Pray Specifically! God Answers these Prayers!

(Psalm 143)

(4-7-2021)

Introduction: In prayer we should spend time each day in praising God and interceding on behalf of others.

**** We should also pray for our own personal needs.***

* As we approach God in prayer, these would make for appropriate personal requests:

O God…

Notice the desperate and earnest heart of David as he pleads with God to meet his personal needs.

1. **<u>Hear</u> me** (v.1)

2. **<u>Forgive</u> me** (v.2)

3. **<u>Help</u> me** (v. 3)

4. **<u>Encourage</u> me** (vv.4-5)

5. **<u>Answer</u> me** (vv.6-7)

6. **<u>Direct</u> me** (v.8)

7. **<u>Deliver</u> me** (v.9)

8. **<u>Teach</u> me** (v.10)

9. **<u>Revive</u> me** (v.11)

10. **<u>Protect</u> me** (v.12)

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(3-31-2021)

Introduction:

One reason many appreciate the Psalms is because we can relate to them. Most all of us have experienced times of deep emotional distress, times of extreme loneliness, times when we felt that God was not around for us (He's there for others, maybe, but not for us).

In Psalm 143, we have the cries of a desperate man. A passionate heart longing to have God's help in crisis.

"It is the outcry of an overwhelmed spirit" (Spurgeon, The Treasury of David, Vol. 3, p. 334).

This prayer involves requests for ***"me"*** ---- ***"Hear me (v. 7) . . . cause me (v. 8) . . . deliver me (v. 9) . . . teach me (v. 10) . . . quicken me (v. 11)."***

Sometimes "me" centered prayers are Biblical. Yes, God is always the focus, but sometimes the supplication is for my benefit. Don't feel guilty requesting for your need.

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O God…

Notice the desperate and earnest heart of David as he pleads with God to meet his personal needs.

1. <u>Hear</u> me (v.1)

"Hear . . . give ear" - It's not that God has hearing problems, or that He does not know our needs and what is going on. But sometimes it seems that He is not listening. We pray and for some reason our request seems to go unnoticed. Why?

Perhaps the reason for the delay could be a matter of:

1) God's Timing – God has heard and will answer but not yet; He works on His sovereign timetable.

2) God's Will – Perhaps our request does not line up with what God wants or with His desires as revealed in His Word, the Bible.

3) God's Working – Perhaps the apparent silence on God's end is His way of proving the earnestness of our request; maybe He's teaching us patience; perhaps He is not responding the way we would like Him to because He has other work to do in our lives first.

Her Husband Was On The "Titanic"

One Sunday night in April 1912, an American woman was very weary, yet could not sleep because of an oppression of fear. At last she felt a burden of prayer, and with tremendous earnestness began to pray for her husband then in mid-Atlantic, homeward-bound on the *Titanic*. As the hours went by she could get no assurance, and kept on praying in an agony, until about five o'clock in the morning when a great peace possessed her, and she slept.

Meanwhile her husband, Colonel Gracie, was among the doomed hundreds who were trying frantically to launch the lifeboats from the great ship whose vitals had been torn out by an iceberg. He had given up all hope of being saved himself, and was doing his best to help the women and children. He wished that he could get a last message through to his wife, and cried from his heart, "Good-by, my darling." Then as the ship plunged to her watery grave, he was sucked down in the giant whirlpool. Instinctively he began to swim under water, ice-cold as it was, crying in his heart.

Suddenly he came to the surface and found himself near an overturned lifeboat. Along with several others he climbed aboard, and was picked up by another lifeboat, about five in the morning, the very time that peace came to his praying wife! Supplication! The prayer that will not take "No" for an answer, that storms the battlements of Heaven, and brings confusion and defeat to all the powers of hell, even death itself!

—*Christian Observer*

—Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations

“In Thy faithfulness. . . in Thy righteousness” - David’s appeal to God is based on God’s faithfulness and righteousness.

The Psalmist is not saying, “God hear me because I am faithful or because I am righteous. To the contrary, in the end of verse 2, David acknowledges that in God’s sight no living man is righteous (i.e. no man by his effort and works is justified [Rom. 3:20]; apart from God’s imputed righteousness [Rom. 4-5]).

When we pray, let’s appeal to our Father’s faithfulness to us and to His righteousness.

He is trustworthy and right and He is my loving Father. Surely He will hear the heart of His son or daughter who acknowledges His goodness.

