

"As for Me"

Psalm 17

All we know about this psalm is that it is entitled, "A Prayer of David." Even though it is in the book of songs for Israel, this one may not have been sung as often as others that were specifically given to be sung. This one most likely was a liturgical prayer used in some form of public worship at the temple, and considering the content of the psalm, it is safe to say that it was used in times of concern for safety from an enemy.

That said, this psalm is one of great comfort to us today, knowing that God is there to help us in whatever situation we find ourselves.

I. GOD'S WORD KEEPS US SANCTIFIED – VS. 1-5

THE PSALMIST'S DEFENSE

By "sanctified," I mean that God's Word keeps us holy, set apart, and walking right with Him.

We find the emphasis for this point in verse four in the phrase, "by the word of thy lips I have kept..."

A. Found in our prayers - vs. 1

1. Prayers coming from a righteous life - "Hear the right, O LORD."
2. Prayers coming from a broken and contrite heart - "attend unto my cry."

Psalm 34:18

¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 51:17

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

3. Prayers of honesty – “give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.”

- a) The word for “feigned” (מְרֵמָה) is one that signifies an intentional misleading someone either through distorting the truth or withholding the truth. God would have known David’s heart and would have known if David was trying to be deceitful, so that’s not the point of him mentioning this. The point seems to be that he was so burdened in this prayer that he wanted to reassure himself that he was being honest and unhypocritical.
- b) The use of the word “lips” (שִׁפָּה) here points to the prayer being prayed out loud. It indicates deep emotion.

Psalm 145:18

¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

B. Found in our proving - vs. 2-4

- 1. Proven in and by God’s presence in our lives – vs. 2

There is a background to this psalm that is not given but it seems that it has to do, at least in part, with an enemy accusing David of something severe enough that he wanted God to intervene and be the judge. It shows that David was close enough to the Lord that he knew that His presence was there to ask for this

kind of help.

2. Proving that results in no charge against us being able to stand - vs. 3

a) This is only possible because of the righteousness of Christ with which we have clothed ourselves.

b) This speaks to justification as well as sanctification - we can be sanctified because we have been justified.

c) There are three statements made here by David in this prayer that help us understand a little better the proving we go through in our walk with the Lord.

(1) "Thou hast proved mine heart" - God knows our heart, our thoughts, and the purpose behind why we do what we do. He's already examined us before we come to Him in prayer.

Job 23:10

¹⁰ But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

1 Samuel 16:7

⁷ But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Psalms 44:21

²¹ Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

1 John 3:20-21

²⁰ For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

²¹ Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

- (2) "Thou hast visited me in the night" - "when men's thoughts range unrestrainedly, and they appear in their true colors" (Cambridge Bible). This is sometimes seen in a negative light in the Old Testament, which demonstrates the genuineness of David's heart here.

Psalm 36:4

⁴ He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.

Micah 2:1

¹ Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

- (3) "Thou hast tried me" - the word "tried" (צָרַף) is one that means to purify as a refiner does metal.

Proverbs 25:4

⁴ Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

David was pleading with God to judge him based on how he had dealt with he testing he had been put through.

A visitor to the shop of a famous potter was

puzzled by one operation which seemed to have little purpose. The workman was beating a lump of clay with a large mallet. It looked as if nothing was happening, and so the one who was taking the tour finally asked, "Sir, why are you doing that?" "Just wait and watch the results; then you'll understand," was the reply.

He heeded the advice and soon noted that the top of the mass began to quiver and swell as little bumps formed on its surface. "Now you can see the need for the pounding," said the man. "I could never shape the clay into a worthwhile vessel if these bubbles remained in it, so I must gradually work them out."

The one watching was a Christian and immediately recalled the 18th chapter of Jeremiah. He saw more clearly than ever before why the great Potter must work upon our souls. The discipline of chastening and the trials God sends are necessary to eliminate pride and self-will. This is the only way the Master can form us into beautiful vessels capable of holding the treasures of His grace.

- d) This is the goal for which we strive - "thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing."

