

Psalm 17

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A Prayer of David.

1 Hear a just cause, O LORD,
Attend to my cry;
Give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips.
2 Let my vindication come from Your presence;
Let Your eyes look on the things that are upright.
3 You have tested my heart;
You have visited me in the night;
You have tried me and have found nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.
4 Concerning the works of men,
By the word of Your lips,
I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer.
5 Uphold my steps in Your paths,
That my footsteps may not slip.
6 I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God;
Incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech.
7 Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand,
O You who save those who trust in You
From those who rise up against them.
8 Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

9 From the wicked who oppress me,
From my deadly enemies who surround me.
10 They have closed up their fat hearts;
With their mouths they speak proudly.
11 They have now surrounded us in our steps;
They have set their eyes, crouching down to the earth,
12 As a lion is eager to tear his prey,
And like a young lion lurking in secret places.
13 Arise, O LORD,
Confront him, cast him down;
Deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword,
14 With Your hand from men, O LORD,
From men of the world who have their portion in this life,
And whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure.
They are satisfied with children,
And leave the rest of their possession for their babes.
15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

The form of the believer's plea, v1–2.

Christians are convinced that the Lord looks upon all things in His righteousness and responds in that righteousness (v2b). When we cry out to Him (v1b), we ask Him to hear righteously (v1a). In order to pray like this, we must come in two ways.

First, we must come through the imputed righteousness that He Himself provides, v2a. That is to say that we must come through the obedience and sacrifice of Christ.

Second, we must come with honest lips, v1c. We come as those who have confessed and turned from all known sin, and have purposed and endeavored after new obedience. We hide nothing from God, because we have been given Christ, through Whom it can all be dealt with. Often, needing to cry out to God becomes the occasion for renewing repentance and faith, so we may pray like this. But if we keep short accounts with God in Christ, we may at times come as David here, with fresh and ready confidence in Christ.

The foundation of the believer's plea: God's justice, v3–5.

At night it is often, especially, just you and God, v3a–c. When you have sleepless minutes or hours at night, what is your interaction with God like? It is a good time to settle accounts with God in Christ. It is a good time to resolve after new obedience in word (v3d) and deed (v4–5) by God's Word (v4b) and deed (v5a).

The force of the believer's plea: God's love, v6–9.

David shifts here from the legal ground of his case to the relational confidence in which he makes it. God's (almighty) right hand is moved by the ~~ressed~~(s!) that it marvelously shows (v7a). By cementing us to Himself through faith (v7b), He has made us sure of His undivided attention (v8a) and of Him Himself as our impenetrable protection (v8b). He is more committed to hearing our cry for help (v6) than the wicked are to our destruction (v9).

The faith of the wicked: self, v10–12.

Think Eglon over Ehud's sword for the image in v10a. The wicked have indulged themselves until their fat closed over not just a sword but their whole selves; the implication is that there is no sensitive place to touch them for appeal; they are wholly self-consumed and lack even the ability to feel compassion. Contrasting David's focus upon righteous speech (v1c, 3d, 6b) is the function of their mouths: to spew pride (v10b). Oppressing and killing the godly is like hunting-sport to them (v11); they do it for pleasure, with the relish of a young, hungry, skilled lion (v12).

The portion of the wicked: earthly and fleshly, v13–14.

David asks Yahweh (v13a) to bring the wicked, literally, to his knees (v13b). The original for v13c–14a probably indicates that the wicked is a fool, because he doesn't realize that he is Yahweh's sword and Yahweh's hand (no preposition for "with" or "by"). So v14c–e seems to be a suggestion on David's part of strategy: let the wicked become so full of hidden treasure, and children, and even grandchildren for whom there is no end of earthly portion. Distract him with food/wealth, and fatten him for the kill!

The portion of the believer: God Himself, v15.

For the believer's part, there is no need to be wealthy in any of these other things, for he already has Yahweh's face by/in righteousness (v15a), and the resurrection will bring everlasting satisfaction in Him Who is the Likeness of God (v15b), even Christ Himself (cf. 1Jo 3:2).

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Psalm 17. This is the first Psalm in the Salter that has the word prayer and its title. The rest I think are 85 and later there's four more if I remember correctly. A prayer of David. Here just cause I Yahoo attend to my cry. Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.

Let my vindication come from your presence. Let your eyes look on the things that are upright. You've tested my heart. You have visited me in the night. You have tried me and have found nothing. I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men by the word of your lips.

I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer. Uphold my steps in your path. So that my footsteps may not slip. I have called upon you for you will hear me. Oh God. Incline your ear to me and hear my speech. Show your marvelous loving kindness by your way and you who save those who trust in you.

