



Prayer

&

Providence

Lesson 5 – Prayer in Time of Trouble



Learning to Pray from the Psalms

Psalms Praising God's Glory and Seeking His Truths

- Psalms 67, 76, 93, 104, 139, 119
- Ps 67:3 “Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.”
- Ps 76:7 “You, Yourself, are to be feared; And who may stand in Your presence When once You are angry?”
- Ps 93:5 “Your testimonies are very sure; Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever.”
- Ps 104:1-2 “Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.”

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a scenic landscape. It features a dense forest of green trees in the background, a calm body of water in the middle ground that reflects the trees and sky, and a clear blue sky above. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

What are troubles the result of?

Sin

Trouble, sorrow and suffering all are the consequence of sin. We are affected by either our own sins or the sins of others and their consequences.

Ge 3:16 “To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children ...”

Ge 3:17-19 “Then to Adam He said, ... “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground ...”



Trouble

- “For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble spring from the ground; yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” (Job 5:6)
- “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue.” (Job 14:1-2)
- Eccl. 2:20-23
- How do we avoid complete despair as we consider these things?
 - **We have a choice. We can look to ourselves, or we can look to God.**
 - **“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” (Ps 50:15)**



When trouble comes, what will be our response?

- Will we heed the counsel of Job's wife?
 - “Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!”” (Job 2:9)
- Or, will we maintain our integrity and humbly submit our lives to God as Job chose to do instead?

“The ancient patriarch recognized man's inherent weakness and the fleetingness of life and man's need for a higher Being to whom he can look and on whom he can depend in time of trouble.”

Homer Hailey



Prayer in the Face of Trouble

- We have many examples of prayer in the face of trouble: David, Hannah, Jonah, Hezekiah, Daniel, Saul, Peter. Reflect on the kinds of trouble each of these individuals faced and how each situation is unique. What do these individuals have in common?
 - **Chased by enemies; punished for personal sin; barrenness; afflicted for running from God's service; under siege by a great army; on a death bed; under threat of death for worshipping and praying to God; blinded and searching; awaiting execution.**
 - **Great faith and trust in God to deliver.**
 - **And their response was to pray!**

David

- Psalms of lament
- Was confident in the omniscience of God
 - **Ps 139**
 - **“You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.” vv. 3-4**
- No matter what trouble David found himself in, he could say:
 - **“In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul.” (Ps 138:3)**
- In his early years, what was the cause of most of his trouble?
 - **Saul’s jealousy and pursuit of David.**
 - **Ps. 142**





“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight.” (Ps. 51:2-4)

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart – These, O God, You will not despise.” (Ps. 51:17)

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.” (Ps. 32:1)



Hannah

- 1 Samuel 1
 - *“Then she made a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.”” (1 Sam. 1:11)*
 - *“My heart rejoices in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation. No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God ...” (1 Sam. 2:1ff)*

Jonah's Prayer (ch. 2)

“Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. And he said: ‘I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice ... I have been cast out of Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy temple ... When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple ... But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.’”





Hezekiah

- Jerusalem was under siege by the Assyrians
- Hezekiah responds to this trouble by going to God in prayer.
 - **Isa 37:14-19**
- “The feeling was intense, the hour was crucial, the need was urgent, and the prayer was fervent. Jehovah heard the prayer and responded by slaying 185,000 Assyrians in one night, thus delivering the city.” (Hailey)





Hezekiah

- Hezekiah became sick to the point of death
- “Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, and said, "Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.” (Isa 38:2-3)
- “... I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years.” (Isa. 38:4)
- Pray – God will do what He knows to be best.



Prayer and Healing

- Some double-blind studies have concluded that prayer had a positive effect on health outcomes.
- “People who regularly attend church have a 25% reduction in mortality compared to people who are not churchgoers.” Further, they have:
 - **stronger marriages, healthier lifestyles, cope well with stress, fewer problems with depression, live longer, have stronger immune systems**
 - **“... prayer can indeed help a person cope with stress and have a greater sense of well-being, more hope, and a readiness to forgive – all of which affect health in positive ways. And machines that monitor brain waves, breathing, heart rate, and blood chemistry record dramatic changes when a person prays. How we think and feel has a direct effect on bodily health because the mind regulates the body’s natural healing systems.” (Philip Yancey)**



“It doesn’t diminish my respect for God’s power in the slightest to realize that God primarily works through the mind to summon up resources of healing in a person’s body ... Those who pray for the sick and suffering should first praise God for the remarkable agents of healing designed into the body, and then ask that God’s special grace give the suffering person the ability to use those resources to their fullest advantage. The prayers of fellow Christians can offer real, tangible help by setting into motion the intrinsic powers of healing in a person controlled by God. This approach does not contradict natural laws; rather, it fully employs the design features built into the human body.”

Dr. Paul Brand



Daniel

- Chapter 2 – King Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams
 - “Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.” (vv. 17-19)
 - “might seek” – Aramaic word meaning ‘pray or petition’
 - Vv. 20-23 – prayer of praise in response
 - As a result of their prayer in time of trouble, the true God was glorified in the eyes of the king, and Daniel and his three friends were elevated to positions of greater service and influence.



Daniel

- Chapter 6 – The Lion’s Den
 - Daniel was made one of 3 governors; distinguished himself
 - Jealous rulers caused a decree against worship
 - “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.” (vv. 10-11)
 - Because of Daniel’s prayer and steadfast faith in the face of trouble, the king issued a decree exalting the God of Daniel and recognizing the enduring permanence of God’s kingdom.





Saul of Tarsus

- Acts 9
 - On his way to continue persecuting Christians
 - Blinded and told to go into the city; would be told what to do
 - Waited three days for that answer
 - In darkness both literally and figuratively; He was in trouble with his God
 - Neither ate nor drank, and he prayed.
 - Acts 9:11
 - After his conversion, he became a devout servant of God and Christ; truly a man that knew the power of prayer and used it constantly.



Peter and the Early Church

- Acts 12 – Peter in prison awaiting execution by Herod
 - **“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.” (v. 5)**
 - Constant prayer!
 - **“So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.” (v. 12)**
 - **When the church faced trouble in those early days, they prayed!**
 - **And God answered those prayers**



When you face some trouble, some difficulty, some trial, do not despair; do not fret and worry and become depressed. Pray to God. Look to Him in humble trust and faith.

*“Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”*

Psa. 50:15



Next Week – Lesson 6 – When God Says 'No' or 'Wait'

1. Sometimes people will complain that God did not respond to their prayer and question whether there really is a God. What might you say to such a person?
2. What are some reasons God might not hear or regard someone's prayer? Consider these passages: Isa. 59:1-2; Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9; Lk. 18:9-14; Mk. 11:25-26; Jms. 1:5-8; Jms. 4:3; 1 Pet. 3:7.
3. Consider these examples and think about why God might say 'no' to some of our prayers: 2 Cor. 12:1-10; Num. 20:10-12 / Deut. 3:23-27 / Mt. 17:1-3.
4. Sometimes we must wait for an answer to a prayer. How might this be best for us or the situation? Look at the following references: Job 19:7; 30:20; 42:1-6,10ff; Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 5:22-43; Jn. 11:1-45; Rev. 6:9-10; 20:1-6.

+ Daily Readings from the Psalms