this, and by the way, I do think that God answers the prayers of the heathens and the pagans, but you know what I think the number one prayer he answers is? "Come forgive me, the sinner that I am." I've got news for you, if you are living in complete rebellion against God and you don't believe in him, don't expect anything from him other than the forgiveness of your sins when you cry out to him.

But let's push back a little bit. What about us as believers? What about us that claim the name of Jesus, believe in Jesus, we're a son, we're a daughter, we're joint heirs with him? You know, I think one of the issues that we struggle with is that we think that somehow, somehow, it doesn't matter how dirty the conduit is, God's gonna do whatever I want God to do, and that's just not the case. How many times have your own children come to you, or you as a child went to your parents and requested some type of, I don't know, allowance, whatever it may be, and they say, "If you..." There's a whole lot of "if you's" out there, right? If you clean your room, if you mow the yard, if you do this, there's a whole lot of "if you's" there, right, because there's a big difference in relationship and fellowship. See, relationship means that we are a part of a family, we have a relationship together. Fellowship means we're on good terms. Some of you think just because you're saved, God has to give you anything you want, and that's not biblical. What does God do? He says, "I will bless, I will give, I will supply according to my lovingkindness." There's not a one of you. who would just quote, open up the pocket book just because. In other words, we must be in a position, not that we're ever gonna be perfect, but at least a position where in our hearts and in our life, we're adoring, we're confessing, we're thanking him, so that basically saying, "God, I know I'm not perfect, but..."

And then there's the powerlessness. Look at what it says in verse 150, "They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law. Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth." You say, "What do you mean that's a position of powerlessness?" I want you to think about it in the context of this section. You have an individual who's in the right position. They're calling out to the Lord with all their heart. They're a person in the right posture saying, "God, if you don't save me, nothing's going to happen." And they are delaying the dawning. They are hanging in there. They are being persistent. They're being drug wherever they may be drug. And then what does it say? There are those that are causing mischief. There are those that are up to no good. Now I want you to know how powerful this position of powerlessness is. In other words, they're basically saying, "God, there is nothing more than I know to do. There is nothing more you could ask of me. God, I've cried it all out. I've done everything. I've confessed it all and as far as I know, I'm as clean as can be."

You know, it reminds me of Acts chapter 4. For those of you who may not be familiar with Acts chapter 4, let me take you back to the early days of the church. What we know as Pentecost had taken place, 3,000 souls had been saved. The disciples, the apostles, the new converts, they began to go out into the highways and the byways and talk about this Jesus who rose from the grave and can change and transform anybody's life no matter how bad or how sad. By the time you get to Acts chapter 3 and 4, those that were in, quote unquote, secular power, they weren't a fan of the message. They didn't appreciate what was being communicated because in their world those in power should have the position of request, not God on the throne and a risen Savior Jesus. So what do they do? They do the same thing the secular world does when they get frustrated with biblical Christianity. They begin to press. They begin to kind of squeeze. They spend a couple nights in prison. They were incarcerated. They were persecuted for their faith. Verse 23 of Acts chapter 4. An amazing thing takes place. These early believers, they have a prayer meeting. It's a prayer meeting like most of us have never seen. See, when the

meeting gets to the end, you know what happens in verse 31? It says the building that they were in began to shake. I've been in a lot of prayer meetings, but I've never been in that one. I mean, can you imagine you're in such a posture and petition of going before God that when you go before his throne and ask him for something, the building shakes. Can we just all agree they were in the right posture and they had the right petition? You say, "Well, how does that amplify powerlessness?" If you back it up to verse 23, let me tell you what happens in that prayer meeting. You got a bunch of believers zealous for the Lord, desires of the things of the Lord. And in their prayer, I'm gonna summarize it. I'm gonna somewhat abbreviate it. You know what they said? They said, "Jesus, we believe you. We believe everything about you. We've done everything we know to do in this situation but there are people that are speaking ill of you. There are people that are contrary to you. They're putting us in prison," and listen to what they said, "Your name is at stake." Whoo, that's a prayer now. Basically, the powerlessness of it was this, "God, we don't have anything to bring to the table. If you don't move, your name is going to be drug through the mud."

I want you to think about that petition. I want you to think about putting yourself in a place in life where you can go before God and say, "You know what, to the best of my ability, God, I'm clean before you but those that are dirty are smearing your name. You need to act because your name's at stake." You know what might just happen? The building might actually shake. We have a demonstration of it in the book of Acts and last time I checked, God's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

But last but not least, there is the persistence, not just the hanging on, but the persistence that comes in this last verse. It says, "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever." The word forever, that's a long time now. And here's how it concludes, that in spite of what we can see, in spite of what we hear, in spite of the environment that is around us, as we petition the Lord, as we go before the Lord, as we cast our cares upon him and we seek him out to supply and to meet those needs, those issues of our life, it says "thy word is true forever," and here's what it means, that even if we never see it, even if we never experience it, does not mean that our request was denied.

Let me give you a little biblical illustration. Matthew chapter 17. Jesus begins this chapter in pretty dramatic fashion. He takes Peter, James, and John on the top of a mountain and there before them he is met with Moses and Elijah. His garment, his raiment, turns as bright as the sun. We call it the transfiguration because that's what he does, he transfigures before them. They have a little meeting up on the mountain. They come down and when they come down they discover there's a little boy who keeps throwing himself in the fire, a little boy who keeps foaming at the mouth. He is demonized and here's the problem, the disciples were trying to deliver him, the disciples were trying to fix him and they couldn't do it. And so the desperate man, I want you to think about this, a position, nobody can do this but Jesus. Powerless, "Jesus, if you don't do this, it's never gonna be fixed." He didn't go away when the disciples couldn't... You know what he did? He waited on Jesus to come down that mountain. When Jesus came down that mountain, he said, "What are you going to do, Jesus? Help me!" Remember what Jesus does? He

puts his hand on that little boy, and instantly he's in his right mind. Instantly he's delivered. Instantly he is as that dad, I will guarantee you, had been praying for years and years and years.

