

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- “Down on my knees have I often fallen, with the hot sweat rising from my brow under some fresh slander poured upon me; in an agony of grief my heart has been well-nigh broken...This thing I hope I can say from my heart: If to be made as the mire [& mud] of the streets again, if to be the laughing stock of fools and the song of the drunkard once more will make me more serviceable to my Master, and more useful to his cause, I will prefer it to all this multitude, or to all the applause that man could give.”
- **So read the words penned by Charles Spurgeon** in one of the most depressing seasons of his life & ministry. The year was 1857 and he struggled with feeling crushed by the opposing & slanderous remarks from wicked men.
 - **Like bullets**, these slanderers penetrated under the skin & hit the heart.
- Spurgeon’s enemies at one time said:
 - “They began to say all manner of evil against the preacher; but the more I stank in their nostrils the better I liked it, for the surer I was that I was really dead to the world.”
- From poisonous slander, Spurgeon suffered it well. ***What do you do? Where do you turn? How do you pray?***

Have you ever been in a situation where you are falsely accused or hotly pursued (verbally, socially, or physically) by others & you really feel as though you did NOTHING to deserve it?

Background to Ps 7

- **Author:** David
- **Title:** A Shiggaion of David which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush a Benjamite
 - **NOW...**“Nothing is known of *Cush*; but from Absalom’s rebellion it emerged that Benjamin, Saul’s tribe, held some bitter enemies of David (2 Samuel 16:5ff; 20:1ff).”
 - Perhaps Cush was one of the “court liars” who flattered Saul and made life difficult for David (1 Sam. 24:9). **But** It is also possible this person was the Cushite who brought the bad news to David about Absalom’s death (2Sam. 18:21-23).
 - May refer to “meditation” or “lamentation”; or it could be “a wild passionate song with rapid changes of rhythm”
- **Ending:** [**Ps 8:1 title**] “For the choir directory on the Gittith”. (perhaps a stringed instrument; Or, could have referred to a location—*winepress*; **WE JUST DON’T KNOW!**).

This psalm shows an interesting cycle:

Situation (betrayal, hounding)

→ **Contemplation (God’s righteousness)**

Realization (evil comes back on one’s own head)

Exultation (God is infinitely worthy of praise!)

****READ THE TEXT****

THESIS—I want to provide 4 ways you can pray when wicked people pursue you so that you can find REFUGE and live THANKFULLY while enduring the pursuit.

I. **SAVE ME!** (1-2)

UPWARD perspective

The first thing we *MUST* do when hardship knocks at our door is NOT look inward, it's not to go outward, it's not to be introverted, fester, boil, lash out in rage---**NO! It is to go UPWARD to God in prayer & confident trust!**

a. Affirmation (1a)

i. Note how David begins the psalm: **O LORD MY GOD.**

ii. **Take Refuge-** נִצְּרָה- to have covering in a large, rocky fortress.

1. “put my trust” (NKJV). David had no one else to cover him & protect Him **other than GOD!!**
2. The word signifies the utter helplessness of the person & the total reliance under the protective guard/shield of another (=God).

b. Supplication (1b-2)

i. **Save me!** Note the ***urgency*** of prayer.

ii. The enemies **pursue** (plural!), they look to **tear David's soul apart like a lion & drag him away** with none to **deliver**.

1. when you are in this kind of dire situation---it gives **urgency & an emergency-like zeal to your prayers!**
2. The tone of the psalm sounds like David is being **slandered by enemies** (hot, pursuing, vicious, slanderous statements).
 - a. This is serious b/c of David's position as *God's appointed King over His People & Kingdom—Israel.*
 - b. **AS A FOOTNOTE: let us learn not to believe everything you hear about another** (guard against the **sin of slander & malice!**)
3. That's why Spurgeon could say: “This may be called the SONG OF THE SLANDERED SAINT.” **Can you relate?**

c. FOR YOU?

i. Maybe you have a host of co-workers that have rallied against you.

ii. Perhaps you have had neighbors or family members that turn against you because of your fervent faith in Christ.