From those who rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of your eye. Hide me under the shadow of your wings. From the wicked who oppress me from my deadly enemies who surround me. They have closed up their thought hearts. With their mouths they speak proudly. They have now surrounded us in our steps.

They have set their eyes crouching down to the earth. As a lion is eager to tear his prey and like a young lion lurking in secret places. Arise O Yahweh confront him cast him down. Deliver my life from the wicked with your sword. With your hand from men. Of the world who have their portion in this life.

And whose belly you fill with your hidden treasure. They are satisfied with children and leave the rest of their possession for their babes. As for me. I will see your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake. In your likeness. So far the reading of God's inspired.

In an errant word. He starts out in verses 1 and 2 crying out to the Lord and asking the Lord to hear a light just cause and will consider that under the idea of the form of a believer's plea or a believer's prayer. And then in verses 3 through 5 he goes on to talk about this encounter that he's had with God crying out to God to examine him and rejoicing that God finds him clean.

And that's in a couple of different ways but will consider that under the idea of the foundation of the believers plea God's justice or God's righteousness. And then in verses 6 through 9 he switches from legal courtroom kind of language to relational covenantal kind of languages, he as the way that he's calling on the Lord intensifies and the force of the believers plea how will.

Be thinking about that. God's love is the force of the believers plea. And then verses 10 through 12, we find the wicked trusting in and living for himself, so the faith of the wicked versus 10 through 12. Himself and then in verses 13 through 14 the portion of the wicked that which is earthly and fleshly in this part of the prayer.

David is actually suggesting a strategy to God that if the wicked loves his flesh so much maybe distract him with it, let him be full of all those earthly things so that you'll leave me alone and then of course he'll be devastated when he finds that those things never could satisfy in this life.

And were violently taken from him as he is judged when he leaves this life so the portion of the wicked earthly and fleshly versus 13 to 14 and then in the the end verse 15 the portion of the believer is God himself very similar in those last three verses to Psalm 73 kind of a mini version of it except for David here is not envying the wicked earthly well being.

So the form of the believers plea he says here are just cause O Yahweh attend to my cry give your to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips let my vindication come from your presence let your eyes look on the things that are upright so he starts with hearing and ends with seeing beginning of verse 1 and end of verse 2 and in both cases the Lord is hearing that which is right and looking for that which is right similar to what Habakkuk says when he calls upon the Lord your eyes are too holy to look upon evil.

Christians are convinced that the Lord looks upon all things in his righteousness and responds in that righteousness when we quiet to him and he uses the word Christ several times in this in this passage we're asking him to hear righteously we're not asking him to set aside his justice, of course the only way to prayer like that is to come through Christ's righteousness and that's the first part of how a Christian must come to such a righteous God in prayer before asking him to hear what is right.

Eous and see what his righteous and do it is right just we need to righteousness that is going to stand up to that and so his vindication comes from God's presence verse to not just from God himself but from God's presence there's an implication of incarnation in verse 2 that vindication would come to us from the Lord and that comes in the form of Jesus God gave his own son to be a righteousness so that the righteousness that we.

Have is even the righteousness of God himself when we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that's the first part of coming to a righteous God and asking him to hear right just things see righteous things do righteous things the second part is to all for the prayer in a righteous manner and you see that in the part of verse one where he says give you ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips and he'll open that up a little bit more in verses 3 through 5, but that is to say he is not hiding anything from God he's coming.

Who's a sinner? But he's coming as a sinner who's trusting in Christ and he's coming not hypocritically but resolved not to sin anymore so there's of you who are memorizing last week what is repentance unto life he's basically saying I'm coming with repentance and to life. I've hated my sin

I've grieved over it.

I've turned from it to you. I've made full purpose of an endeavor after new obedience and so. And so many say that it's not from deceitful lips is he's it's not just that he's not pretending to be righteous but that he is earnest earnest that he wants to be righteous so there's both of those things when you when we get to Psalm 32 and he talks about in his heart there is no deceit and that particular case as most south deceit or God deceit trying to look better than you are you're the one who sins are forgiven, you're the one who's iniquity is atoned for whose guilt is taken away and you're not.

Hiding your sin from God. So in the first the two ways that we come to the righteous God are with his righteousness counted for us and then also with this resolve that he himself has given us by his spirit for righteousness, we need to keep short accounts of God as it were if you come to God asking him to hear righteous things and see righteous things and do righteous things and you have unrepented sin, then you're gonna have to spend the first part of your prayer dealing with that sin asking God to forgive you.

