

PSALM 5

INTRODUCTION

A while ago, there was an advert on TV that talked about a bedtime routine. I want to ask you; do you have a morning routine? There are some people who do the same things at the same time every morning. They have the same breakfast at the same time, and leave for work at the same time and take the same route. The truth is that we all have a morning routine, because we are all creatures of habit. This Psalm starts with some instruction about how to start the day. The instruction comes in the way of an example that is set for us by David Himself.

1. HOW TO START THE DAY

David starts the day by:

a) Approaching God consistently (v 3) - The term in the morning which appears twice carries the idea that as soon as it is morning, and it also carries the idea of morning by morning. So as soon as David wakes up the thing he thinks about is approaching God in prayer. He does this consistently, every morning; he is found praying unto his God. Now that is not a bad way to start the day. I know that for some of us, the morning is the best part of our day; we are awake, alert and ready to go. For others I know, that the morning is not so good, in fact it is very bad. In fact the evening is the time when you are at your best.

But whatever your physical make up may be, it surely is a good thing to start the day (no matter what time that day starts for you) by bringing our requests before our God. Do you have a morning routine of starting every day consistently with God? David did.

b) Approaching God humbly (v 2) - Notice David's language, he calls God "His King, and God." Now David is a King himself, but when he comes before the King of all Kings he knows that his kingship is not on the same level as God's. He simply comes humbly before God, recognizing that compared to God he is nobody, to everyone else he was King David, to God He was just David. This surely ought to be our approach as we come to God. We ought to come humbly, realising that we are nobodies, coming into the presence of our King and our God.

Please never come to God in a casual or flippant manner, as if you are approaching anyone, come humbly before God, and remember you can only come because you are invited by God to do so, of our own we have no right. That ought to keep us humble

c) By Approaching God expectantly (v 3) - Again notice David's language. He comes to God asking him to "hear his words," "consider his sighing," "listen to my cry," "to you I pray," "I lay my requests." After saying all that; he says, "I wait in expectation." That's confidence in God. He knows that God will hear his prayers and his cries and his sighs. I love that. Have you ever had one of those days, which just as you go to bed, you want to pray to God, and all you can do is sigh? That sigh says all that is in your heart. Well God hears that sigh and knows exactly what we want to say through it. These are times when our eyes have been so full of tears that we cannot get the words out. Well God sees and knows what is meant by those tears.

Then of course there are times when we are able to articulate our thoughts into reasonable well-structured sentences. God hears those prayers as well. David in these opening verses covers all types of prayer, and then he says that he expects them to be answered.

Now this was a challenge to me when I prepared this. How many times do I actively look out for answers to my prayers? I am ashamed to admit that often I have prayed and then forgot what I have prayed for. But when David approaches God in prayer, He does so in a mood of

expectancy. Such an expectation would mean that prayer becomes something really exciting, as we wait to see how God is going to answer this time.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A HOLY GOD AND SINFUL MANKIND (vs. 4-6 & 9-10)

David can come boldly to God in prayer every morning, but not everyone can. The unbeliever described here as wicked, arrogant, bloodthirsty and deceitful cannot approach God with confidence in prayer. Why? Because of God's relationship to them. Notice what the text says, God takes no pleasure in evil and indeed those who do evil, such people cannot dwell in His presence, and they cannot approach God.

Now we need to remember that God's definition of evil and ours is completely different. Dr. Shippley is evil according to most people, but the self-respecting person is not. Evil in God's eyes is simply disobedience to Him; a refusal to trust in Him or allow him to be Lord or King of your life is evil. In fact if we are honest in assessing ourselves we will come to the conclusion that our hearts are wicked and vile.

That is what Paul says in Romans 3:9-18). That is why you and I cannot approach God our sin bars us. And God is not passive or indifferent towards such people, no! Again notice the words, "hate all who do wrong," (v 5) "you destroy those who tell lies," (v 6) "the Lord abhors." (v 6). Now this is not the God that we like to picture in our minds. But sin and therefore the sinner is so obnoxious to God that He has to act and deal with both the sin and the sinner. That is what he does, both now, and finally on that great and dreadful day of the Lord, the judgement day. That is what David means in v 10, he is simply praying for justice, that God will judge all people who remain opposed to Him, because their opposition is nothing short of rebellion against God (v 10).

