

Psalm 17

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[0 : 0 0] Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 17. It is on page 550. If you're in a church Bible, if you're in your own Bible, somewhere near the middle. Psalm 17. I'm going to read for us and then I'm going to hand over to Ray who's going to preach for us.

Psalm 17, a prayer of David. Hear me, Lord. My plea is just. Listen to my cry. Hear my prayer. It does not rise from deceitful lips. Let my vindication come from you. May your eyes see what is right.

Though you probe my heart, though you examine me at night and test me, you will find that I have planned no evil. My mouth has not transgressed.

Though people try to bribe me, I have kept myself from the ways of the violent through what your lips have commanded. My steps have held to your paths. My feet have not stumbled. I call on you, my God, for you will answer me. Turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

Show me the wonders of your great love. You who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings.

[1 : 3 4] From the wicked who are out to destroy me, from my mortal enemies who surround me. They close up their callous hearts and their mouths speak with arrogance. They have tracked me down. They now surround me.

With eyes alert to throw me to the ground, they are like a lion hungry for prey, like a fierce lion crouching in cover. Rise up, Lord. Confront them. Bring them down with your sword. Rescue me from the wicked.

By your hand, save me from such people, Lord, from those of this world whose reward is in this life. May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies.

May their children gorge themselves on it, and may they be leftovers for their little ones. As for me, I shall be vindicated and shall see your face.

When I awake, I shall be satisfied with seeing your likeness. Amen. Ray. Thanks, Steve. Good evening, everyone.

[2 : 4 6] Let's come to the Lord, shall we, and ask for his help as we look at it together. Father, thank you that we heard the great boasts of your word this morning, how good it is for us.

We pray that that will be our experience tonight. We pray that your Holy Spirit will speak words from your word to us to change our lives.

Take away distractions, those things that would hinder your word tonight, and speak to us, please, Father. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Right, well, you saw there Psalm 17, right from the very top, it was a prayer of David.

And it's a plea of David to God for vindication from his enemies. That's the general kind of theme of what's going on there. But interestingly, if you notice going through, not a lot of time is spent on David's problem.

We're not told a lot about his problem. It's just three verses there in verses 10 to 12. The majority of the psalm is dealing with David's heart responses, as in fact most of the psalms are, of course.

[4 : 02] We see here a revelation of David's heart, his confidence and his hope in God, and what his heart's desires were. So, I'm planning to look at this in three sections, and we're going to look, first of all, verses 1 to 5, at his heart cry.

What was the cry of his heart? Verses 6 to 12, what was the confidence of his heart? And verses 13 to 15, the last few verses there, what his heart's desire was.

So, his heart cry, first of all, verses 1 to 5. If you keep your Bibles open, we won't be reading big chunks of it, so you'll need to follow yourselves there.

His heart cry, verses 1 to 5, seen in two elements. First of all, hear my prayer. That's his plea. Lord, hear my prayer. And in case you don't get it, in the first verse, he says that three times.

Can you see that there? Hear me, Lord. Listen to my cry. Hear my prayer. And then in verse 6, twice again, I call on you and turn your ear to me and hear.

[5 : 16] Why is this? Why does he labor this? Well, it's because it's his heart cry. He's not making this up. He's not thinking, well, how many times should I say this?

How many times should I repeat it? He is desperate to tell God of his need. But it also is showing his complete confidence and dependence on God.

If you're asking God time and time again to save you from the situation, you must have some confidence that he's going to help you. He's going to save you. So that's the first thing about his heart cry.

The second thing, which is a little stranger, is his claim to innocence there in verses 3 to 5. Why should God hear David? Well, if you ask him the question, he will say, because I'm innocent.

His prayer doesn't rise from deceit, he says in verse 1. And then in verse 3, he talks about three things. God probing him, examining him, and testing him.

[6 : 16] All the same kind of thing. So God has been dealing with him, has been searching his heart. And it's after this, he says that he is innocent.

The original wording for that verse, it's all in the past tense. You have tried me in the night. You have visited me. My heart you have tested.

So God has done this already. And still David says he's innocent. Verse 3, he's claiming his heart is right. Verses 4 and 5, he's claiming his actions are right.

Now with what we know of the gospel, and with what we know of our hearts, does this seem a bit strange to you? It certainly did to me as I was reading it. How can a man claim innocence before God?

What we have to take into account here is I don't think he is claiming sinlessness.