Racing before him over his love in which he's given Christ pleading Christ before him this is something God often does for us. I think in our spiritual lives and you know, we could go through and quote several verses for instance from Psalm 119 is that when we haven't come to him to confess our sin he gives us in his wisdom something else that we have to come to him about and then we confess our sin, but if we're keeping short accounts with him, we may find ourselves at some point.

In a situation like David was here where he's been he has been renewing repentance frequently and can just come straight in and plead the recent repentance and his clean conscience before God without having to confess your sin at this point at least. So the foundation of the believers plea God's justice you've tested my heart you have visited me in the night you have tried me and found have found nothing it's a very challenging thing to think about David on his bad sleepless or if as this probably was at some point in the many times that Saul was hot on his.

Trail with no bed at all and therefore sleepless for multiple reasons. He's taken those sleepless moments at night as a visitation from God and he's in a interactive directly with God. Often we find ourselves if we're awake on our beds. We are alone with God. Even if you're married you're trying to let yourself sleep and so you're asleeplessness is yours alone.

I think we find out often in that in those lonely moments of sleeplessness when there's nothing but us on God, what is coming out of our hearts at that point? There's a testing and a trying. At that point and we should improve those moments. Few places in the Psalms 63 is one that comes to mind where sleepless time at night is used for prayer and first of all for this searching prayer being visited as it were by God and spending some time alone before his face, especially if you have not been having what some people call their quiet times or personal diversions or secret worship depending on where and, when you're from.

If you haven't been having those and then you find yourself awake when you want to be asleep at night, perhaps. God is giving you your quiet time that you have not been not been taking but the recent memory of those things and David's part is precious to him. That's a time when he has renewed repentance cleared accounts with God got to the point where he is clung to God for forgiveness and he's thinking of things to repent of and he's actually run out.

That's that's pretty amazing to be able to have that and you can see why David when he's crying out to God is recalling that time recently when he had that when he had that time with God. If you find yourself having sleepless nights, perhaps, you may be blessed to use it well and then it will be available to you when you're crying out to God and you're remembering that recent encounter with him.

Part of his encounter with God was resolving. To new obedience and when he says, I purpose that my mouse shall not transgress in verse 3 and then. He also wants to keep from the path of the destroyer in verse in verse 4 and he wants to walk in God's paths instead with footsteps that do not move literally in verse 5 the idea is that that never move out of the way.

The New King James has translated that with the idea of slipping but that every step is in the path of God he wants every word and every action to be according to God's word, but of course as he's as he's purposing that he's doing it independence upon God's words and God's actions so by the word of your lips verse 4 be and you uphold my steps in your paths verse 5a those who seek to have righteous words and deeds.

Must depend upon God's own words and God's own deeds to sustain us in such a walk before him and then the force of the believers plea he's remembered now this this interaction with God in which he's clung to Christ's righteousness and he's depended upon God also for righteous behavior and righteous speech, but now he turns and the the tone of verses 6 through 9 is much more relational even than what we've just seen in verse 3 through 5.

I have called upon you for you will hear me there's past experience of God there this is something he has done before and something he is doing now and the implication he was you will do it again, he has found God to be the God who hears and so he calls upon him and now.

There's there's all kinds of anthropomorphic language here that is using body part language of God to try to and I guess it's um ortho promorphic the in the second half of verse eight or orthino pomorphic, whatever the Latin prefixes for bird, but God's ear being inclined his right hand in in verse seven the, Apple of his eye verse eight literally the pupil the word that's used there is sometimes black or darkness or obscuring and then a shadow of your wings verse eight and it's all connected especially to in verse seven show marvelously the the word that's being translated marvelous meaning marvelous are wondrous or wonderful, it's actually attached to the verb show marvelously your and then loving kindness is.

The word facet there is in the pale in verse seven by your right hand so he knows God to be the one who is inclined to him the one who has a sight on him listens to him shelters him the the idea that God himself is his protection, but he uses a word picture under the shadow of your wings there, that is.

Very tender and personal and protective like a bird with its chicks there, he knows that God has has all of these ways of relating to him that are

tender and personal because God has bound himself to him in facets dead fast love and even multiplies the intensity of that by using the word and the plural verse 7 as you plead to God to do righteously and as you think about the fact that he has made Jesus, right?

Eousness don't get stuck up on the purely legal you can rejoice in your legal cleanliness your legal justness your right standing with God but move on from that or in addition to that see the the love of God himself having bound himself to you as if his eye is on you and his ear is incline your ear and so that the word picture is of craning his ear to hear.

To hear his dear one his pupils, so God sees everything all the time but the that which is front and center and the side of God is his servant who's being persecuted and and the the images are just so tender and so personal. Do not. Allow anybody to tell you that Christianity is personal relationship and the tenderness of God and not like that.

