

Psalm 4: 1-8; “God Hears & Answers”, A Message for the Zoom Bible Study/Prayer Meeting, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 5th, 2020.

David knew that our God is a God who hears and answers the prayers of all those who know Him. But even though he knew this, still he prayed – “Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness.” He prayed – “Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.” And so, it will do us good to think together about the basis upon which God hears and favorably answers our prayers. 1st of all – God hears us and favorably answers our prayers for Christ’s righteousness sake. (verses 1 and 2) 2nd – God hears and favorably answers our prayers because He has set us apart for Himself (verses 3-5) And 3rd – God hears and favorably answers our prayers when we offer the sacrifices of righteousness and trust in the Lord. (verses 4-8) Let us ponder now, the greatness of the grace of Christ which is given freely to every person trusting in the Lord Jesus.

1st of all – God hears us and favorably answers our prayers for Christ’s righteousness sake. (verses 1 and 2)

In verse 2 we find that David was a man who at that time in his life who was surrounded by many worthless men fighting against him. In verse 2 he mentions them. He says – “How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame?” “How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?” In this particular case it was probably the men who were supporting Absalom’s rebellion against David who were acting this way; trying to turn the glory of David’s being king to the shame of overthrowing him. Absalom thought that he knew better how to run the kingdom than David, his godly father. He had won over the hearts of a number of the men of Israel, to his way of seeing things. And so, with Absalom were men like Ahithophel, David’s trusted counselor, and a number of worthless people who were willing to join with them, believing lies. And these were the ones who were plotting against David. They were men who turning the glory of David’s being king, into the shame of thinking that they had to bring him down, and put Absalom on the throne in his place.

But David confesses here, that God had relieved him in his distress; his distress of seeing what his own awful sins had done to dishonor God; how he had committed adultery with Bathsheba, and how he had had Uriah her husband killed in his trying to cover up these great and awful sins. And so, he prays and asks mercy from God, that He would now hear his prayer, and help him against those who desired to take his life. I want you to see, that God is sin-forgiving and prayer-hearing God to all who will make God the God of their righteousness. All sins and blasphemies will be forgiven men (Matthew 12: 31), if they will humble themselves in the sight of God and confess their sins and plead with God to forgive them of them. But let me ask this question: Is forgiveness based upon anything that the sinner can do to atone for their own sins? Can a sinner do anything to make up for their own unrighteous thoughts and deeds? No, it will only be what Christ has done to satisfy the justice and righteousness of God in your place. God has to be the God of your righteousness; that is, the Author of it.

Look over at Galatians 6: 14 – “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” This is a glory that all repentant sinners will find at the cross. It is, that Christ took the place of any person who believes in Him, there. A sinful person, if they do not look to Jesus in faith, would continue to bear the whole load of their guilt and their shame. But God will have regard to the righteousness of Christ, if He is trusted in. God does not have respect to the works of men who try to atone for their own sins; to try to some way to make up for the damage that they have done to God’s honor. But He will have respect to Christ’s perfect sacrifice. His sacrifice merits your being completely forgiven.

2nd – God hears and favorably answers our prayers because He has set us apart for Himself. (verses 3-5)

David says in verse 3 – “But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the Lord will hear when I call to Him.” “Be angry, and do not sin.” “Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.” “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.” The Lord had set David apart for Himself to be king in Saul’s place. But these words mean more than this. They mean that God had set David apart to be godly in terms of His becoming a holy man of God. This is God’s purpose for every Christian. That is, that after believing in Christ, you will be sanctified. There is an initial sanctification and there is an on-going progressive sanctification. Initial sanctification is your being set apart to the purpose of God; that you would be born again; the seed of righteousness is placed in your heart and by your faith and obedience it will be cultivated. But can you do this on your own? No, you can only do this as God sees you in Christ and when He works in your heart His precious grace which leads you to righteous deeds.