[7 : 21] Okay? We see from other Psalms, particularly Psalm 51, but from other Psalms, David realises that he is guilty. He realises that he's not sinless.

Okay? So he's not saying that. It must be that in this particular situation, where his enemies are after him, trying to kill him, that he's innocent of whatever their accusations are.

That's his innocence. So in trying to apply these verses to ourselves, we need to be quite careful. Why should God hear your prayer?

Why should God hear my prayer? Not because our behaviour is right or proves us innocent, but not because we mean well, we have a good heart, but because as we're seeing right before us, God in Jesus declares us innocent.

That is, when Christ took the anger of God on our sin, he not only forgave us but he also transferred god's righteousness sorry christ's righteousness to us we're so we're we're doubly clean as it were so when god looks at us he sees not our sinfulness but jesus's righteousness so what do you think can god now hear our prayer of course he can hear our prayer and he loves to hear our prayer because of the goodness of jesus added to that as if that's not enough romans 8 34 tells us that christ is now at the right hand of god interceding for us so not only has he cleaned you not only has he given you his righteousness but he's also interceding for you he stands before the father and the father can see he's died in our place so of course god is going to answer our prayer so the first five verses we've looked at showed david's heart cry god hear me and this should be our heart cry as well we have the access to god how are we using that access to god how are we praying to god are we like david fervent in prayer are we saying lord only you can sort this out i need you more than anything else more than anyone else so that's david's heart cry david's heart confidence we see in verses 6 to 12 what is this confidence well god david is appealing to god on the basis of god's love verse 7 david says show me the wonders of your great love you who save by your right hand so david is saying two things here isn't he god is able to save god's right hand showing his strength his power he's able to save but he's also willing to save because of his great love then he drives it home in verse 8 with two wonderful illustrations i told you last time i spoke that i'm rubbish at illustrations so the lord's given me two illustrations here right from the pages of scripture the first one he says is keep me as the apple of your eye isn't that beautiful have you heard that expression that somebody is the apple of someone's eye it's a phrase used to describe how precious someone is or something is and it is in fact used in the old testament in a two or three places and it's in in two of those places it describes israel as precious to god israel is the apple of god's eye isn't that amazing and his prayer is not uh lord i know it messed up make me the apple of your eye he doesn't say that he says keep me as the apple of your eye he's already the apple of god's eye he knows that and then after that he says hide me in the shadow of your wings so straight after that hide me in the shadow of your wings now the picture here i don't know what conjures up in your mind when you think of that the first thing i thought of was an eagle all right you americans might appreciate appreciate this the the american eagle or any of these huge birds with a great wingspan and i picture

[12:18] this eagle going through the desert with his arms stretched out there casting a big shadow and anyone who happens to be fortunate fortunate enough to be under the shadow of that gets protection from the blazing sun that was the image it came to my mind but perhaps if you're more spiritual than i am and you're thinking of scripture you might think of what jesus said in luke 13 when he said how often have i longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings so here we have two illustrations that show us that we are precious to god and that we are safe and protected by god god is here showing us as david first said the wonders of his great love so this should encourage us in our prayers not only will god hear us because of jesus but god loves to hear his people and he has power to save them so we've now seen two things david's uh david's heart cry his confidence in god and now lastly we look at uh verses 13 to 15 what was his heart's desire and this is the last few verses there verses 13 to 15 david there in verses 9 to 15 is describing his enemies can you see that and as i say doesn't spend a lot of time dwelling on that but he does call on god to confront his enemies and to deliver him in verse 13 at the beginning of the psalm david asked god to vindicate him and now here at the end of the psalm verse 15 we're seeing that he's saying that god will vindicate him now notice the tense here it's not that he has been vindicated but he knows he will be vindicated and this plays him very much to what he's saying in in these verses here when he's describing the end of verse 14 his enemies and then he's describing his heart in verse 15 he's here you see drawing a parallel or probably not a parallel it's a contradiction between his heart and his enemies heart his priorities and his enemies priorities so he says there in um the end of verse 14 about his enemies that they're those of this world whose reward is in this life in other words they live for themselves and for what they can get now that so are the enemies of david so are the enemies of god so were we before we knew the lord we were enemies of god we lived for what we could get at the time david describes his heart in verse 15 he says this as for me i will be vindicated and will see your face when i awake i will be satisfied with seeing your likeness now the context here suggests that when i awake is talking about when he awakes from the sleep of death that's what we read here in this in this context so he may not even get his vindication that he's asking for this side of death but he knows it will come he will get it one way or the other what is it what is his reward what is his vindication it's seeing god's face and when you consider the trouble he's going through his enemies are out to get