The disciples said, "Jesus, how did this happen?" It's a famous verse, verse 21 in chapter 17. Jesus said, "These only come out by prayer and fasting." What was Jesus saying? Jesus was saying there's no amount of your energy that's ever gonna do this. There's no amount of your desire. This is up to God and God only. And then Jesus ends with this very famous story. He says, "If you will have the faith of a mustard seed, you can move a mountain." Now, can we be honest with ourselves? Most of us take that story very allegorical, metaphorical, because you know what? We've got mountains in our lives, right? There's relationships that are mountains. There's finances that are mountains. There's just the days of our life that are mountains. But you know what's fascinating about that passage? Jesus says, "If you have the faith of a mustard seed, you can tell this mountain to move, and it will move." Did you know that mountain actually does move? You say, "What do you mean it moves?" You've got to go all the way to the book of Revelation chapter 12. In the book of Revelation chapter 12, which has not happened as of yet, it's a future event, the people of God are running from the enemy of God. They cry out to God and you know what God does? He moves a mountain, allows them to go through its innards and have safety on the other side.

You say, "Why is that so important?" Because when we talk about supplication, one of the biggest problems that we have is a stopwatch. "God, this is my need. I need it done in five minutes." Five days, five months, five years, well, I guess God's not going to answer. Can I go back to Matthew chapter 17 for a moment? How long has it been since God's answered that prayer? Two thousand years. "Thy testimonies are true forever." I've got news for you, it's going to be answered one day. So when we talk about persistence and supplication, it's not we cry out till we're tired of crying. It's not that we cry out for a set amount of time. It's that we cry out if necessary to our last breath in our lungs, trusting that God is going to answer that which we have been persistent with.

Today, every single one of you, at some point in your life had somebody praying that you'd believe in Jesus. You did. At some point, somebody, might be a relative, may not be, somebody somewhere has prayed that you would come to saving faith in Jesus. You know, for some of you, that person is no longer living, that person is no longer alive on what we know as planet Earth, and maybe today's the day God's gonna answer their prayer. Maybe today's the day you realize what it means to go before a holy God in a powerless way and say, "O God, save me." See, today, when we come to this time of decision, this isn't just about 30 minutes on a Sunday morning at the end of a gospel message. This is about those that have prayed for you, many of them for months, years, decades, and even to their last earthly breath, that you would understand your sinful state and ask Jesus to save you. May today be the day that those prayers are answered.

Let's pray with our heads bowed, our eyes closed. As we come to this time at the end of the service, you might be that person whether in person, online, by way of radio, and you would admit to yourself there have been people that have been praying for you for years

that you'd come to Jesus, and maybe today the Spirit of God took the word of God and said this is that day. The Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. It doesn't say whoever gets religion, joins a church, gets baptized, starts giving. No, it says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. You say, "What does that mean, pastor?" It basically means this, whoever's willing to admit they've got a sin condition that only Jesus can fix. If that's you today, let me encourage you just to cry out. It's not about doing so out loud. It's not about reading a script or repeating what I or somebody else would say. And remember that passage in verse 146 that, "God, save me." This basically is just getting yourself into a posture where you're willing to say, "God, I can't do this on my own. I need Jesus to do it in my stead." Maybe today your heart's cry will go a little something like this, "God, today I acknowledge my sin before you. God, I've been places I should have never been. I've participated in activities I should have never been a part of. God, you know that I have communicated, I have spoken words and had thoughts that are so contrary to your word and your Bible tells me the result, the wages of my sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So God today, I believe. I believe I've got a sin problem only Jesus can fix. God, today I believe Jesus Christ loved me so much he came on my behalf, he lived a sinless life on my behalf. God, today I believe he paid the price for my sin on his cross and three days later, when he rose from the grave, he made it possible, he made it feasible for my sin to be forgiven and my soul to be saved. God, today I don't have all the answers to the struggles, the issues, the problems of life but there's one thing I know, I've got a sin problem that only Jesus can solve. So the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed, our eyes still closed, in a moment, I'm going to pray for us and after we're going to stand and sing together and I want to invite you, if you're that person today who didn't just cry out to the Lord but that your crying out became the answer to somebody else's heartfelt supplication and petition before God, I want to invite you as we stand and sing in a moment just to step out and step forward. I'll be here, we'll have others as well. We just want to celebrate with you. We just want to hear from you. We want to pray with you and pray for you. Or maybe today you say, "Pastor, that took place years ago. It took place decades ago. But you know, almost every Sunday I know of a baptism on the campus and I kind of struggle with that. I'd like to have a conversation with that." We'd love to have it. Or maybe today you're like those folks we meet every week that say, "This is our church home. How do we formalize that?" We'd love to talk. Or maybe today you say, "Pastor, I've got all that covered. I'm just, well, I'm going through a tough spot. I really need somebody to pray with me. It would be really nice if somebody would just pray over me." We have those people, we have that room set aside. We would love to be a part of whatever God is doing in your life.

Lord Jesus, as we come to this time of decision, God, there are not enough thanks in our vocabulary, the fact that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. And God, even as believers who stray and vary from the path, you tell us in 1 John 1:9 if we come clean, if we confess, you are faithful, you are just to forgive us. At the same time, your word says if we need wisdom, you'll give it. God, whatever it is today, may we have that whole heart of verse 145. May you not be our second option, our plan B. May today be the day where

you are our only option for whatever it is that we need in life. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.