

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 17

Soul Survivor

Quote

“Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.”

John Bunyan

I. Introduction

In every adversity of life, prayer is one of the believer's greatest weapons, a sure and trusted instrument that brings victory in the face of defeat. This proved to be true in David's life as he found himself in perilous situations, calling out to God to deliver him. David learned to put his trust in God, relying upon his presence and power to rescue him from harm.

The relevance of Psalm 17 is timeless, speaking to all believers who find themselves under attack from the unrighteous. Such persecution arises as a result of the spiritual warfare in which Christians find themselves, a clash between good and evil, light and darkness, heaven and hell. In the midst of such conflict, God must be the believer's first line of defense. This is precisely where the psalmist found himself in this “prayer of David.”

This is the first psalm characterized as an intercession to God (cp. Pss. 86; 90; 102; 142). Prayer to God is the Christian's most powerful rebuttal when under attack by godless enemies.

MAIN IDEA

When persecuted for his faith, David turns to God in prayer, asking that he reveal any personal sin and supply perfect protection.

A See Me! (17:1–2)

17:1–2. This psalm begins with the language of the courtroom as David pleaded his case before God, the ultimate chief justice, to hear, O Lord, my righteous plea;

listen to my cry This request expresses dire urgency for the ear of the Lord. This righteous plea is an urgent cry for justice in regards to the charges being brought against him. David asked for God's vindication because he believed he had done what was right.

B Search Me! (17:3–5)

17:3–5. Inviting God to probe his heart and examine and test him, David believed he was innocent of the charges made against him by his enemies. Not claiming sinless perfection, David did believe himself to be blameless. You will find nothing, he believed, of which he could be accused by God. Divine investigation would reveal that he had resolved not to sin and that he had restrained himself from the ways of the violent. His steps had followed God's paths without slipping. David believed that upon God's close scrutiny, his integrity would be preserved.

C Show Me! (17:6–7)

17:6–7. Again appealing to God for a response, David asked that the Lord answer him and show the wonder of his great love. Ultimately, the basis of his petition was not his own integrity, but God's loyal love (Heb. *hesed*; see "Deeper Discoveries," 23:6). He pleaded that God would deliver him from trouble by his right hand. David was confident that everyone who took refuge in God would be protected.

D Shield Me! (17:8–12)

17:8–9. In asking for God's protection, David prayed, Keep me as the apple of your eye. This expression refers to the protection of the pupil of a person's eyeball. Hide me in the shadow of your wings, he continued. This is a picture of welcomed protection from the blazing heat of the hot desert sun. As a mother bird's wing provides shade, so David requested God's protective care from those who would harm him. David petitioned God to be shielded from the wicked who assailed him, from his mortal enemies who surrounded him.

17:10–12. David described those vicious men from whom he needed to be saved. Insensitive and indifferent to what was right, they had closed up their callous hearts, literally, "closed their fat" (cp. Deut. 32:15; Job 15:27). Their dull hearts spoke with arrogance. In aggressive pursuit their feet had tracked him down to do

him harm. They sought to throw David to the ground to devour him like a lion hungry for prey. David needed God's protection from such persecution.

E Save Me! (17:13–14a)

17:13. With urgent language David prayed, Rise up, O Lord, confront them (cp. 3:7; 9:19–20). This is the language of a person in battle, appealing to God as the divine warrior to intervene on his behalf and bring them down. He asked God to confront these enemies, to rescue him by wielding his sword against them. The battle belongs to the Lord!

17:14a. Encircled by such hatred, David pleaded to be saved from such men who desired to do him harm. He declared that such men were of this world, meaning a part of the evil system that is opposed to God and his people. Their reward was confined to this world. Believers need God's deliverance from such evil.

F Satisfy Me! (17:14b–15)

17:14b. Concluding with a confession of confidence in God, David testified to divine goodness. Addressing the Lord, he declared, You still the hunger of those you cherish. This means that God fully satisfies the hearts of believers whom he loves. So abundant are the Lord's earthly, temporal blessings that their sons have plenty as they store up wealth for their children. Certainly there are exceptions to this maxim.

17:15. God also promises eternal, spiritual blessings for those who trust him. One day, David knew, he would see God's face. Anticipating a greater reward that was based upon an imputed, divine righteousness, David looked ahead to the vision of God in heaven (Rev. 22:4). Beyond the grave he would be satisfied with seeing the Lord and, in that day, being glorified, or made fully in his likeness (1 John 3:2).

III. Conclusion

When attacked by the world, believers should look to God in prayer, asking his help in; perilous times. Persecution should drive a person closer to the Lord, seeking his divine protection and sustaining grace. Someone said that "though the outlook is often bleak, the uplook is always bright." When opposed by the world, the believer should always examine his own heart and life to determine if the

attack has been brought on by his own sin. Sometimes God uses the unrighteous to chasten the righteous.

Furthermore, believers must always look forward. The heat of adversity should always cause us to long for the glories of heaven and the beauties of the world to come. This world is passing away; heaven is eternal. Persecution is a reminder of this truth.