him um his his enemies are surrounding him they've in they've got him trapped his concern is not primarily for deliverance although he wants that but it's that he was going to rejoice when he sees his face and he's going to be satisfied if we're seeing god's likeness this is true for us as believers we can read these promises of the old testament for ourselves um but it's explicitly we're told the same thing in one john chapter three verse two when it's this it says this but we know that when christ appears we shall be like him for we will see him as he is that's your vindication that's your reward that's your promise from god when christ appears we shall be like him we shall see him as he is and like david we will be satisfied when we see him and when we are like him then we'll have a resurrection body our sinful self will finally be done away with our problems will be over when i was mulling over this this morning i'm not going to do this but you can do this exercise at home i was thinking of what won't there be in heaven now you can think think yourself there so this is why we should be so excited what won't be there and what will be there and for david the greatest thing was the lord is going to be there he will see the lord's face so the unspoken question as we get to the end of psalm 17 i think has got to be this is christ enough for us here and now are we totally satisfied with him is christ enough for us what does it mean to be satisfied with christ well it's that we don't have to have other things other loves other pleasures christ is enough um take this illustration all right if you've been through this yourself you will know it well if you've heard other people go through this through this you'll know it well too and it's the marriage vows all right this is the marriage vows if you are not familiar with it i take you to be my wife or my husband to have and to hold from this day forward for better for worse for richer for poorer in sickness and in health to love and to cherish till death do us part so the couple standing there at the front of the church giving their life to each other and they're promising to be faithful to each other not just to be faithful to each other in a vague sense but to keep themselves to the for each other to the exclusion of all others so that is a wedding is a beautiful picture of the church and christ have we given ourselves to the exclusion to christ so that although we may have other loves we may have a wife a husband we may have our children other things in in life that we love our prime love is jesus christ is christ alone enough for you we sung song we've learned recently and uh we're going to sing it it's if christ is mine and the last verse says this though all i have is stripped away still i rejoice for christ remains and when he comes he'll lift me high for all of christ is all of mine what a wonderful song a wonderful verse

just before we stop and we go into communion i think it's very important that we look at our lord jesus and how he how we see him in this song how did jesus read this song i was very interested to hear from a preacher that steve actually knows which i was very very i'm surprised i know you're moving big circles but i didn't know it was this big all right this guy's written a book named christopher ash for those of you that may be studying scriptures and he speaks at length on christ in the psalms all right and it's a great it's a great um great thing to follow up if you if you can do that and what he says is this is that the psalms was jesus's song book so jesus was very familiar with this psalm and for all of the other psalms that was his prayer book that was his his song book he would hear it in the synagogue he would memorize it and you can see as you read through the psalms it's all about the heart the heart response to god and how did how did jesus's heart response to his father fit him with what what is said in the psalms this is i haven't got the answer to it i haven't got the answer to it but it's just fascinating to think about what i can see from this psalm i'll share with you we see here that david reflects jesus but jesus is the greater david we see that david could claim innocence in his actions on a particular matter but our lord jesus could claim perfect purity that's how christ read this psalm he had perfect purity he was holy as his father was holy david experienced in verses 9 to 12 there the wrath of his enemies he he had people surrounding him out to destroy him jesus experienced this very same thing on the cross for us his enemies were out to destroy him as we read in verse 9 david's experience verse 9 they surrounded david they surrounded jesus around the cross of course they closed up their callous hearts and spoke with arrogance what can be more arrogance than to say to the son of god who is dying in their place come down from the cross you saved others so save yourself they were indeed as verse 12 says like a lion hungry for for prey yeah unlike david his prayer was not for rescue or for vindication but what did he say father forgive them his prayer for us jesus was of course the apple of his father's eye and even so his desire was not to be saved from his enemies but to submit to his father that he may ransom his people lastly he lived and died not for this short life on earth as david's enemies did but his for his father's glory and to win souls to his eternal kingdom so that this is true of us when we look forward to the celestial city revelation 22 verse 4 they will see his face the lord will be their light we were once his enemies now forgiven bought into his kingdom and we have a chance to reflect now of his wonderful love for us

around the table so i pray that god will help us all to do that so i pray that god will be our hope for us all to do that Thank you.