A MORNING PRAYER

This Psalm carries the title, To the Chief Musician, with flutes. A Psalm of David. It shows David coming to the LORD in the morning and receiving the strength and joy he needs to make it through the day against many adversaries.

A. Approaching God in the morning.

1. (Psa 5:1-3) David approaches God.

Give ear to my words, O LORD,

Consider my meditation.

Give heed to the voice of my cry,

My King and my God,

For to You I will pray.

My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD;

In the morning I will direct it to You,

And I will look up.

a. Give ear … consider … give heed: David longs for an audience with God. Using the Hebrew method of parallelism he repeats the same idea three times: "LORD, please listen to me."

b. For to You I will pray: David prayed to God. This may sound elementary, but it is an essential aspect of prayer. Often we come to prayer so full of our request or our feelings that we never consciously focus on God and sense His presence. David was a great man of prayer because His prayer time was focused on God.

i. "Very much of so-called prayer, both public and private, is not unto God. In order that a prayer should be really unto God, there must be a definite and conscious approach to God when we pray; we must have a definite and vivid realization that God is bending over us and listening as we pray." (Torrey)

c. My voice You shall hear in the morning: David made it a point to pray in the morning. He did this because he wanted to honor God at the beginning of his day, and set the tone for an entire day dedicated unto God.

David gives us what to do before and after prayer. Before we pray, we should direct our prayer. After we pray, we look up with expectancy to heaven, really believing that God will answer.

1. The idea behind direct is not "to aim" but "to order, to arrange." "It is the word that is used for the laying in order of the wood and pieces of the victim upon the altar. It means just this: 'I will arrange my prayer before thee;' I will lay it out upon the altar in the morning, just as the priest lays out the morning sacrifice."

iii. "Do we not miss very much of the sweetness and efficacy of prayer by a want of careful meditation before it, and of hopeful expectation after it? Let holy preparation link hands with patient expectation, and we shall have far larger answers to our prayers."

Verse 2. *"The voice of my cry."* sometimes we cannot put our prayers into words: they are nothing but a *cry:* but the Lord can comprehend the meaning, for he hears a voice in our cry.

*"For unto thee will I pray."* Here David expresses his declaration that he will seek to God, and to God alone. God is to be the only "Unto thee *will* I pray." He makes a resolution, that as long as he lived he would pray. He would never cease to supplicate, even though the answer should not come.

object of worship: the only resource of our soul in times of need.

*"In the morning."*  "I will arrange my prayer before thee;" I will lay it out upon the altar in the morning, just as the priest lays out the morning sacrifice.

2. (Psa 5:4-8) A contrast between the wicked man and the godly man.

For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,

Nor shall evil dwell with You.

The boastful shall not stand in Your sight;

You hate all workers of iniquity.

You shall destroy those who speak falsehood;

The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy;

In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.

Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies;

Make Your way straight before my face.

a. You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness: David meditates on the righteous character of God. Our actions matter before a God who hates all workers of iniquity.

i. As David drew closer to God he became more aware of God's holiness and man's sinfulness. "This is a good way to measure how well you are praying and whether, as you pray, you are drawing close to God or are merely mouthing words. If you are drawing close to God, you will become increasingly sensitive to sin, which is inevitable since the God you are approaching is a holy God." (Boice)

b. I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy: This is David's confidence. It isn't that he is righteous and all others are sinners; his ground of confidence is the mercy of God.

c. In fear of You I will worship: David's worship isn't based on his feelings, but on his reverence for a righteous, merciful God.

d. Make Your way straight before my face: This reflects David's constant reliance on God. He needs God to lead him and to make the way straight. David's contrast between the wicked and the godly is humble, and he knows it is only God's power and work in him that can keep him from the way of the wicked.

B. Description and destiny.

1. (Psa 5:9-10) The description and destiny of the wicked.

For there is no faithfulness in their mouth;

Their inward part is destruction;

Their throat is an open tomb;

They flatter with their tongue.

Pronounce them guilty, O God!

Let them fall by their own counsels;

Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions,

For they have rebelled against You.

a. There is no faithfulness in their mouth: David focuses on what the wicked say as evidence of their wickedness. David knew what Jesus said later in Matthew 12:34: Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Our righteousness or wickedness will sooner or later show up in our speech.

i. David felt the sting of wicked words and lies against him. Yet this prayer shows something good brought out of the attacks from the enemy. "Thus a man's enemies, while they oblige him to pray more fervently, and to watch more narrowly over his conduct, oftentimes become his best friends." (Horne)

b. They flatter with their tongue: "Always beware of people who flatter you, and especially when they tell you that they do not flatter you, and that they know you cannot endure flattery, for you are then being most fulsomely flattered, so be on your guard against the tongue of the flatterer." (Spurgeon)

c. Let them fall by their own counsels: David prays that the wicked will come to their deserved end. As rebels against God, they deserve the "guilty" sentence.

2. (Psa 5:11-12) The description and destiny of the righteous.

But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;

Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;

Let those also who love Your name

Be joyful in You.

For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous;

With favor You will surround him as with a shield.

a. Let all those rejoice who put their trust in You: The righteous aren't made righteous by their words. The righteousness are those who trust the LORD and love His name. But their righteousness is evident in their words. They rejoice, they shout for joy, and they are joyful in the LORD.

i. "A touch of enthusiasm would be the salvation of many a man's religion. Some Christians are good enough people: they are like wax candles, but they are not lighted. Oh, for a touch of flame! Then would they scatter light, and thus become of service to their families. 'Let them shout for joy.' Why not? Let not orderly folks object. One said to me the other day, 'When I hear you preach I feel as if I must have a shout!' My friend, shout if you feel forced to do so. (Here a hearer cried, 'Glory!') Our brother cries, 'Glory!' and I say so too. 'Glory!' The shouting need not always be done in a public service, or it might hinder devout hearing; but there are times and places where a glorious outburst of enthusiastic joy would quicken life in all around. The ungodly are not half so restrained in their blasphemy as we are in our praise." (Spurgeon)

b. But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You: This is a permit, a precept, a prayer, and a promise.

i. You have permission for joy. "You have here a ticket to the banquets of joy. You may be as happy as ever you like. You have divine permission to shout for joy." (Spurgeon)

ii. You have a precept, a command for joy: "Come, ye mournful ones, be glad. Ye discontented grumblers, come out of that dog-hole! Enter the palace of the King! Quit your dunghills; ascend your thrones." (Spurgeon)

iii. You should pray for joy, both in yourself and others - especially servants of the LORD. "If you lose your joy in your religion, you will be a poor worker: you cannot bear strong testimony, you cannot bear stern trial, you cannot lead a powerful life. In proportion as you maintain your joy, you will be strong in the Lord, and for the Lord." (Spurgeon)

iv. You have a promise for joy: "God promises joy and gladness to believers. Light is sown for them: the Lord will turn their night into day." (Spurgeon)

c. You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him: This is the greatest blessing of all - the favor of God. Knowing that God looks on us with favor and pleasure is the greatest knowledge in the world. This is our standing in grace.

i. A shield does not protect any one area of the body. It is large and mobile enough to cover any and every area of the body. It is armor over armor. This is how fully the favor of God, our standing in grace, protects us.

ii. When Martin Luther was on his way to face a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church to answer for what they said were his heretical teachings, one of the Cardinal's servants taunted him saying, "Where will you find shelter if your patron, the Elector of Saxony, should desert you?" Luther answered, "Under the shelter of heaven."