Prayer Like Mom's Response To Child

A newborn baby cries frequently when he or she has needs. And the mother comes immediately, day or night, to fill those needs. Thus, children learn to cry when they want Mother's presence.

Later, Mother comes but does not pick up the child; she only softly says, "Hush, child, go back to sleep." Later she may not even come every time the baby cries. Of course, the baby does not like this one bit, but the feelings of "abandonment" lessen as he or she learns that Mother will always come in the morning.

In the process, all babies learn that they cannot manipulate a mother, especially one who distinguishes between her baby's needs and wants.

So it is with prayer. When we are young believers, God often answers our prayers quickly. Later, as we mature, He uses unanswered prayer as a means of teaching us to rely on him—he who knows our real needs and who is always faithful.

—Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations

2. **<u>Forgive</u> me** (v.2)

"Enter not into judgment" – If God were to call us to His judicial bench and state a case against us, not one of us would stand a chance of acquittal.

David "had entreated for audience (with God) at the mercy-seat, but he has no wish to appear before the judgment seat. Though clear before men, he could not claim innocence before God" (Spurgeon, p. 335).

In His holy sight, not one person is righteous (based on his/her own merit).

For *"there is none righteous, no not one"* (Rom. 3:10).

Job said: ***Job 14:3***
And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

Solomon acknowledged: ***Ecclesiastes 7:20***
For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Implied in David's appeal in verse 2 is a request for God's merciful forgiveness. Any good that God gives to any wretched sinner would have to be based on His mercy and grace. Requesting forgiveness should be part of any pattern of prayer, as the Lord Jesus taught:

Matthew 6:12
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (cp. Lk. 11:4; 1 Jn. 1:9)

3. **<u>Help</u> me** (v. 3)

David's enemy—jealous King Saul—wanted his very soul (life). He would stop at nothing less than David's death.

Due to Saul's persecution, David hid in caves by day and fled on foot by night. He was all alone. To his kinsmen, he was as though dead.

Not heard from or seen, he was as a man buried in the ground, in the darkness, for quite some time.

God sometimes uses persecution to drive us to Himself. He did so to Israel at the Exodus (the Red Sea crossing) and will do so again to Israel at the time of Christ's second coming.

It is in those lonely and dark times of our lives, that God shows Himself to be "*a very present help in trouble"* (Ps. 46:1).

The Mayo Brothers

Said Dr. Will Mayo:

"I have seen patients that were dead by all standards. We knew they could not live. But I have seen a minister come to the bedside and do something for him that I could not do, although I have done everything in my professional power. But something touched some immortal spark in him and in defiance of medical knowledge and materialistic common sense, that patient LlVED!"

The Mayo brothers, Doctors Will and Charles, were founders of the world-famed Mayo Clinics.

—Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations

4. <u>Encourage</u> me (vv.4-5)

v. 4

"My spirit overwhelmed" - David had such a heavy load upon him that he just wanted to faint. His spirit felt too burdened to go on.

His heart felt so lonely (**"desolate"**) and so deserted that he desperately needed some degree of spiritual encouragement from God.

v. 5

To find encouragement, David recalls the "good old days" – God's great working in and through his life in the past. He calls to mind the powerful works of God and contemplates the awesome creative and redemptive works of God.

This is how David encouraged himself in the Lord (1 Sam. 30:6).

It is at times of our deepest loneliness and heaviest trials that we can find encouragement in no one but God alone.

5. **<u>Answer</u> me** (vv.6-7)

v. 6
David's soul matched his dry, parched tongue.

Perhaps while beholding the dry, hot climate of the Judean wilderness and Dead Sea, David says to God: **"My soul thirsteth after Thee, as a thirsty land."**

Just as the Negev soil thirsted for water, so David thirsted for God.

Do we literally thirst for Him?

v. 7
"Hear me speedily, O Lord" - Quickly listen to me, Lord, for my spirit is on the brink of death.

David felt separated from God, abandoned (like those who die and go to hell).

6. <u>Direct</u> me (v.8)

David longed to wake up in the morning to the sweet sound of God's lovingkindness, not to the cold feeling of walking a lonely road.

"The way wherein I should walk" - A good prayer request for every morning.

--Lead me this day, O Lord.
--Let me find and fulfill Your plan for me this day.
--Guide me, O great Jehovah.

Knowing the way is inseparably linked to knowing the Word. For God's way is revealed in His Word.

