
Entering God's House

Psalm 5

Pastor Russ

(Baptism Sunday)

Psalm 5 is one of the many psalms that David composed during his turbulent life, reflecting his deep faith and dependence on God in times of trouble.

Most Psalms are songs. They are lyrics. They were written to be sung by a choir or by God's people gathered in the courtyard. It is likely that many of these were intended to be used after David's son, Solomon, built the Temple. But certainly, God's people gathered on the hill within Jerusalem where the tabernacle was setup and sacrifices and worship took place. Remember, the temple was not built till *after* David's death.

Many of the Psalms are prayers. They were written as prayers by David and Asaph. They were prayers in poetic form. Then they were given to the Chief Musician to be set to the music of the day and either chanted or sung. These prayer songs were composed in the midst of the mess. They were often a response to some major trial, some major hardship in David's life. Often we know the backstory. Sometimes we don't know specifics but from the Psalm, know what the trouble was.

We pick up Psalm 5 written by David, the king of Israel. HE wrote it when he was facing a rebellion from his son Absalom, who tried to overthrow him and kill him. David expresses his trust in God as his protector and judge, and his hatred of the wicked who oppose him and God. He also declares his devotion to God's worship and his expectation of God's favor and joy. This psalm is a morning prayer that David offered to God, asking him to hear his voice and to guide him in his righteousness.

Psalm 5 also shows David's awareness of God's holiness and justice, and his desire to align himself with God's will and character. He contrasts himself and the righteous with the wicked, who are doomed to destruction by God's wrath. Do not forget that the "person" being represented in this Psalm is David's own son. Not just nay of his many. Absalom was the apple of his eye, his favorite. HE could deny him nothing and until the rebellion, could not bring himself to pass judgment on his son even when he murdered his half-brother in vengeance for his sister's rape.

Quite the context, yes? In that situation, we have this prayer song. In this prayer song is the second of the “as for me” great reversals.

We are helped to understand this Psalm if we see the parallel structure:

A – Invocation to God (v.1-3)

B – Confidence in God (v.4-6)

C – Commitment to God (v.7-8)

B’ – Condemnation by God (v.9-10)

A’ – Blessings from God (v.11-12)

Call: Hear Us, Please (v.1-3)

David asks God to hear his prayer and to guide him in the morning (verses 1-3).

¹ Give ear to my words, O LORD;
consider my groaning.

² Give attention to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to you do I pray.

³ O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

Hear Us Because of our Pain (v.1)

We come to God in our pain and troubles. We want Him to hear us. This is not just pain, but is groaning. IT is a tearing in the soul. So we need God’s ear.

As New Covenant people, we know we have our faithful High Priest. He knows our groaning. He leans over from the throne of grace to hear and to help.

Hear Us Because you are our King (v.2)

We come to God because He is our God and King. To Him we apply for help. In Him we have put our hope.

Where do you go for hope and help when troubles overwhelm you?

Hear Us Because we come through Sacrifice (v.3)

The Old Testament believer had access to God through faith in what his sacrifices represented. Sacrifice and offerings were not the ultimate, but rather the temporary requirement until the true and final sacrifice came.

We have access to God only through the sacrifice of Christ. Otherwise, we are far away, shut out, unable and unwilling. But the grace of Christ's work makes us willing and able to come to God.

Confidence: You will deal with the Wicked (v.4-6)

David affirms that God hates and rejects the wicked, who are deceitful, destructive, and rebellious (verses 4-6).

⁴ For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil may not dwell with you.

⁵ The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.

⁶ You destroy those who speak lies;
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

Our Confidence in God's Character (v.4)

We come to God and His house when troubles surround us because we have confidence in God's holy character. He will not delight in wickedness. He does not allow evil to dwell with Him. So in God's house there is a kind of refuge because God is there.

The house of God in our time is not a temple or a building. It is God's people with Christ as the cornerstone. Thus in and among God's people should be a place to take refuge and be safe from all the turmoil of the world.

Our Confidence in God's Stance (v.5)

Once again we are faced with the simple truth that God is against evildoers. Yes, we so hope that grace will draw them, regenerate them, save them, transform them. But do not be fooled by the false and foolish sentimentality of much of Christianity. God is against the wicked. They will not continue to stand in front of God because of His holy, pure hatred of all that is opposed to Him.

Our Confidence in God's Judgment (v.6)

Now we get a laser-like focus on what kind of wickedness has motivated this prayer. Liars. Violent. Blood-thirsty. IS this a generalization? No, there is a particular, wicked, blood-thirsty, liar. Who is it? David's son, Absalom. Yes, it is many others who surrounded Absalom and advised him in his rebellion, but this is David's dear boy.

Does this shake you? It oh so easy to agree with and have confidence in the ultimate judgment of God. And we should. But this is sobering in its context. Is God's stance any different now in the New Covenant? Do we soften this because we believe in the cross? Or frankly, do we soften this because we love our children too much. They are our idols...

Commitment: We will Fear and Follow You (v.7-8)

David declares his confidence in God's mercy and his desire to worship God in his temple. He also asks God to lead him in his righteousness and to protect him from his enemies.

