

God's Righteousness, Protection and Discipline

Psalms 5 & 6

Psalm 5

Psalm 5 – *“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. 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.

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. 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.”

Background Notes for Psalm 5

Psalm 5 is a morning prayer, in which David rejoiced in God's righteousness and protection in the midst of enemy opposition. We don't know the occasion of this psalm, but it seems that the opposition facing David was from within the kingdom rather than from the surrounding enemy army of another nation. What the opposition was saying is typical of internal opposition: *“For there is no faithfulness [uprightness] in their mouth; their inward part is destruction; their throat is an open tomb; they flatter with their tongue”* (v9).

The same is true today. Internal opposition to the work of the Lord is usually subtle. It is accomplished “undercover,” through unreliable words (such as gossip), or subtle flattery that is designed to manipulate others.

What do you do if you find yourself in a situation like this? The internal opposition may be a family problem, or a church or ministry problem. Answer: **Turn to the Lord in prayer**, as David did: *“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”* (v1-2).

David did not turn to secular sources for help - he looked to the Lord. Verse 3 indicates that David brought his problems before the Lord every morning, and then **waited for God's answer**. We, too, should pray and bring our problems before the Lord every day. Why unload your problems on everyone else when you can go directly to the Lord?

Doctrinal Point for Psalm 5

Godly believers pray in line with the Word of God.

David prayed on the basis of God's righteous standards - standards that are clearly declared in God's Word (v4-6). The Lord hates wickedness, and pride, and falsehood, and deceit, and (obviously) the sin of murder.

David wanted his life, as well as his prayers, to line up with God's Word (v7-8). Because of God's abundant loving-kindness and His steadfast covenanted love, David knew he could come reverently to God's House, and ask for God's righteous guidance.

What about verse 10? *"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."* Is praying for God's judgment to fall on the opposition in line with the Word of God? Yes! Notice that David wasn't asking God to judge those who opposed him because they had been mean to him personally. No – he prayed for judgment on the opposition because they had rebelled against the Lord. David wanted God to be vindicated. He wanted God's righteous standards to be upheld.

"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" (v11-12). In these verses David prayed that those who love and trust the Lord, and those who seek righteousness, would experience the joy, blessing and protection of the Lord. He was praying in line with God's Word, because that's exactly what God's Word teaches. Godly believers pray in line with the Word of God.

Practical Application for Psalm 5

Pray every morning!

That's what David did! *"In the morning, O LORD, You hear my voice. In the morning I lay my requests before You, and wait expectantly."* (v3).

Psalm 5 is not teaching that you must have your daily time with the Lord in the morning! No. The Bible does not teach "no Bible, no breakfast"! We all have different schedules and workloads. The important thing is to spend time each day

with the Lord, praying and reading His Word. But if someone asks me, “Should I pray in the morning, or afternoon, or evening?” - what do you think I tell them? Of course I say, “Pray all three times - and more!” In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 the apostle Paul exhorts us to pray continually!

Your prayers don't have to be long or “official-sounding” prayers. Just talk to the Lord! And what better time than morning, to bring the day's problems and responsibilities to the Lord and ask for His help? Pray every morning!

Psalm 6

Psalm 6 - “O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled. O Lord—how long? Return, O Lord, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake! For in death there is no remembrance of You. In the grave who will give You thanks? I am weary with my groaning. All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears. My eye wastes away because of grief. It grows old because of all my enemies. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping.

The Lord has heard my supplication. The Lord will receive my prayer. Let all my enemies be greatly troubled. Let them turn back and suddenly be ashamed.”

Background Notes for Psalm 6

Psalm 6 is a psalm of David, in which he acknowledges God's righteous discipline. Like Psalm 5, Psalm 6 is an “individual lament” psalm. And like Psalm 5, Psalm 6 was put to music for use in worship, as we see in the titles. Once again, we don't know the exact occasion for Psalm 6, but it appears that David was experiencing some kind of serious illness or injury: *“O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak. O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony” (v1-2).*

David may have been referring to an injury received in battle, because he mentions his “enemies” (v10). In any case, David recognized that the Lord had allowed this serious physical situation as discipline in his life as king. We don't know what David had done wrong on this particular occasion, but many students of Scripture consider this psalm to be the first of David's penitential psalms.

Doctrinal Point for Psalm 6

Godly believers acknowledge the discipline of God.

I think we can safely assume that David had confessed his sin. At the beginning of verse 3 he said, *“My soul is greatly*

troubled,” and in verses 8-9 he said, “... *the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping. The LORD has heard my supplication. The LORD will receive my prayer.*” It’s unlikely that David would have had such a godly attitude in prayer - and would have received an answer from the Lord - if he hadn’t confessed his sin.

In his prayer of repentance and confession, David based his hope of restoration on two things: God’s mercy and loving kindness, and God’s steadfast, loyal love. “*Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies’ sake*” (v4).

“*Among the dead, no one proclaims Your name; who praises You from the grave?*” (v5). In other words: “If I die from this life-threatening illness, I won’t be able to praise You from the grave!” David acknowledged that God was disciplining him for his sin. When God disciplines us, do we recognize that it’s because of sin in our lives? This does not mean, by the way, that every illness or injury is a form of God’s discipline. No, the Bible certainly does not teach that idea! Sometimes our sicknesses or our injuries are the result of our own carelessness. However, if we’re ever seriously ill, it wouldn’t hurt to examine our hearts before the Lord, because He can use illness or injury to turn us back to Him. The important point here is that godly believers acknowledge the discipline of God.

Practical Application for Psalm 6

Let the Lord “turn the tables”!

In verse 10, David prayed confidently that God would “turn the tables” on the enemies who had opposed him and caused his injury. He prayed that the enemies would be turned around, and covered with shame and anguish. But David left it all in the Lord’s hands!

God has ways of turning situations around – then, and today. In fact, He will “turn the tables” for the nation of Israel, and that is part of the prophetic implications of this psalm. When the nation of Israel, like David, acknowledges its sin, and acknowledges that God has disciplined the nation righteously through the opposition of foreign nations, the tables will be turned! Anti-Semitic nations will suddenly be overwhelmed with shame and greatly anguish when they undergo the judgment of God.

When we face opposition from unrighteous people, we don’t need to take matters into our own hands. Bring the problem to the Lord – and let the Lord “turn the tables”!