iii. Or, maybe the day will come when *persecution* will actually dawn—you may be beaten, brutalized, banished, or beheaded for your **faith in Christ.**

iv. **Or even if none of these are true**, I guarantee one way this occurs in your life...**you have an army of Satan's minions & hosts that serve his bidding to wage war against YOU!**

Hebrews 13:5 "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

II. SEARCH ME! (3-5)

NOTE that David still hasn't gone after his pursuers yet—his persecutors, his opponents. **NO! Now he turns inward & examines himself to make sure HE is in the right.**

INWARD perspective

- a. **Affirmation of innocence**
- b. **V.3 – O LORD MY GOD**
- c. **If... then...** - if I've done evil, injustice, been advantageous, or dishonest, then let the enemy get me, consume me & destroy me & my reputation!
- d. **What brutal honesty!**
 - i. vv.3-4 has 3 “*if...*” clauses showing the deep, heartfelt hurt.
 - 1. This isn't a scratch on the surface, this is an internal wound against the vital organs.
 - 2. he's not claiming *sinlessness* but that he is innocent in the matter of which they're accusing him.

An innocent/blameless man... (6 distinctives)

- i. Has no injustice
- ii. Does not retaliate
- iii. Does not Take Advantage of
- iv. Receives punishment if guilty
- v. Squashes self-glory
- vi. **V.8-** lives *wholly* & righteously
- e. **Are YOU blameless?** Are you innocent? Is there anything in your life that *marks you as defiled*—visible or invisible? Known or unknown?
 - i. The blameless man does not slouch down when realizing that everything is open & laid bare before the all-seeing eyes of God (Heb 4.13).

III. SHIELD ME! (6-16)

OUTWARD perspective

I get this point from verse 10 – “my shield is with God” -- (מִגְּנִי עַל־אֱלֹהִים).

- a. **V.6 – ARISE O LORD!!** He asks God to rouse up from a state of *inactivity!* (Rise...Up...Wake!)

In this section—we need to know that **NOW David calls for the enemies to receive their punishment!** BUT DAVID does not retaliate or bring revenge—he leaves it in the hands of God!

1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil,

- b. **You are righteous—so shield me! (6-11)**
 - i. **Vv6-7 – LORD, you act, rise & smash them.**
 - 1. v.7- **picture of a COURTROOM scene.** The peoples surround the JUDGE (=GOD) & he asks God to render judgment as the Righteous Judge.
 - ii. V.8 – here's my innocence.
 - iii. **Vv.9-11 – God is righteous, angry & examines the heart & minds.** These verses talk about God's righteous rule.

- iv. We meet the attribute of **God's righteousness** again: the demonstration (the living out/the outworking) of God's holiness—he is absolutely incompatible with evil & can do no other than to uphold his perfect *standard* of pure holiness (Wilson, 194).
1. **NOTE that God doesn't just go after the actions; it's the HEART and the MIND that he judges!**
 - a. Jer 11:20; Rev 2:23
 2. More than anything here—David wants God's justice to be known. He doesn't want God to *allow injustice*.
 3. We ought not to judge---but let God be the Judge.
 4. **1 Corinthians 4:3-5**
- v. **God has anger/indignation/wrath every day.**
1. The idea is also found in the NT: **John 3:36** ³⁶ "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God *abides on him* (me,nei evpV auvto,nÅ)."
 2. **HOW?** God is in a constant state of war against his enemies. *The more that his enemies reject him & sin against His holiness, the more they store up wrath for themselves & the angrier God gets.*
 - a. **One day they will meet their horrendous doom!**
 3. **God has anger and wrath every day because of injustice, iniquity of man.**
 - a. **AND**--It is only Jesus Christ—who can turn away God's angry wrath→**Propitiation** (READ 1 JOHN 2:1-2); Rom 3:25!!
 4. Truly Thomas Boston said: **"A NEGLECTED SAVIOR WILL BE A SEVERE JUDGE!"** (in Spurgeon, 1/1:74).
 - a. If you know Christ as Savior you'll never know Him as **judge**. But if you don't know him as **Savior** then you'll *only meet him & ever know him as Judge!*
 - b. What a FULL salvation—full & free & eternal & total that is *made available* to you! What a thunderstorm of anger that can be diverted from you & you can receive a tender stream of God's all-satisfying, loving, Fatherly graces! **Believe!**
 - c. **You bring revenge—so shield me! (12-16)**
 - i. This is what's so scary about these verses. The unrepentant sinner must face the *Person of God Himself*. And the image is that of WAR. God is a warrior: ready, prepared, angry, & ready to drop the first deadly blow on his little enemies (that provide no match for God at all!)