⁷ But [as for me], I through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.

I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.

⁸ Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me.

To Enter God's Presence (v.7)

The "as for me" is right here. Sadly, our ESV did not capture it. Here is our own assertion, our commitment that is in contrast to what has gone before. We commit to enter, to live in the presence of God. While His hatred of the wicked is strong, His love for His people is abundant. It is steady, unchanging, faithful. Through the power of this love we will enter God's house and be among God's people. God loves as individuals. But we must never lose sight of the fact that God loves corporately. He loves us together. He loves us as being, in Christ.

To Submit to God's Authority (v.7)

Even in the hardest of times, we will commit to respecting God and bowing to Him. It is easy to confess the Lordship of Christ when there is not pain. But let the world fall apart, our comforts are disturbed, our children rebel... There is the true test of whether we will bow to providences of good, wise and sovereign God who insists that we are not the center of the universe.

To Follow God's Will (v.8)

There is logic to this stanza. In God's presence we learn and rest in His providence as we seek to obey His precepts. We will follow Him.

God's leading is in His Word. There is both an objective, that is, in His Word and subjective, that is, in us work of the Spirit. But keeping in step with the Spirit means we will follow the path of the Word of God. This is the center of the prayer song. It is foolish to come to God expecting that HE will conform His power, His Providences, His purposes to our will and our wants. He does not. HE will not. Even when it comes to our children. To sing this prayer, we must be willing, in God's presence, to bow to His providences and to seek to obey His precepts.

Condemnation: You will Judge the Wicked (v.9-10)

David prays for God to punish the wicked for their sins and to make them fall by their own schemes. He also describes their evil speech and actions. This stanza is parallel to verses 4-6.

⁹ For there is no truth in their mouth;
their inmost self is destruction;
their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰ Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;
because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out,
for they have rebelled against you.

For their Evil Ways (v.9)

The focus is on their speech. They are corrupt in all their lives. But it shows mostly in the way they speak. The description includes some very graphic imagery, their throat is like an open grave full of decaying, putrid matter. Those who followed Absalom in his rebellion were like their leader. As is so often true in politics, there is little or no truth in corrupt people's words.

Romans 3:9-18 quotes from this Psalm is part of a cluster of texts demonstrating universal depravity including Jewish people (note the surrounding context).

⁹ What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰ as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God.

¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;

no one does good, not even one.”

¹³ “Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive.”

“The venom of asps is under their lips.”

¹⁴ “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

¹⁵ “Their feet are swift to shed blood;

¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery,

¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known.”

¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Sin and depravity in the heart coupled with no fear of God drive small and large sins.

How then does David respond? How will this response point us to Christ, the true King on the throne?

With the Appeal to God (v.10)

David appeals to God to deal with them according to their sin. This appeal is in three parallel thoughts.

Let them bear the consequences of their guilt, for they are guilty.
May justice prevail.

Let them fall by their own advice. May the counsels they have given circle back to destroy them. God often causes people to be destroyed by their own evil counsel to others.

Let them be removed from God’s people. While we often do not feel the force of this, this is a great judgment. But worse, is the last judgment when they will cast out of God’s Presence.

Entering God’s house sometimes means we have to be taught, we have to believe, and sometimes even sing hard truths. This is a part of worship. Why? Because it is from the Word.

Celebration: You Bless the Righteous (v.11-12)

David praises God for his favor and joy that he gives to those who trust in him. He also asks God to surround him and the righteous with his shield and love

¹¹ But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy,
and spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may exult in you.

¹² For you bless the righteous, O LORD;
you cover him with favor as with a shield.

With the Songs of Joy (v.11)

We will rejoice and sing songs of joy in God's house. Worship... praise... For the good that God gives when we need to be protected and shielded. We will rejoice in Him.

For the Safety in God (v.12)

We have a reason to sing even in the hardest of times. God provides for us a refuge from sin and judgment. We hide in that safety. God spreads the wing of His protection over us. He is a shield to us even against the evil speech and terrible lies of the wicked.

Reflect and Respond

We are inspired to seek God's presence and guidance every morning, and to trust in his **mercy** and **grace**. It can also remind us of the importance of worshipping God in spirit and truth, and of avoiding the ways of the wicked.

We are reminded of the importance of worshipping God in spirit and truth, and of avoiding the ways of the wicked.

We can pray to God with confidence and honesty, expressing our needs, desires, and feelings to him. We can also listen to his voice and follow his direction for our lives.

We can praise God for his attributes and his works, acknowledging his sovereignty, holiness, and justice. We can also thank him for his love, mercy, and favor that he shows to us.

We can ask God to protect us from the evil that surrounds us, and to deliver us from our enemies. We can also pray for God to judge the wicked and to vindicate the righteous.

We can rejoice in God and his salvation, finding joy and peace in his presence. We can also share his goodness and grace with others, inviting them to trust in him.

<>

*If you are interested in more on this idea of prayers to be sung in the midst of life's incredible difficulties, obtain a copy of my book entitled *Perplexity, Bringing your Questions to God* available at Amazon.*