Answer to True Prayer

Dr. Adoniram Judson, while laboring as a missionary, felt a strong desire to do something for the salvation of the Jewish race. But his desire seemed not gratified; even to his last sickness, he lamented that all his efforts in behalf of the Jews had been a failure. He was departing from the world sad with that thought. Then, at last, a gleam of light thrilled his heart with grateful joy. Mrs. Judson, sitting by his side while he was in a state of great languor, read to her husband one of Dr. Hague's letters from Constantinople. That letter contained some items of information that filled him with wonder. At a meeting of missionaries at Constantinople, Mr. Schauffler stated that a little book had been published in Germany giving an account of Dr. Judson's life and labors; that it had fallen into the hands of some Jews, and had been the means of their conversion; that a Jew had translated it for a community of Jews on the boarders of the Euxine, and that a message had arrived in Constantinople, asking that *a teacher might be sent to show them the way of life*. When Dr. Judson heard this, his eyes were filled with tears, a look of almost unearthly solemnity came over him, and, clinging fast to his wife's hand, as if to assure himself of being really in the world, he said, "Love, this frightens me; I do not know what to make of what you have just been reading. I never was deeply interested in any object, I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for anything, but it came; at some time—no matter how distant the day—somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised, it came!" What a testimony! It lingered on the lips of the dying Judson; it was embalmed with grateful tears, and is transmitted as a legacy to the coming generation. The desire of the righteous shall be granted. Pray and wait. The answer to all true prayer will come. In Judson's case the news of the answer came before he died, but it was answered long before.—Bible Illustrations

7. <u>Deliver</u> me (v.9)

"Deliver me" - All of us have enemies. If you stand for anything, you will have others who stand opposite you.

If you don't know of any human enemy, then certainly you have a spiritual foe (Eph. 6:10ff).

"I flee unto Thee to hide me" - Those who flee to God find that He is *"our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"* (Ps. 46:1).

David, who was well aware of hiding (as he often hid in caves and caverns) found that God was his best hiding place.

Psalms 17:8
Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

Psalms 27:5
For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

Hymn And Pill For Doomed Sub

The *British Press Association* reported this strange incident:

A British submarine lay disabled on the ocean floor. After two days, hope of raising her was abandoned. The crew on orders of the commanding officer began singing:

"Abide with me!
Fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens—
Lord, with me abide!

When other helpers
Fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless,
Oh, abide with me!"

The officer explained to the men that they did not have long to live. There was no hope of outside aid, he said, because the surface searchers did not know the vessel's position.

Sedative pills were distributed to the men to quiet their nerves. One sailor was affected more quickly than the others, and he swooned. He fell against a piece of equipment and set in motion the submarine's jammed surfacing mechanism.

The submarine went to the surface and made port safely.

—*Gospel Herald*—Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations

8. **<u>Teach</u> me** (v.10)

"Teach me" and **"lead me"** convey the same thought – that being that God would instruct David regarding His will and righteousness.

"To <u>do</u> Thy will" - Not merely to know God's will. David's desire was to obey the will of God.

John 7:17
If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Hebrews 13:20-21
Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Do we make it a daily prayer request, that we might learn to obey God's will?

There is a land of wickedness (it's all around us), but we need God to lead us to higher ground.

As the hymn writer put it:

"I'm pressing on the upward way,
new heights I'm gaining every day,
Will praying as I'm onward bound,
Lord, lead me on to higher ground."

9. <u>Revive</u> me (v.11)

"Quicken me" – Make me alive, revive me, restore me to spiritual life and spiritual prosperity.

The word "quicken" ("revive" occurs frequently in Psalm 119:25, 40, 50, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159 --- because it is God's <u>Word</u> that brings revival).

Do you want revival? Ask God for it.

David's appeal for revival is based on:

1) God's <u>name</u> (God's reputation)

2) God's <u>righteousness</u> (David's righteousness does not deserve it)

3) God's <u>mercy</u> (v. 12)

10. <u>Protect</u> me (v.12)

David's weapon against the forces out to get him was the Lord alone.

His appeal was, **"I am Thy servant" -** I belong to you, Lord. I'm yours.

If anyone knew God's protection, it was David.

God delivered him from the lions and bears (1 Sam. 17:36) and giants (Goliath – 1 Sam. 17), and would deliver him from the king Saul and every other enemy who tried to destroy him.

Psalms 23:4
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.