

A Survey of the Psalms - 1

Psalm 17

Praying Against Your Enemy

Focus Verse: Psalm 150:6

Lesson Verse: 1Peter 5:8

I. Introduction to the Book of Psalms

- A. The Book of Psalms in the Old Testament is God's answer to the headaches and heartaches of life. Without it the Bible would not be complete - as a matter of fact, next to the Gospels, Psalms is probably the most read part of the Bible because of the reality and the promises found there!
- B. There is such practical instruction to the believer here - written by David, and others in "real-time" (while right in the middle of life, with all its ups and downs). No airy-fairyland approach - just the constant development of confidence and grace!
- C. Psalms is written from the heart, FOR the heart. Every Christian benefits best from the Psalms, when it is read daily, and hungrily!

II. Background (Mt 5:43,44)

- A. When is a Christian allowed to fight? To resist an enemy?
- B. Jesus said, pray FOR your enemies
- C. He said to NOT resist
- D. An apparent contradiction!
- E. But there are some times when you must pray against your enemies – when you MUST resist!
 1. When they are looking to KILL you
 2. When they are not just smiting you on the cheek
 3. When they seek to destroy your life, and your marriage, and your children
 4. We are commanded to resist a murderer, a thief – the devil (John 10:10; James 4:7)

III. Lesson - Psalm 17 - Praying Against the Enemy

A. You had better be Right With God (17:1-4)

1. If you ever have to fight against an enemy, you must first spend time in prayer
 - a. Most people argue and fight flesh and blood (Eph 6:12)
 - b. Useless until you have spent time wrestling in prayer
2. Present to God YOUR side of the problem – like a lawyer
 - a. Pray - use your voice - put your feelings and concerns into words, and sentences, and requests
 - b. David is VERY passionate “my cry”
 - c. But have no hypocrisy – no feigned lips – no pretence – no hiding the truth
 - d. Be real, and honest, and hungry for God to do something - not a religious effort
3. Ask God to pass judgment in your favour
 - a. God’s throne is a throne of justice (Ps 9:4)
 - b. God sees all sides
4. Make sure you have already passed God’s test for right-ness
 - a. In the heart – not on the outside (1Sam 16:7)
 - b. In the hard times, like during the night
 - c. In your mouth! With no regrettable words. Make sure you have control of your mouth - not rash, or filthy - just an extension of the heart!
 - d. God is not going to help you
 - 1) When your mouth is wrong!
 - 2) When your heart is not right.
 - 3) When you yourself cannot pass any testing by God!
 - e. Make sure your life is lived according to God’s word!
 - 1) Are YOU obedient to God's word?
 - 2) Are you staying away from the paths of the destroyer (Ex 12:23; 1Cor 10:10)?
 - a) Stay away from bad attitudes
 - b) From anger (Eph 4:26,27) – flee from it like the plague!
 - c) From traps that the devil sets so that you have no power with God

5. So, before you ask God to DESTROY your enemies, allow God...
 - a. To prove you – what a challenge!
 - b. To visit you (show up) in your night times (not mountain-top times)
 - c. To allow Satan to put your faith on trial to find you true - as with Job, and in James 1
 - d. Because your enemy could just be hot water to reveal what is in your heart!

B. Ask First for Yourself (17:5-12)

1. Call upon God as your primary defence (Psalm 18:1-3)
2. Ask God, on your behalf:
 - a. To keep you from slipping – from falling into the devil’s traps
 - b. To show His lovingkindness on your behalf – grace (2Cor 12:7-10)
 - c. To save you by His right arm – Jesus (Isa 41:10; 53:1) – not spiritual salvation
 - d. To protect you like the apple of God’s eye, under the shadow of God’s wings (Mt 23:37)
 - 1) From the wicked – a common phrase in Psalms
 - 2) From deadly enemies
 - a) They surround
 - b) They act as if they already have you
 - 3) Our enemies are compared to lions (1Peter 5:8)
 - 4) Spiritual enemies (Eph 6:16)
3. This is a prayer so that the believer does not get overwhelmed with fear of the enemy! Satan loves fear! Fear destroys more lives than actual fighting!

C. Ask God to Destroy Your Enemies (17:13-14)

1. Now, pray against the attacks of your enemies
 - a. Against demonic attacks
 - b. Against attacks against your character
 - c. Against attempts to destroy your home and marriage
 - d. PRAY against your attacker!
 - e. Pray against drink, and cigarettes, and bad friends, and pubs and corrupt politicians
 - f. Pray that God destroys them!
 - g. Pray hard against envious thoughts, and covetousness
 - h. Pray against hatred and anger in your own heart and everything that is stirring it up!
 - i. Ask God to help you cast them down!
2. Ask God to ARISE – to DO something! Instead of YOU always trying to do something!
3. To disappoint your enemy – and Satan behind him!
4. To cast him down every time he attacks. Knock him off his pedestal (Cf Isa 14)
5. To deliver (save) your soul from the wicked
 - a. Remember that even the wicked are in God’s hand like a sword
 - 1) God uses your enemies as extensions of His hands
 - 2) Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:9)
 - 3) The only reason why God allows the devil to continue is because He intends on using him for good - greatest upset to the devil!!!
 - b. They are not able to do anything without God’s will!
 - c. They only have their “portion” in this life – you have eternal life!
 - d. Every good thing in their life is from God – and they don’t even realise it!
 - e. They leave everything when they die

D. Rest in God’s Care (17:15)

1. While an enemy plans and connives, and schemes to devour him:
 - a. David lies down in rest, and confidence in the strength of the Lord!
 - b. David trusts God – leaves the battle to Him (Ex 14:14)
 - c. David knows he wins no matter what – will see God’s face, and will be LIKE GOD (1John 3:2; Philp 3:21)!
2. So, David decides to stay right to the end! It will be worth it to stay right!
3. Because the wicked WILL die, and everything about them will die as well
4. But we have something to look forward to – a resurrection - seeing God's face (Job 19:26)!

IV. Conclusion – Concluding Questions

- A. So, WHEN is a Christian allowed to fight? To resist an enemy?
 - 1. When they are looking to KILL you
 - 2. When they are not just smiting you on the cheek
 - 3. When they seek to destroy your life, and your marriage, and your children
- B. What are the requirements to pray against your enemies?
 - 1. You had better be Right With God (17:1-4)
 - 2. Make sure you have already passed God's test for right-ness
- C. What areas should we make sure are right with God?
 - 1. In the heart – not on the outside (1Sam 16:7)
 - 2. In the hard times, like during the night
 - 3. In your mouth! With no regrettable words. Make sure you have control of your mouth - not rash, or filthy - just an extension of the heart!
- D. What could your enemy actually be in your life?
 - 1. Your enemy could just be hot water to reveal what is in your heart!
- E. How does God see a believer?
 - 1. As the apple of his eye
- F. What are a Christian's enemies compared to?
 - 1. Our enemies are compared to lions (1Peter 5:8)
- G. What does the devil hope defeats you before he has to wrestle with you?
 - 1. Fear! Satan loves fear! Fear destroys more lives than actual fighting!
- H. What can you do while an enemy plans and schemes to devour you?
 - 1. David lies down in rest, and confidence in the strength of the Lord!
 - 2. David trusts God – leaves the battle to Him (Ex 14:14)
 - 3. David knows he wins no matter what – will see God's face, and will be LIKE GOD (1John 3:2; Philp 1:21)!
- I. What does a Christian have to look forward to, no matter what? a resurrection - seeing God's face (Job 19:26)!