

DAVID'S PRAYER FOR GOD'S SUSTAINING POWER

BIBLE TEXT : Psalm 17:1-15

LESSON 135 **Senior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Psalm 17:1-15

¹ Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* not out of feigned lips.
² Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.
³ Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, *and* shalt find nothing; I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.
⁴ Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept *me from* the paths of the destroyer.
⁵ Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.
⁶ I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, *and hear* my speech.
⁷ Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee* from those that rise up *against them*.
⁸ Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
⁹ From the wicked that oppress me, *from* my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.
¹⁰ They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.
¹¹ They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;
¹² Like as a lion *that is* greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.
¹³ Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I A Petition

1 David prayed fervently for God to hear his cause, attend unto his cry, and give ear unto his prayer, Psalm 17:1, 6;

Psalm 103:6

⁶ The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

Romans 5:2

² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 1:6

⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Ephesians 2:18

¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

2 David prayed for God's sustaining power to help him, and keep him in the way of righteousness, Psalm 17:5;

Psalm 119:116-117

¹¹⁶ Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

¹¹⁷ Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

Psalm 121:3

³ He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Psalm 18:36

³⁶ Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

3 David prayed for God's loving protection from his enemies, for such protection is the peculiar privilege of every child of God, Psalm 17:7-9, 13;

Psalm 31:19-24

¹⁹ *Oh* how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

²⁰ Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

²¹ Blessed *be* the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

²² For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

²³ O love the LORD, all ye his saints: *for* the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

²⁴ Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Psalm 57:1

¹ Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.

Deuteronomy 32:9-12

⁹ For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

¹⁰ He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed

from the wicked, *which is* thy sword:

¹⁴ From men *which are* thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, *which have* their portion in *this* life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure*: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.

¹⁵ As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

¹¹ As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

¹² So the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

II David's Cause

1 David felt justified in his walk before God, and did not hesitate to appeal to God for justice in his behalf, Psalm 17:2-4;

1 John 3:21-22

²¹ Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

²² And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

Hebrews 10:22

²² Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Ephesians 3:12

¹² In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

2 David's prayer to God describes his enemies, their ungodly ways, their tactics of hate, and he prays that God will mete out to them their just reward, Psalm 17:10-14;

Psalm 73:5-9

⁵ They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men.

⁶ Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them *as* a garment.

⁷ Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

⁸ They are corrupt, and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression: they speak loftily.

⁹ They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

Luke 16:25

²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

3 David prayed that God would disappoint the wicked and cast him down, and deliver his own soul from the wicked, Psalm 17:13

III Conclusion

1 David concludes his prayer with the confidence that he can face God in this life in righteousness, and in the resurrection shall be satisfied to be like Him, Psalm 17:15;

Psalm 36:7-8

⁷ How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

⁸ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

Psalm 63:5

⁵ My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips:

Jeremiah 31:14

¹⁴ And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

1 John 3:1-2

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew

him not.

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

NOTES:

Access to God

The seventeenth Psalm is one of many prayers David made to God. It is thought he prayed this prayer when Saul, King of Israel, was desperately seeking his life. The many trials and perils David suffered drove him to his knees to seek the guidance and help of God. But for the intervention of God in David's behalf on several occasions, he would have lost his life.

David, as a man who prayed from dire necessity and need for body and soul, knew from experience how to pray. His prayers are great comforts for those who are in trouble and need. Prayer is the supreme privilege and blessing of the Christian. To have access to God, to be able to go to Him, to pour out our hearts and tell Him our troubles and trials, is a privilege that cannot be overvalued.

The worldly-minded do not value the praying heart because they do not pray; nor do they have access to God unless they repent. David was a man after God's own heart. His prayer in the seventeenth Psalm is one we can do well to copy.

A Right Cause

Prayer to God is not a haphazard thing; but God is King, and He *sets* forth definite requirements as to how we are to pray. David started out correctly by praying, "Hear the right, O LORD." We must have a just cause to go to God in prayer. We cannot bring some selfish or vengeful cause to God, and expect to get an answer, as God does not stoop to the petty and sinful things of men. James tells us: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

David was persecuted severely by Saul, who was embittered against God because of his own sin. Seeing the blessing of God upon David, Saul became jealous and filled with hatred against David, because God had given him the kingdom in Saul's stead. David was forced to flee for his life from the hatred of Saul. David knew he had a right cause when he prayed for protection from Saul, and this was the first utterance of his prayer.

Holiness

While our justifiable cause is a strong incentive for God to hear our prayer, it is not the prime motive with God for answering prayer. David knew that holiness of life and soul is what God looks at. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chronicles 16:9).