[Luke 1:6](#)

⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Philippians 2:15

¹⁵ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

3. Proven faultless because of obedience to the Word of God - vs. 4.

- a) "Concerning the works of men - seems to be dealing with the works of the wicked around him, as we have to be concerned about the wickedness around us that it doesn't permeate our lives and walk with the Lord.

1 Peter 4:1-5

¹ Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

² That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

³ For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

⁴ Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

⁵ Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

- b) "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" - it's through the Word of God that we are kept from the one who would destroy us and our testimony.

C. Found in our purpose - vs. 5

1. Purposed to follow God - "Hold up my goings in thy paths."

Psalm 119:116-117

¹¹⁶ Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

¹¹⁷ Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

Psalm 119:133

¹³³ Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

2. Purposed to STAY following God - "that my footsteps slip not."

Same term translated "I shall not be moved" in the previous psalm (16:8).

Psalm 18:36

³⁶ Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

Psalm 38:16

¹⁶ For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.

Psalm 94:18

¹⁸ When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.

II. GOD'S LOVINGKINDNESS KEEPS US SECURE – VS. 6-12

THE PSALMIST'S DESPERATION

A. Secure in our confidence in Him - vs. 6-7

What a blessing beyond compare we have in a God that is so concerned about us that He is always ready to hear. It gives us such great confidence to know that He's there to hear.

Verse seven is one of the most encouraging verses here, showing to the child of God that no matter what enemy rises up against us, because of God's lovingkindness we can know we will be secure in Him if we have our trust anchored in Him. If we get outside of that anchor and try life on our own, our security will be in great jeopardy.

B. Secure in His tender care for us - vs. 8

1. "Keep me as the apple of the eye" - one of the most, if not the most, precious part of our body is the eye, and the most important part of that is the pupil.

Uniquely, this is literally translated, "the little man, the daughter of the eye," "because a picture in miniature of one's self is seen, as in a glass, when looking into another person's eye...inasmuch as the saint knows himself to be so near to God, that, as it were, his image in miniature is mirrored in the great eye of God" (K&D).

2. "Hide me under the shadow of thy wings" - as a parallel to the first part of the verse, this is another way of pointing to the tender care with which God secures us in times of extreme danger.

In Mission, British Columbia, a fellow by the name of

Ike tells the story about his Grandpa's hen house which burned to the ground one day. Ike arrived just in time to help put out the last of the fire. As he and his grandfather sorted through the wreckage, they came upon one hen lying dead near what had been the door of the hen house. Her top feathers were singed brown by the fire's heat, her neck limp. Ike bent down to pick up the dead hen. As he did the hen's four chicks came scurrying out from beneath her burnt body. The chicks survived because they were insulated by the shelter of the hens' wings.

C. Secure from the conflict against us - vs. 9-12

These verses describe the enemy that was against David, and it is a poetic way of describing the enemy of God's people down through the ages.

III. GOD'S PRESENCE KEEPS US SATISFIED – VS. 13-15

THE PSALMIST'S DETERMINATION

The word for "satisfied" (שָׂבַע) means to have enough of something, or in this case, Someone.

This is speaking of both now while on earth and then in heaven in person.

- A. Verse thirteen and fourteen are to be taken together, dealing with the enemy described in verses nine through twelve. That enemy is seen as the "sword" in the hand of the LORD, allowed by Him to come against us for purposes often known only to Him. The satisfaction we have in this trial is that God is in control, and they can do nothing**

against us without Him, and He will not allow anything to happen to us that we cannot bear. It is all for His glory and for our good.

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The end of verse fourteen - “they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes” - is a poetic structure to show that the wicked of the world may prosper, and that for generations, but God is still in control and their end will be one of devastation for eternity in hell.

Psalms 37:1-2

¹ Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

Psalms 37:7

⁷ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Psalms 39:6

⁶ Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

- B. Verse fifteen finds David again showing that he was confident in his righteousness, and when the night of trial was over, he would be satisfied with the presence of the Lord with him.**

Conclusion: What about us? Does God's Word keep you right with Him? Does His lovingkindness keep you secure in your battles against the enemy? Does His presence keep us satisfied, is it enough for us in this life, or are we always looking for more?

Hopefully, we can all answer those questions correctly.