If you are a saved person, God has indeed set you apart to Himself and to His precious and holy working within you, so that you will grow in greater faithfulness; the life of the Lord Jesus will be more and more seen – in your conduct. God’s working in sanctification is most sure. It is a progressive work of grace in your soul, once you have believed. Look at 2nd Timothy 2, verse 19 – “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’” You see, this is the purpose of God, that you, when you become a Christian would depart from iniquity; that you would depart from those sins that you once loved, and forsake pursuing them altogether. An example of this is given in verse 4 of this Psalm that we are studying. “Be angry, and do not sin.” “Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.”

Now, before you became a Christian, you may have thought that if someone crossed you, if someone mistreated you, if someone did something wrong to you, that your righteous reaction would be to be angry. In fact, you may have been a person who, if you could not get your own way in a discussion, or if a person objected to the way that you were thinking or proceeding in relation to a particular subject, that you would get angry in order to see to it that your own will would be done in regard to any issue that you were discussing or trying to work through. But this is not the way of the Christian.

The way of the Christian is not sinful anger. The way of the Christian is, that they may indeed be angry if something that is happening to them, or to those whom they love, that is wrong, and they can clearly see that it is wrong. But if they are walking in the Spirit, they will not sin. They will not try to obtain what they want to see happen, any longer, by force; by fighting and displaying anger and threatening people, or by their attempting to show them their displeasure by a menacing countenance. They will not do this any longer. They have come to realize, by grace, that this is wrong; to try to force other people to their conclusions in an unbiblical way. That is why it says here in verse 4 that a Christian will “meditate within their heart upon their bed, and be still.” They will think about what they are doing, and why they are doing it, and how they are going about to do the things that they do, to obtain the righteous objective which they seek.

You can tell whether your anger is righteous or not. It is when you can commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still; when you can offer the sacrifices of righteousness, you think about the righteous things that you can do in that situation, and you put your trust in the Lord so that you might truly help those persons who you are angry with, to be able to see what the right thing is, as well. Let me ask whether you can do this? Can you pray to the Lord at such times when you are angry? Can you offer up thanksgiving to Him for giving you Christ, and giving you grace at such times? Can you pray and be still and trust in the Lord during the time of that situation which is so provoking to you; when you believe, also, that it is provoking to God Himself? That you will only act in the self-control that you know that you are doing what God

would have you to do? This shows growth in grace. This shows the development of true maturity and godly character.

3rd – God hears and favorably answers our prayers when we offer the sacrifices of righteousness and trust in the Lord. (verses 6-8)

Verse 6 – “There are many who say, ‘Who will show us any good?’ “Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.” “You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increased.” “I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.” One of the ways that you can tell that you yourself are a true Christian is when you are a person who is continually praising and thanking the Lord for His goodness to you; for His wonderful works to you, one of the children of men. You have become a praying person who knows that it is in the essence of God’s nature to show goodness, and so you want to become more like God and to show others around how good a God His is. When other people are griping and complaining about things continually, when they are refusing to believe that anyone can show them any good, you will be a person who desires to show others good.

Look over at Matthew 5: 43-48 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.” “For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?” “Do not even the tax collectors do the same?” “And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others?” “Do not even the tax collectors do so?” “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” The Lord would have you to be striving to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The Lord is the One, and the only One who can put love in your heart for your enemies. He is the only One who can put gladness in your heart more than in the season that their grain and wine increase. He will do that in response to your praying that He would lift up the light of His countenance upon you. You can know that it is His working in your heart, when you have this gladness at such times when unrighteous people hate you because you love God and you are doing what is right. It is God who will satisfy your heart and provide for all of your needs. When you are in the most desperate and difficult circumstances, to the most mundane and everyday circumstances, God takes notice of them all, and He will help you by His Spirit and by His grace. He alone can make you to dwell in safety, and to truly prosper both materially and spiritually.

So, will you not believe this, if you are a Christian? For it is not glorifying to God to always live your life as though everything is against you, when actually, God is really for you. Romans 8: 31-37 – “If God is for you, who can be against you? “If He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Since this is true, let us be people of praise in every situation, because we believe in, and we realize day by day, the greatness of His grace, and His help and His presence with us every day and in every situation that we find ourselves.