David in his need did not hesitate to point God to his life as an inducement for God to help him in his distress. "Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing. . . . Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." When we can point God to our lives without fear that God will find sin, we have access to God. David said God had tried him and found nothing evil. and would find nothing in the future. Holiness in the past is good promise to God that by His grace we shall have holiness in the future. It was the evidence of the past that enabled David to pray so boldly, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." No one is keeping his tongue as he

should unless God helps him.

Satan is the accuser of the brethren, but holiness of life is one thing his accusations are powerless against. When a mortal can get upon the rock of holiness he has a vantage point with God that will prevail in every instance. **The** Psalmist tells us: "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. . . . The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (Psalm 34: 15, 17).

Job, in his trial of faith, knew that the integrity of his soul before God was his most valuable asset in getting God's help in his affliction. His testimony was: "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:11, 12). "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live" (Job 27:5; 6). Job did prevail with God, and God did hear and answer his prayer; and it was his holiness of life before God that brought him through to victory.

Power and Protection

David prayed for God's grace to be manifested toward him that he would not turn away from righteousness to sin. God's power is ample to keep every child of God in the way of holiness. All we need to do is ask of God and use His grace when we receive it. Sin will never have any power over us so long as we remain under the Blood of Christ. Yet we must ask often, for God gives only as the need of the day.

David's plea to be kept by God as the apple of the eye is thought by many to have reference to the eyeball of the eye. The human body is a masterpiece of God's creative hand, and the eye is a marvel amidst marvels in the protection God has given it. It is set deep in the skull where any stray foreign object would merely hit the skull and not touch the eye. The eyes are equipped with eyelids which quicker than thought can and do shut upon the approach of a missile, hiding the eye from harm. Besides this, the eyebrows are above the eyes to help in any misfortune that might occur.

David in a few words said a great deal in describing to God the kind of protection he desired. He would be protected from danger, from all sides, from above and below, if God kept him as he desired. David saw the marvelous work of God in the construction of the eyes, and did not hesitate to desire the same for himself as a child of God. Ample Scriptural authority is given in promise for such protection to the child of God, the 91st and 121st Psalms being good examples.

Sinful Men

David reminded God of the wickedness of his enemies in contrast to the righteousness of his own life. We need only to walk in the streets of everyday life to see men as David described them. His enemies were hunting him as a lion does its prey. Lions usually hide in ambush, in tall grass, or some good cover, and spring upon their prey as it passes by. Peter calls Satan, the archenemy of all mankind, a lion: "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). David prayed for deliverance "from men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life" (Psalm 17:14). It is a truth not always seen that the men of the world, and the wicked, have their portion of wealth and good in this present life.

The hid treasure David refers to, many think means the hidden wealth of the world, such as mineral wealth. It is an undisputed fact that some of the most wicked men who have lived have also been the wealthiest. To *possess* wealth does not prove the character or success of men before God. Many people favor the rich and slight the poor. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:24, 25). David, concerning the prosperity of the wicked, wrote: "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men. . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (Psalm 73:3-5, 16, 17).

The rich leave their substance for their children to enjoy after they are gone. The wicked often have all the material blessing they could desire, yet in their death they are as other men — they leave all. Those who know not God are "like the beasts that perish" — without hope, (Psalm 49:20).

The wicked many times enjoy riches and the pleasures of sin in this life but they die and go to an everlasting hell without any good thing to comfort them. This is exemplified in the account of Lazarus and the rich man (**Luke 16:19-31**)¹⁹ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: ²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; ²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. ²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. ²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. ²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: ²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead). Lazarus begged at the rich man's door and desired the crumbs from his table. He seemingly had no good thing in this life, but when he died he left all of his evil days forever and went to an eternity with God where there was nothing but good forever. What a contrast when the rich man died and left his days of good, and went to spend an eternity in hell.

Christian Rest

David's prayer to God ends with a note of confidence in God and serenity of soul. The child of God has peace with God, and confidence in the divine plan of God, and in His protection for His people. The hope of beholding the face of God in righteousness was portion enough for David. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, [meaning the resurrection] with thy likeness." We shall see Him as He is and we shall be like Him. It

is hard for finite minds to conceive what immortality will be like; yet, the Bible tells us we shall be immortal, shall be like Christ, and shall be the sons of God in the fullness of the heritage. Then it is not difficult to see why David could say with all honesty: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the right way to pray?
- 2 Should we let God prove our hearts, and search us out to see if we have sinned?
- 3 Who is the destroyer of men?
- 4 What did David mean when he asked God to keep him as the apple of the eye?
- 5 How are sinners likened to lions?
- 6 Do the wicked enjoy better things in this life than the saints of God?
- 7 When shall the saints inherit all their good things?
- 8 What did David mean when he said he would be satisfied to awake with the likeness of God?