

**Psalm 69: 1-15, “Christ’s Prayer and Sufferings”, A Communion Sermon Delivered
on May 8th, 2016, by Pastor Paul Rendall in the Afternoon Worship Service.
Part of the Communion Series – Christ’s Passion, Death,
and Resurrection as Noted in the
Psalms and Remembered.**

This Psalm is written by David and describes for us his sufferings and his prayers concerning his sufferings. But we must understand it as a Psalm which is also prophetic of Christ; His sufferings and His prayers as well. In fact it is quite astonishing how many of these verses seem to apply more directly to Christ Himself than to David who penned it. It is as if Christ has taken the pen from David’s hand and said to him, “Let me write this for you, because the only way that you will be able to have an answer to your prayers in your afflictions, is if I will undergo greater sufferings for you, on your behalf.” And that is exactly what our Lord Jesus did. Whenever we are suffering afflictions, difficulties, distresses, or persecutions, let us remember that Jesus has undergone deeper, far deeper sufferings in His soul than we will ever go through. The Lord Jesus bore the sins of the world, the sins of all His Elect people upon Himself, so that we would be able to be forgiven. We, then, go on to endure the things that God would have us to go through, the things that the Father thinks will help us to become more conformed to the image of His Son. How good it is to approach this table this afternoon, and to think of whatever sufferings and problems that we have, or will have, with this in mind. We are looking at a prayer here, and it is a prayer of no small importance. We will look at this prayer, the first 15 verses of it, in 4 parts. 1st – An Urgent Request; 2nd – A Sad Report; 3rd – A Revealing Confession; and 4th – An Acceptable Time.

1st – This Prayer is an Urgent Request –

These were great sufferings that David was undergoing. He cries out in prayer to God, “Save me, O God!” “For the waters have come up to my neck.” “I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, where the waters overflow me.” In David’s case the time of suffering was probably when he was driven out of the city of Jerusalem by his own son Absalom’s rebellion against him. So many people in his kingdom had turned against him. Their hearts had been stolen by Absalom and they were trying to throw off David’s rule and get rid of him. His prayers are like those of a drowning man. “Save me, O God!” “For the waters have come up to my neck.” The word “neck”, there, is literally the word “soul”, and I think that we should read it as such. “For the waters have come into my soul.” The “waters” are the great troubles and sorrows that were leaking into his soul just like water coming into a proud sea vessel’s hull after she has struck a rock. The ship is taking on water and you are going to sink down to the bottom of the sea, and there is apparently nothing that you can do to stop it. Well David was in just this position. Absalom had declared himself to be king, and David now had to flee from Jerusalem. “Arise and let us flee,” says David, “or we shall not escape from Absalom.” “Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword.” God was the only one who could rescue David from these deep waters which threatened to overwhelm David.

You and I, as we think of the reasons why we will partake of the Lord’s Supper this afternoon, know that there was a point in our lives when we cried out to God in the same way as David did; but for a different reason. We had come to see that sin was something that was not only draining the life out of us, but that it was going to bring our soul down to destruction in hell. We came to fear God. We came to see that we desperately needed God. A sinner who has been awakened to his sin and the consequences of it, does the same thing as David did, whether he is a believer under God’s shepherding care, or whether he is coming for the first time to beg

for mercy from the hand of God. We cry, "Save me, O Lord, for the waters have come up to my neck." The experience of our sinfulness is like "sinking into the deep mire". It is like quick-sand where we are sinking so fast that we must have someone come and help us out, because we cannot help ourselves. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing." This is where Christ comes into the picture. It was He who rescued David, and it was He who has rescued you and me who have believed in Him. How did He do this? By His actually stepping into our place and taking the judgment of God which we so richly deserved. He saw us ruining our lives and He pulled us out, even as He went under the billows of God's wrath. When did He do this? He did it at the cross. There in that awful place, He was the One who was willing to take upon Himself the deep waters of what our sins deserved. He was willing to sink into the deep mire of the punishment which was due our sins. He was the One who came into deep waters, where He would feel and receive to Himself the floods of the waves and billows of God's righteous anger against our sins.

Was David weary with His crying over the affliction that he was going through? Was His throat dry and did his eyes fail while he waited for God to help him? Christ went below him and beyond him in what He suffered for David. Because Christ would suffer at the cross, He could undergird David in his sufferings. Psalm 18: 16 says, "He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters." "He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me." This is why David calls God his rock, his fortress, his deliverer, and other names such as this. David was rescued, but Christ was not. Charles Spurgeon says, "Christ had prayed till He sweat great drops of blood, and well might physical weariness intervene." "My throat is dried, parched and inflamed." "Long pleading with awful fervor had scorched his throat as with flames of fire." "Few, very few, of his saints follow their Lord in prayer as far as this." "We are, it is to be feared, more likely to be hoarse with talking frivolities to men than by pleading with God; yet our sinful nature demands more prayer than his perfect humanity might seem to need." "His prayers should shame us into fervor." Our Lord's supplications were salted with fire, they were hot with agony; and hence they weakened his system, and made him a weary man and full of woes." This is what Christ did for David so that His prayers could be answered and he could be rescued. This is also what Christ has done for us so that our prayers could be answered as well. Ponder it well O my soul!