Old Testament religion that was all just ritual and and legal and penalty and sacrifice no there's both in both and you hardly find a more tender or personal section of scripture on how God interacts with us as Psalm 17. Verses 6 through 8. The faith of the wicked is in himself the word hearts does not actually appear there the the beginning of verse 10 they have closed up their fat this of course is related at least visually or send sensory to one of our favorite stories from the book of judges sticking his sword into Eglon until the fat closed over the hilt.

Although this is even a little bit more gross and complete this beginning of verse 10 is that the wicked's fat has closed over himself so with with he had an egg when the fat closed over the sword this is this is a guy who sewed to his flesh so much that the fat ended up making a giant fats fear, he's just this massive global and the the implication of that is they viewed.

At as that which was the least sensitive. You poke somebody in an eye or you knock them on a bone or you pinch them in a muscle. That's that's gonna hurt. The the fat parts were or the least feeling and so here's someone who has completed his quite literal entire self-absorption.

This is I I hope you can remember this from the rest of for the rest of your life. Psalm 17:10 when you hear someone. Use the phrase self-absorbed and when you realize that you are being self-absorbed that you would shrink back and where from making progress towards the word image here.

And so their entirely closed off completely insensitive to God and to man their mouths speak proudly and they actually delight in the oppression the deadly oppression of verse 9 verses 11 and 12 verse 11 it. Is the picture of the hunter who has got the prey right where he wants him he's he's circled round and in this case there's many of them and they're eyeing their approach the they've got their eyes to the ground, they know exactly the path of pouncing that there it's a sport to them.

That's the idea in verse 11 and similar idea in the when the image changes to the young lion. In verse 12 as the lion is eager to tear his prey. And so David asks Yahoo to confront him and cast him down he doesn't have illusions of his own ability in himself he asks God to deliver his life from the wicked and then there's a problem here because New King James says with your sword with your hand other translations say by your sword or by your hand, but there's actually no preposition there which is weird in Hebrew.

Has tons of prepositions in it, you know attached to the words all over the place the the synth seems to be that David is actually recognizing his enemy as the sword of Yahweh and as the hand of Yahweh that has chastened him that that the wicked is so self-absorbed he doesn't actually realize it's not about him.

That God has used the. The the wicked for David's good to afflict him in a way that is for his good for his blessing and and he's and he's kind of having this side conversation with God. So the wicked is is in you know, surrounding him and eyeing the ground the path that he's gonna use to bounce and David is David says well as soon as you're done with him God, we've got him right where you want him.

You have used him. Deliver me from from the wicked who are your sword who are your hand from men of the world who have their portion in this life and so he gives this suggestion that the Lord just he wants to fill his belly feel his belly he wants treasure give him treasure he he can have kids and he can have grandkids and they can all have all of it.

Just distract him from or take him take him down from this attack that he's making on me by giving him what he wants in this life and then bringing him to his knees that that's a more literal translation of cast him down there and the second the second part of verse 13, very very similar to the wicked man in Psalm 73 whose eyes are bulging with fat and he's surrounded by his children.

And he never lacks anything and people are saying all kinds of good things about him and asap there is not like David here. David sees right through it. David says, you got him right where you want him ASAP had to go to worship and when he went to worship he said oh now I know yeah, you heard you have set him in slippery slippery places once he's gonna be destroyed.

David David has that. Well understood in verses 13 through 14, he actually sees it as a means of his deliverance but a blessing it would be to us as Christians if instead of despairing like ASAP did when he saw the wicked prosper we saw the wicked prospering and we were horrified at the end that they were coming to but grateful to God if he was using that as a way of delivering us.

You never see a man suffering on his deathbed and envy all the pleasure and riches that he had in in his life you're just horrified his suffering and we who see eternity by faith ought to see that so the portion of the wicked is earthly and fleshly and they will be destroyed suddenly and then of course at the end the portion of the believer is God himself very similar again to Psalm 73 as for me.

I will see your face in righteousness. That's probably in this life that that portion there because he adds in the second half the second couplet. I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness, so the Lord's face is and the Lord's righteousness for David and upon David is his portion in this life first half of verse 15 and then I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness that the resurrection he will be.

Hold. The likeness of God. And that is exactly what we are going to do we're going to see Christ himself forever and ever so. Marvelous marvelous prayer a lot in there for us but especially you could you could sum up you could sum it up with the Psalm 73 language whom have I in heaven but you on earth there's nothing I desire beside you my flesh and my heart may fail but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever that the wicked are going to destruction but for us goodness that which is good.

Is to be near the Lord