

# **Psalms: Teaching Christians How to Pray**

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from lessons by Mark Copeland and Brent Hunter)

## Introduction:

- A. Psalms was the inspired prayer and praise book of the Old Testament.
  - 1. Of the 238 direct quotations from the O.T. in the N.T., 116 of them are from the Book of Psalms.
  - 2. It was the second most often quoted book by Jesus from the O.T.
- B. It is a versatile book dealing with every emotion in the human spectrum.
  - 1. The Psalms are models of devotion, sources of doctrine, songs of comfort and hope, and prayers of righteous men
  - 2. The Psalms are men speaking to God about the things that God had already spoken to man. Prayer is pleading the promises of God.
  - 3. They show us how to effectively and acceptably pray to and praise God.
  - 4. They also can be used effectively to teach and minister to others.
- C. It is important that we learn to “speak God’s language” as we communicate with Him. We can do this by saturating our minds with scripture - Col. 3:16-17
  - 1. Cultivate the habit of pleading the promises of God - Psalm 143:1
  - 2. Use all Bible prayers as models of your own, not just the Psalms.
    - a. Consider Paul’s prayer in Col. 1:9-12

## **I. THE BIBLE USE OF PSALMS IN PRAYER**

- A. The example of Jesus
  - 1. “My God, why have You forsaken Me? - Matt. 27:46; Psalm 22:1
    - a. שָׁאַגְתִּי דְבָרִי עַל־אֵילַת לְמַנְצִים - ëliy ëliy lămäh ázav'Täniy
  - 2. “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” - Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:5
  - 3. While suffering in deep agony, He chose to use the Psalms to express His deepest feelings.
  - 4. These were the songs they sang weekly in worship; they would be so familiar with them that the words would come easily to them in crisis
- B. The example of the early church
  - 1. The prayer of the apostles - Acts 4:24-26; Psalm 146:6, 2:1-2
  - 2. Their reaction to persecution was to choose to use the Psalms to express their problems to God
- C. What these examples teach us
  - 1. That it is appropriate, helpful, and scriptural to use language from the Psalms in our prayers
  - 2. That in the Psalms are man's deepest emotions expressed in inspired terms; it is only natural that we would want to use them to express our own fears and feelings

## **II. USING THE PSALMS IN PRAYER TODAY**

- A. Godly prayer as taught by Jesus - Matt. 6:9-13
  - 1. Addressing the Father - vs 9
  - 2. Praying for God's purposes - vs 10
  - 3. Praying for our material needs - vs 11

4. Praying for our spiritual needs - vss 12-13
  5. Concluding praise - vs 13
- B. The Psalms use these forms; God was inspiring Psalmists to teach Israel and us how to pray - Rom. 15:4
1. Addressing the Father - Psalm 8:1, 90:1-2
  2. Praying for God's purposes - Psalm 57:11, 72:18-19
  3. Petitioning for material needs - Psalm 144:12-15
  4. Appealing for spiritual needs - Psalm 51:1-2, 71:1-3
  5. Offering praise - Psalm 36:5-9
- C. The Psalms use these forms to:
1. Edify us about the Father
  2. Enable and enhance our prayers to Him
  3. To comfort us with the knowledge that we have expressed our needs in the best and most Biblical manner possible, assured that if we prayed from faith, our Father has heard our heart's outcry

### **III. WRESTLING WITH DOUBTS AND FEARS**

- A. It is acceptable to express doubts and fears to God.
1. How can it be possible in a world over which a wise and just God rules, that the wicked should prosper and the righteous suffer?
  2. The wicked only prosper short-term; the righteous will prosper eternally
  3. Psalm 37:1-6, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14
- B. God's longsuffering is not indifference - Psalm 73:16-26, 17, 22, 25, 26
- C. The wicked will be suddenly overthrown while the righteous will live forever enjoying fellowship with God.
1. The fleeting pleasures of proud scoffers pale into insignificance before everlasting fellowship with God - Psalm 139:19-24, 1, 2, 9, 20, 23

### **IV. CLIMBING OUT OF THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR**

- A. After battling through doubts, we emerge with renewed faith and hope
1. "If out of the depths we cry, we shall cry ourselves out of the depths" (Alexander Maclaren)
- B. Psalm 88 is unique in that it is sad and plaintive from beginning to end.
1. It is said to be the darkest prayer in the Bible. No ray of hope appears. Psalmist cries out for deliverance from bodily weakness and loneliness
  2. It is a lifelong process, not an instant cure - Ps. 90:12-17, 91:1-4 92:1-2
- C. Out of the depths of persecution and slander - Psalm 31:19-20, 33, 34, 35
- D. Out of the depths of disaster and defeat - Psalm 60:9-12, 74, 79, 89
1. The Psalms address the trial of the exile and captivity (586-7 BC).
  2. When we suffer from calamities, whether from a church division or a monetary reversal, Psalms can help. Psalm 60 closes with confidence