2nd – This prayer of David's is a sad report-

David here relates to God the sad report of how he was being treated by his enemies. "Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they are mighty who would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully; though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it." It is a hard thing to be hated, but to be hated without a cause, without a reason, is even worse yet. David was such a valiant warrior and such a wise and good king, and so loved by his people, that you would never think that so many of his subjects would turn against him. His own son had turned to become his enemy, and his own trusted friend and counselor Ahithophel was advising Absalom as to how he could be overthrown. As bad as this was, David was delivered from this awful trial. But he was delivered because the Lord Jesus voluntarily went into an even worse situation than David had been in. He never spoke an evil word and never did an evil deed; He always went about doing good and healing people and teaching them the truth of the way to have everlasting life. And yet, even so, He had many enemies and was hated.

In John 15: 24 and 25 it says, "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father." "But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, "They hated me without a cause." So, the Lord Jesus full well knew that He could not be delivered from their wicked schemes for He knew that He must die in David's place, and in the place of all of God's Elect. This hatred of men towards Him had no reasonable cause, but it would be a part of the

Atonement; a part of the sufferings that Christ had to go through for David, and for you dear Christian. His sufferings included unjust treatment at the hands of self-righteous and wicked men. Will you not remember this important truth? We need to remember this today because as we grow more into the likeness of Christ, a part of what the Lord would have us to experience will be the unreasonable malice and possibly even the hatred of people around us, because we are Christians. And we should see that it was because Jesus bore this first, that you and I will be able to bear whatever sufferings come to us as well. Jesus stole nothing from anyone, and yet our text says in verse 4, He had to restore it. He did nothing to take anything good away from any person, and yet He was the only one who could restore to sinful people like you and me, favor and blessing from God. We have robbed God of the glory due His name by our disobediences and neglects of His commandments. Jesus suffered so that we could have a heart relationship with God. This is the only way that His enemies and the enemies of God His Father could be saved.

3rd – This prayer of David’s has a revealing confession contained in it.

David says in verse 5, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You.” David, as he went through these distressing things, no doubt thought back to some of the reasons that these things had come to pass. It was because of his sin with Bathsheba, and what the prophet Nathan had told him; that he had “despised the commandment of the Lord and had done evil in His sight.” Nathan told him, “You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.” “Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.” “Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight this sun.’” “For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.” “So David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’” “And Nathan said to David, ‘The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.’” How could this be? How could David find forgiveness and eventual restoration? It was through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is where David’s prayer and the prayer of our Lord Jesus diverge from each other in this Psalm. There was no foolishness in our Lord Jesus that He needed to confess. But He would take to Himself the guilt, and bear the sin of David’s foolishness. There was no sin to be found in Jesus at all. There was no need for any confession by Christ. The only question that we need to consider was one which came from His own lips. “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?” This was the question that He asked the Jews who did not believe His testimony to them; that they were sinners by nature and practice. He had tried to convince them that He was their Messiah, but they did not understand the things that He was speaking to them. In John 8: 26 He said to them, “I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true ; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.” “They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.” “Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.’” “And He who sent Me is with Me.” “The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”

This what we remember today in the Lord’s Supper; that the Lord Jesus was always pleasing to the Father. His was the holy labor of working out a righteousness for us; before God His Father, a righteousness that could be imputed to us. This righteousness would cover all of our sins past, present, and future, and we receive it by faith. We glory in this, this afternoon. Not that we were righteous, but that He was. We do not glory in what we have suffered or gone through for Him, but what He has suffered and gone through for us. David said, “Shame has covered my face.” But even though this was true, he would still have gloried in the shame that

Christ faced for his sake at the cross, if he would have known of it. David was zealous for God's house, and wanted to come back to Jerusalem and worship there if he could. But he would have gloried in Christ, if he could have seen Christ's zeal for God's honor. He would have gloried in Christ's taking a whip made of cords and driving out the moneychangers and those who were doing business there. He would have gloried in Christ's saying to them: "Take these things away!" "Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" "Then His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.'" The Jews asked Jesus for a sign that He would show to them; seeing that He had done these things. And He said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He was speaking of the temple of His body. This zeal is what we come to remember this afternoon when we think of the Lord Jesus; that He would be so willing to have the temple of His body destroyed for us who were foolish in our sin. Let us now come down front to the table, remembering these things.

4th - This prayer of David's was to the Lord in an acceptable time.

Verse 13 – "But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Lord, in the acceptable time..." Let us understand that there is a time when prayer is acceptable to God. In Psalm 32: 5 and 6 after having been under the Lord's discipline for his sin with Bathsheba for some time, David says: "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden." "I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." "For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him." It is when we have come to see the problem of our sinful heart that we come to realize the importance of prayer. That is the acceptable time to pray, when you realize the greatness of your sins. It is only when you refuse to come to terms with sin in your heart and life, that then, when the "flood of great waters" comes, you cannot find Him. But when you acknowledge and confess your sins, and don't hide them, it is then that you find mercy.

Suffering times are more than acceptable times to pray. The true believer actually benefits in every way from the sufferings of Christ, during such times. Christ's death and His resurrection power is what sanctifies their sufferings to them; whether their sufferings are from persecution, or whether they are doing battle with their own indwelling sin, and trying by the Spirit's power to put sin to death. And so, we see that actually it was Jesus' prayer that was answered in the acceptable time. His prayer was answered in such a way that He would be able to die and accomplish redemption for us. His prayer was heard by God, to triumph over sin and death through His sufferings and death. Even as He hung upon the cross, He knew that God would raise Him from the dead as it says in Psalm 16: 10: "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." This is the reason that we rejoice as we come to partake the Supper now. Our sufferings for His Name's sake will be bearable because of the grace that He purchased for us by His sufferings; His sufferings in both body and soul. This is why our prayers will be heard. Christ came into the deep waters, Christ sank into the mire, Christ bore reproach, Christ suffered, bled, and died so that our prayers for salvation would be heard. And He hears our prayers, when we suffer, as well.