

Last week, in Psalm 16, we considered how Christians ought to be single-minded, focused upon God in all things. Nowhere is this more true than when we are embroiled in conflict, and this is what we see in Psalm 17: what the prayer looks like of a God-minded man who is embroiled in conflict.

1. **We trust in the justice of the Lord, vv1-5**
2. **We hope in the love of the Lord, vv6-8**
3. **We wait for the action of the Lord, vv9-14**
4. **We long for the joy of the Lord, v15**

1. We trust in the justice of the Lord. vv1-2 imply that at times (most of the time?) the just case will not win out on earth; the righteous are not always vindicated in time. But this must not dismay us, for God is yet judge over all, and He will vindicate the right in the end. This leads to a series of concerns for the believer that never cross the mind of the unrighteous:

a. that our hearts would be right and our consciences clear before God (3a-b); I don't think this is a claim to be sinless as much as a declaration of a clear conscience.

b. that we would keep from sinning with our mouths (3c), and therefore in any way at all... how often do you hear someone in conflict say, "what I'm most worried about in this situation is that I might end up sinning"?

c. that we wouldn't cause unnecessary harm to our enemies (4b); this is a sticky wicket—what is 'unnecessary' harm?—and the only way we can do it is by the Scriptures (4a)

d. that we wouldn't get distracted from a life of obedience and service to God by the difficulty of our situation (5)

2. We hope in the love of the Lord. Why is David sure God will hear and answer (6)? Because God's covenant love is both strong/determined (7) and intimate/tender (8)

3. We wait for the action of the Lord. Believers don't try to "win," so much as they try to do right. For us, doing right is in itself winning, and we trust God to do the ultimate winning for us. vv9-12 are the exact opposite of the believer: desiring to do harm, having a wrong/hard/closed heart, sinning with the mouth, and being undistracted from doing evil (correspond these to a-d in point 1 above). The astonishing thing in v14 is that David recognizes that the vengeance of v13 may never see the light of day in this world. (It's so difficult that some even monkey with v14 to make it about the righteous). But David's cry for the Lord's sword doesn't mind if the evil ones get everything in this world!!

4. We long for the joy of the Lord. That's because for the believer, God all by Himself is worth more than all of the earthly blessings in the world. Even children and abundance are nothing compared to beholding the face of God, being satisfied in feasting our eyes upon him. v15 is about resurrection.

Weekly Quote on Prayer

“...that attitude of spirit which befits our approach to God [is...]

In the first place, it is necessary that we should realize the presence of God. He who fills earth and heaven 'is,' in a singular and impressive sense, in the secret place [...]

Again, He who 'is' in the secret place 'seeth' in secret, and honest dealing becomes us when we kneel in His pure presence.

In our address to God we like to speak of Him as we think we ought to speak, and there are times when our words far outrun our feelings. But it is best that we should be perfectly frank before Him [... this section is fantastic but selected quotes couldn't do justice here...]

Once more, it is necessary that when we draw near to God we should come in faith [...] where God is, no miracle is impossible [...] but this God who is ours is our Father. Our Lord confers on us His own rights and privileges. He puts into our hand the master-key, which unlocks all the doors of the treasury of God”¹

¹ D. M. McIntyre, *The Hidden Life of Prayer* (Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1971), 39-47.

Harvest Community Church

at Prayer

the midweek meeting, 17 SEP 2008

Devotional

Psalm 17

Singing

Psalm 17

PRAYER

Doxology

Psalm 17 (ESV)

⁰A prayer of David.

¹Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry!
Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit!

²From your presence let my vindication come!
Let your eyes behold the right!

³You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night,
you have tested me, and you will find nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

⁴With regard to the works of man, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.

⁵My steps have held fast to your paths;
my feet have not slipped.

⁶I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me; hear my words.

⁷Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O Savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

⁸Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,
⁹from the wicked who do me violence,
my deadly enemies who surround me.

¹⁰They close their hearts to pity;
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.

¹¹They have now surrounded our steps;
they set their eyes to cast us to the ground.

¹²He is like a lion eager to tear,
as a young lion lurking in ambush.

¹³Arise, O LORD! Confront him, subdue him!
Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword,

¹⁴from men by your hand, O LORD,
from men of the world whose portion is in this life.
You fill their womb with treasure;
they are satisfied with children,
and they leave their abundance to their infants.

¹⁵As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;
when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

Psalm 17



¹LORD, hear my righteous plea and listen to my cry;
It does not rise deceitfully or come from lips that lie.

²Declare me innocent and vindicate my name;
LORD, may your eye see what is right and free me from all blame

³Though you examine me and probe my heart and mind,
And though you test me in the night, yet nothing you will find.

I said, "I will not sin in anything I say."

⁴From those who practice violence I have kept far away.

From every evil path by your word I'm preserved.

⁵My feet have held to all your ways; from them I have not swerved.

⁶I call on you, O God, for you will answer me;
O turn your ear towards my prayer and hear my earnest plea.

⁷Display your steadfast love and save with your right hand
All those who flee for help to you when foes against them stand.

⁸In shadow of your wings hide me in times of strife;
And as the apple of your eye preserve and guard my life.

⁹Hide me from ruthless foes who follow wicked ways,
From those who circle me about and seek to end my days.

¹⁰They close their callous hearts; they speak with swelling pride.

¹¹They dog my steps; my enemies are found on every side.

They fix their eyes on me to cast me to the ground.

¹²Like hungry lions stalking prey, they crouch without a sound.

¹³Arise, confront my foes, and bring them down, O LORD;
Deliver me from wicked hands and free me by your sword.

¹⁴Save me by your right hand from all such people, LORD,
From mortal men who in this life will have their sole reward.

You fill them with good things; their sons are satisfied.
They leave their children all the wealth which they have set aside.

¹⁵But I in righteousness your face will surely see;
And with your likeness, when I wake, I satisfied will be.

Prayer Requests

- Tonight's session meeting
- Harvest's worship, evangelism, discipleship
- Elders, Sunday School teachers, parents
- The church around the world, the PCA, our Presbytery, our children, our visitors, our community, our country, the world.
- National morality, elections, mainline churches, seminaries
- Celestin's work and family
- MTW, SAT-7, MERF, ITEM, Gideons, and other world mission works
- The persecuted church and the church in troubled areas: Zimbabwe, Georgia, Israel, Iran, Russia, Congo, India, China, North Korea, etc.
- Flood and hurricane survivors in the U.S.
- Kade Krosschell—asthma, ulcer, knee tissue damage
- Jonathan Vander Plaats – will have some leave here soon, assigned to Norfolk, VA
- Caleb and Joel De Groot – in Iraq, coming home soon
- Peter De Groot in academy, Jacob to start basic in April
- Matthew Laverman and Maggie Ehlert's upcoming wedding
- Hal & Sara's new life in Fla; Hal looking for a teaching job
- Erin Alsum – God's powerful sustaining of her in every way in a difficult teaching situation in Mexico
- Ron De Groot – physical, spiritual healing
- The Rowenhorst Family—Randy's Cancer
- Brian and Kim Vander Plaats – pregnancy, due Nov 6
- Gary Vander Plaats's dissertation

If you have something for which the church might ought to pray, and it doesn't appear here, please notify an elder.