IF man does NOT repent...

- i. God sharpens his sword (12a)
- ii. Bends his bow & prepares it (12b)
- iii. Prepares deadly weapons (13a)
- iv. Makes fiery shafts as arrows (13b)
 1. This refers to the ANE practice of arrows being dipped in flammable material (oil) and being set aflame before being shot at the enemy (Longman, 132).
 2. This is the text that Spurgeon preached a sermon appropriately titled: **"TURN OR BURN!"**

- v. He [sinner] travails in wickedness (14a)
 - 1. The point is that the wicked man does what only he can do—**reveal his true nature by his evil deeds!**
 - 2. The evil man is pictured as one who **gives birth**—not to a child but to **evil!**
 - a. A wicked man’s heart will reveal itself in wicked deeds.
 - b. Sin gives birth in pain to much trouble (James 1:14-15)
 - c. **Cf. Mark 7:21-22**—a warning against an evil heart!
- vi. God brings the judgment upon his own head (15-16a)
- vii. God brings violence upon his own head (16b)
 - 1. These images are that of a *boomerang*.
 - 2. The Hebrew wording emphasizes the **utter devastation upon their own heads** ---they inflict selves!
 - 3. **Proverbs 26:27** ²⁷ He who digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.

These all describe: inescapable judgment!

- 4. **Friend—this is utter revenge! No man can escape the strangling wrath of God’s righteous fury as described here!**

EXCURSES—MOTIVATION FOR EVANGELISM!

- **The Character of God!**
 - A judge
 - I wonder if this is the most dangerous predicament most people are in.
 - Many anticipate that they will one day stand before a God of great love, great mercy, great warmth, and great generosity. They never imagine they will stand before a God who is perfectly just and who cannot ignore the crime of sin.
 - We can say that sin is a crime; that it breaks the good and holy law of God (**Guzik**)
 - A God who has indignation *daily*
- **The Impenitence of Sinners!**
 - If a man doesn’t repent. This is essential. Faith & Repentance. Faith toward Christ & repentance from sin & holiness! (1 Thess 1.9).
 - **Acts 17:30** God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,
- **The Punishment Due Them!**
 - God is a *ready* judge. He is ready as a warrior whose bow is out, stretched, & prepared to fire. It’s like a gun & the finger is on the trigger & putting pressure on the trigger.
 - The oven of God’s wrath is hot & increasing.

This section causes us to recall **Deut 32:35-43!!**

The only thing that holds back the *deserved* and the *right* justice of God *at this very moment* is the **UNDESERVED MERCY OF GOD!**

IV. **HEAR ME!** (17)

UPWARD perspective

David has a *commitment*: “*I Will...*”

Worship is NOT based on feelings but on knowing what is right.

He probably didn't *feel* like worshipping. He may not have had the *warm-fuzzies* and the *emotional 'high'* that drove him to heavenly thanksgiving & worship!

a. Give Thanks!

i. אֲדַוְּרָה- I *will* give thanks/praise

b. Sing Praise!

i. I will sing praise (וְאֶזְמְרָה) lit. *pluck* music to the LORD!

ii. שֵׁם-יְהוָה עֲלֵיּוֹן- to the Name of the LORD *most high* (verb “to lift high”)

1. The Name of the LORD is the revelation of the glory (perfection) of God in his acts of **creation** and **redemption** and in the **revelation of his person (Longman, 135)**.

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

- o In the 1700's, *Augustus Toplady* penned these words when caught in a Thunderstorm in London & found refuge in a crag in a large rock that towered above him...

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Save from wrath and make me pure.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Find your **refuge in the Rock of Ages & as you hide, regardless of the storm that HOWLS overhead—give thanks & praise Him!**

1 Peter 2:12 ¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

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