

Prayer 1 - Search Me O God

Introduction

In this new year, I want us to make a special focus on prayer. Prayer helps us to:

- Build our relationship with Jesus,
- Overcome temptation,
- Figure out God's Will in our lives
- It is a powerful weapon in spiritual warfare,
- Jesus is waiting to make intercession when he hears our prayers, and
- It is the key to revival!

Every single revival from back in history to the modern day began with a group of people gathered together in prayer. We have hit a point in this church when our list of unsaved is growing and we have hit roadblocks. So, I want us to focus on a real revival this year!

- I am talking about a powerful move of the Holy Spirit that changes lives and goes exceedingly abundantly beyond what we ask or think.
 - Not just those lost people saved, but learning, faithfully attending, serving God, answering the call to the mission field, preaching and teaching.
 - It isn't just our selfish will against God, it is God's will that none should perish, but that all come to everlasting life.
- We know prayer is important, but how do we pray, I want to look at what David prayed in Psalms 139, so that we can learn an example of prayer from a man after God's own heart.

Psalms 139:1-10, 23-24

(1) **To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.** O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*.

(2) Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

(3) Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.

(4) For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

(5) Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

(6) *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.

(7) Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

(8) If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.

(9) *If* I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

(10) Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

(23) Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

(24) And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Who Are We Praying To?

David spends the first 18 verses of his prayer talking about God and his character. Look at David's first two words, "O LORD."

- We need to remember who we are talking to in prayer. We are directing our prayer to God, we are talking to God.

- This may seem simple, but it is easy to forget and our prayers can become weak, meaningless and repetitious because we forget who is listening.
 - Imagine this conversation with your spouse, your parent or your best friend:
 - “Dear Mom, I have sinned, please forgive me, and take away my headache, give me a good day at work, and help me to be a light to the world, amen.”
 - Then don’t say another word until the next morning and repeat nearly the same thing, changing out the wish list for ourselves.
- We are praying to the almighty God that created the heavens and the earth and anyone that has ever seen him in a prophesy has always fell down in fear and was unable to speak.
 - Yet, we will have long and deep conversations with our loved ones and friends, pour out our hearts to them, talk about our struggles, our plans/dreams and our needs, yet we spend just a few minutes with the almighty God.

David’s Prayer Request

David makes two requests at the end of the psalm, one about his enemies, which we won’t cover today, then the second request is in verses 23-24:

(23) Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

(24) And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- David knew that there was weakness lurking in his own heart, there was sin in his heart and evil thoughts in his mind, wickedness in his way and he wants God to search his heart and mind.
 - He wants God to perform an inspection, an examination, so that he can grow closer to God and God’s plan for his life.
 - This needs to be our goal as well and if we want to take a step closer to God, we need to stop and ask God to examine us too!

Who Can Perform the Search?

Why do we need to ask God to search our hearts and minds?

- Couldn’t David have searched his own heart or asked one of his mighty men that fought alongside him for years or even his very close friend Jonathan, wouldn’t they be able to give him an honest determination?

Jeremiah 17:9-10 The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (10) I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

- Your own heart is deceitful, it is constantly deceiving you when it comes to sin. It promises you pleasure in sin, but it hides the bitterness, pain and death.
 - Eve in the garden listened to the serpent, then she thought about the fruit, how it was good looking and that it would make her wise.

- Her heart and mind didn't stop her, it paved the way to sin.
- We need something much more reliable than our own heart and mind or the mind of another man or woman, who is suffering from the same problem.

God is Omniscient

- (1) O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.
 - (2) Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.
 - (3) Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
 - (4) For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
- David starts off the prayer acknowledging that God has already performed the search and that he already knows everything.
 - The fancy word is omniscient, God knows your thoughts, he knows your actions, your intent, what you do and what you say.
 - If you genuinely want an honest report of the state of your heart, then you need to skip yourself because your heart is deceiving you and skip others because they can only see your outward actions.
 - God knows everything about you and David sums it up by saying at the end of verse 4: "O LORD, thou knowest it altogether."

God is Omnipresent

- (7) Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
- (8) If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.
- (9) *If* I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
- (10) Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

The reason we need to ask God to search our hearts is that not only does he know everything, he is everywhere.

- Jonah received instructions from the Lord and he tried to run away from where God called him to go to Nineveh, but he forgot that you cannot run away from God.
 - Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, but God knew right where they were.
 - Where can you go to flee from the presence of God? Asks verse 7, then verses 8-10 say not in heaven, hell, flying in the sky or sailing in the sea, God will be there!

Search Me O God

(23) Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

- After acknowledging who God is (knowledge, presence, and power), David asks God to search him, which God has actually already done in verse 1.
 - He asks God to know my heart and thoughts, which God already knows, and David has already admitted in the prayer that God already knows it, so why is David asking God to do it?

(24) And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- The key to the whole prayer comes in the last verse. The problem that where we go and what we do, which is effected by sin.
 - Sin effects what we think, our heart, what we say and what we do.
 - We need God to point it out so that he can lead us out of it.
 - We can be deceived in many ways which causes us to lead our own lives instead of God leading it.
- I don't want sin to continue to grow and multiply in my heart.
 - It is easy to be a Christian outwardly but have a heart that is growing away from God.
 - The devil wants you and I to ignore sin, but not a single sin glorifies or pleases God.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*:

- The verse doesn't say, "If I have iniquity in my heart..." it says "If I REGARD iniquity in my heart...regard means to see it, know it, once sin is made known to me and I chose not to forsake it and repent from it, "the Lord will not hear me."
 - Once God points it out through the Holy Spirit that you have fallen short, you need to come to the Lord and take care of it before you ask God for anything else!
 - Will you ask God to search your heart today?
 - Maybe God has pointed out something to you this morning, don't just pray about it here, the altar is the perfect place to start, but keep praying, take it to your prayer closet.
 - Get alone with God, don't ignore or excuse the things that he has pointed out, drop the pride, the false piety and excuses and let the Lord lead.
 - If you are like me, you can see everyone else's faults quickly and easily, but you need God to tell you what he has already found in your own heart!
 - God search me today, tomorrow, this year and lead me in the way everlasting !