

THE MORNING PRAYER

PSALM 3

Introduction:

Every day should be begun with prayer. Whatever the circumstances may be, the door to the new day should still be opened with prayer.

This prayer came on the morning after the darkest night of the King David's life. David had spent most of the night fleeing from his rebellious son Absalom. He faces an uncertain future, but he will face it with prayer.

The Psalmist places this psalm so that any child of God can make it his prayer as he begins a day. Whether the day ahead looks threatening or promising, it should be begun with prayer. In recent days I have begun the day by writing out my prayer for the day in my journal. These prayers reflect my meditation on the Scriptures that I have been reading, and the circumstances that I face in the day.

I. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR STRUGGLES. (V. 1-2) (A Prayer of Confession)

LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many *are* they that rise up against me. Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is no help for him in God.*

In order to be a person of faith, you do not need to deny the reality of your situation. David was confronted with a rebellious son and a hostile army under the son's command. His struggles were real just

like yours. He was fully aware the he could be dead before nightfall. But so could we!

1. The struggles may be physical.

As you awake to begin a new day, you may be aware of the physical struggle before you set a foot on the floor; you may begin to feel pain immediately. It may be a condition brought on by cancer or some other life-threatening disease. It may be a condition brought on by the aging process for they are many. Your morning prayer should acknowledge the struggle.

2. The struggles may be spiritual.

David faced the same spiritual enemy that we all encounter. Paul reminds us that we do not struggle against "flesh and blood", but rather against dark spiritual powers that threaten to destroy us.

Do you feel yourself under spiritual siege? Are you in the midst of a severe spiritual struggle? Express your awareness of the struggle to the Lord God in the morning! That is how you find help in your time of struggle--you confess the need.

II. AFFIRM YOUR FAITH (V. 3-6) (A Prayer of Adoration)

But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.

(This is the first Psalm to include a selah. No one knows for sure what the word means. The best guess is that it has something to do with guidance for the singing of the Psalm. It may have called for a pause in the singing.)

1. Affirm who God is.

Consider what David says to the Lord in his expression of adoration--

He is the LORD--the Lord of salvation and covenant.

He is "my shield"--not the army that protectively encamped around him.

He is "my glory"--the world may see him in disgrace, but his life was never about making a name for himself; it was about being an honor and praise to God.

He is the one "who lifts up my head"--This speaks of restoration to favor. When we have fallen, He is the One who lifts us up!

What will your affirmation say to God this morning?

2. Affirm what God has done.

He has heard and answered my cries for help in the past--
blessed be His name.

He woke me up this morning to face a new day--someone has
labeled it a resurrection every time we stir out of sleep to a new
day. (Not everyone woke up this morning, but I did!)

He sustained me through yesterday and through another night--
why should I be afraid!

3. Affirm your confidence.

"I will not be afraid"--If God be for me, who can be against me?

What a way to begin a troubled day! Announce your faith and
your confidence in God. It will please the Lord to hear you say
it, and it will do your soul good to hear you say it.

III. ASK FOR HELP (V. 7) (A Prayer of Petition)

The prayer does not begin with a petition, but it includes a petition.

"Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all
mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of
the ungodly."

1. Ask for the interest of God.

"Arise" is a petition for God to notice where you are, and to give attention to your situation. This does not mean that such a petition is necessary to God--does He not watch over His own all of the time. But it is good for your soul if you express the longing of your heart.

2. Ask for the intervention of God.

"Save me" is a cry for divine intervention. For that day in David's life it meant to turn back the army put together by Absalom and to rescue him. It may be a prayer for healing for you, or a petition for a job, or a cry for the cloud of depression to be lifted, or even a cry for rescue from a threatening circumstance.

It is right for your morning prayer to include petitions! God has heard such petitions in the past and He will hear them again.

IV. ANTICIPATE BLESSINGS (V. 8) (A Prayer of Affirmation)

Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD: thy blessing *is* upon thy people.

This concluding word needs our careful attention. The King James Version supplies verbs for the statement when there were no verbs in the Hebrew text. The translators made this clear by putting the verbs in italics. You could literally translate the statement

"salvation unto the Lord: thy blessings upon thy people." Thus they are an exclamation from the heart of the suffering king. So what can we carry away from this statement. Surely it expresses our anticipation at the beginning of this troubled day.

1. Our anticipation is based on God being the source of all salvation.

God alone delivers His people. It is His nature and His work to deliver His people His very name Lord identifies Him as being our salvation. Shall we not anticipate today that God will be our salvation?

2. The anticipation is based on God's inclination to bless His people

Without question Israel did not deserve a blessing that day. Were they not joining Absalom in deposing God's anointed king over Israel? It reminds us of the prayer of Jesus when He prayed from the Cross, "Father, forgive them." It is the heart of our God to forgive and to bless. Build your expectations for the day on what we know of the divine nature. Make it a part of your morning prayer.

Conclusion:

Pray this prayer at the dawn of the day and you will be ready for whatever the day may bring. It became for David a day of victory. He did live to serve God another day.

Let me make a suggestion! Why don't you sit down and write a personal morning prayer that you can pray for this day, or for tomorrow morning.

You could include some of the same elements that we found in David's morning prayer. The situation in which you find yourself along with your understanding God will be surely reflected in your prayer. Your prayer does not have to sound like poetry; it just need to sound the like the need of your own heart. It needs to sound like you. Try it!