Are you an unbeliever? Then please don't kid yourself by thinking God thinks well of you, do something about that sin that bars you from His presence and from enjoying His company. If you are a Christian then remember this is what you were once like, and it is only because God dealt with your sin that you can come to Him in prayer. Therefore make the most of this privilege, enjoy His company daily, enjoy His presence with you at all times, at work, school, at home etc.

But this brings us to the question how can David approach God with such confidence, after all did he not commit adultery, and surely that is evil?

3. THE WAY TO FELLOWSHIP WITH THIS HOLY GOD (vs. 7-8 & 11-12)

How does David come into God's presence (house)? By God's great mercy! It's not that David suddenly changed and became acceptable to God; it's the fact that God showed David mercy, and granted him forgiveness and cleansing. For us, that mercy comes to us because of the sacrifice of Jesus who died to pay the price for our evil, wickedness and wrongdoing. On that basis God chooses to show mercy to sinners like us, and it's only as a result of God's mercy that David or any of us can come before God and enjoy His presence and His company. David speaks about this experience in Psalm 40:1-3.

Notice that once we have a realisation that we only come to God through Jesus, as a result of His mercy, then we will come in reverence (v 7).

It seems to me that if there is one thing that is missing from our modern day Christianity it is this thing called reverence or awe. I think we have lost awe for God today, because we fail to understand the seriousness of sin, it is grossly offensive to a Holy God, and we have failed to grasp what it means for God to be holy. Perhaps because of that, we fail to see that the only reason why we who are Christians can approach God is because of His great mercy.

Not only will mercy lead to reverence but also it will lead to seeking God's righteousness and

guidance (v 8). Because of our enemies, who are so eager to trip us up and cause us to sin, whether those enemies be physical or spiritual, we need daily to ask God to lead us in His righteousness, and to guide us in His paths. It is a prayer for protection, a prayer for guidance and a prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit to be evident within our hearts. Of course walking in His righteousness is walking in obedience to His Word. Both go together.

The fact that we have received God's mercy leads to security in God, which in turn makes us glad and gives us reasons to rejoice (vs. 11-12). Again notice the language that is used, words like "refuge," "protection," "shield." They are all words of security. During those high winds last week, weren't you glad that you had the protection and refuge of your home. Although you may have been worried about losing a few tiles on the roof, you had confidence that your house would stand up under the battering, and would give you shelter and protection. Well that's like God. God is the protector and shelter for all who love His name. For David who was constantly being hounded by his enemies this truth made him rejoice and be glad.

Christian rejoice, sing for joy because the Lord will not only lead you in the way of righteousness and guide you, but He will protect you in the midst of physical enemies as well as protection from our spiritual enemies. Do you see the contrast here, what will happen to the wicked? God will declare them guilty and banish them from his presence (v 10). But for those who have received His mercy, we will be led, guided, protected, and blessed by God Himself (vs. 8 & 11-12)

Are you one of those who have received mercy from God? Are you rejoicing in His protection? Or are you one who at this moment of time will be judged and banished from God's presence? Do you enjoy the presence of God with you daily? Are you living in His company? Are you daily laying your requests before Him and waiting with an expectant heart for His answers? Or are you one of those that God calls wicked, one of those who do not and will; not enjoy God's blessing?

You know you can become someone who knows God's leading, guiding protection and blessing. You can come to God in prayer with expectation. To do that, you need God to be merciful to you. We are not in a position to strike a deal with God; we are not on the same level as He is. We are sinful and wicked but God is pure and Holy. You must plead and cry unto God to show you mercy. The promise in the Bible is that if you do that in all seriousness then God will be merciful to you and bring you into a living and saving relationship with His Son Jesus Christ.

Amen