



Valley Life Community Church

Pastor Vinnie Hanke

Psalms 2023: Jesus' Songbook

May 14, 2023

Psalm 5

Psalm 5. As you find your way in your Bible, let me remind you of the five themes, or the five things, that we need to keep in mind when we come to the book of Psalms. We need to remember...

1. **The Psalms are worship songs.** They model what praise and devotion are, as they flow from the hearts of God's people to the living God. We just sang part of Psalm 5, and it was easy to do because they were written for the worship of God's people.
2. **God reveals himself in the Psalms.** He reveals his character; his steadfast, faithful love; his righteous judgment; his glorious creativity, etcetera. He reveals his character as we read the Psalms.

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Meridian, Idaho



3. **The Psalms are evangelical and gospel centered.** Even though they were written hundreds, thousands, of years before Christ, in some cases, they still point forward to the coming Messianic King. The one who would be King of all kings forever and always.

4. **The Psalms are full of hope.** They are places where we can turn when we're confronted with the suffering in this world.

5. **The Psalms help build community.** When we study them together, when we sing them together, when we pray them together, we become God's people worshiping him, witnessing to his mighty deeds, and working together. They bind the people of God as we collectively turn to them for their wisdom and worth.

That should be plenty of time for you to find Psalm 5 in your Bible. I'm going to invite you to stand with me for the reading of the Word. This is something that we do as a church, not out of ceremony or tradition, though certainly we could, God's people have been standing for his Word since the days of the Old Testament. But for us we stand out of reverence for God's Word, believing that when we read it, God is going to speak to us through the power of the Holy Spirit, and we sit down for my words when I talk about it because it's God's words that have the power in this room. With a clear mind, with a ready heart and a willing spirit would you hear the Word of the Lord beginning in Psalm 5.



For the choir director: with the flutes. A psalm of David.

*Listen to my words, LORD;
consider my sighing.
Pay attention to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for I pray to you.*

*In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case to you and watch expectantly.*

*For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil cannot dwell with you.
The boastful cannot stand in your sight; you hate all evildoers.
You destroy those who tell lies;
the LORD abhors violent and treacherous people.*

*But I enter your house
by the abundance of your faithful love;
I bow down toward your holy temple
in reverential awe of you.
LORD, lead me in your righteousness
because of my adversaries;
make your way straight before me.*

*For there is nothing reliable in what they say;
destruction is within them;
their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongues.
Punish them, God;
let them fall by their own schemes.
Drive them out because of their many crimes,
for they rebel against you.*

*But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them shout for joy forever.
May you shelter them,
and may those who love your name boast about you.
For you, LORD, bless the righteous one;*



you surround him with favor like a shield.

This is the Word of the Lord, church. Amen. Amen. Let me pray.

God, thank you for your Word, and I pray you'd help me to deliver it carefully and clearly to your people this morning, that you would illuminate our mind, that you would convict our heart, and ultimately that you would transform our life. We thank you for the goodness that is contained in the Psalms and pray that you would be glorified by this. We keep none of it for ourselves. We ask this through Christ, amen.

Here's my main idea if you like to take notes for community group. I hope that you do, so that you can have a lively discussion with other disciples throughout the week. Here's my main idea: **Disciples of Jesus can pray for protection knowing that he will surround us with the shield of his faithful, steadfast, abundant, great, and unfailing love.**

Disciples of Jesus can pray for protection knowing that he will surround us with the shield of his faithful, steadfast, abundant, great, and unfailing love. Hopefully, you can see where this psalm is going. As we move into it, let me give you a little bit of structure for Psalm 5. Remember, because it's an odd year, as we do the Psalms in the summer, we're going to move through all the odd psalms. We were in Psalm 3 last week. We're in Psalm 5 this week. Spoiler alert... We're going to be in Psalm 7 next week.



Psalm 5 is a prayer psalm. Hopefully, that should be clear from what we sang to what we just read. But it's a prayer that's offered in the morning following the end of Psalm 4. Here's the end of Psalm 4. In Psalm, chapter 4, verse 8, ***"I will both lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, LORD, make me live in safety."*** That's the end of Psalm 4. David's talking about being in the midst of rebellion and rejection, and then here's where we pick up in Psalm 5, after saying he can lay down and sleep at night because it's God who provides for him and for his safety. David is going to talk about his ability to pray and reach the throne room of God.

Psalm 5 contains two prayer requests. As a structure, here's the outline. In Psalm 5:1-7 we have the initial request in verses 1 and 2, and then we have the reasons why David anticipates his being answered by God in verse 2b through verse 7. The rest of the Psalm is the second request, that's found at the beginning of verse 8, and then the reasons why David anticipates an answer from God in verses 9 through 12. So the bulk of the psalm is made up of the reasons why David expects that God is going to answer his prayer. Then it contains two requests, verse 1 through 2a and in verse 8.

Let's begin with the first section. Let's begin with verse 1. ***"Listen to my words, LORD; consider my sighing."*** Once again, I hope you notice from last week that David uses the personal and relational name for God here in the Psalms. Any time you read, Lord (especially, I think, in the CSB) you'll have all capital letters: LORD. That is the English translation of the Hebrew name for God, Yahweh. It's the personal



relational name that God gives to his people when they ask who he is. So as David begins this psalm he's crying out to the personal and ever-so-close, relational God.

And what is David's request of this personal and relational God? It is to be heard and be considered when he prays. If you will, stop if we can for just a moment and consider what an incredible gift of God's grace that prayer is to us. For most of us, I think, prayer has fallen into this burdensome thing we know we're supposed to do but often find ourselves too busy to give time toward. Martin Luther would say that he was so busy that he must give three hours of prayer a day. We've taken it for granted, I think, that we have the ability whenever and how ever to approach the throne of Grace upon which sits the almighty King and God of creation who reveals himself to us personally and relationally.

David's doing that here as he opens up Psalm 5. He's asking the Lord of the universe, God...Creator, Almighty, personal, and relational...would listen to his words. The distance between Creator and creation cannot be magnified enough to think about how different God is from us, and yet, David prays and asks God to listen and to hear his words.

David uses a common structure in the Psalms when he writes. He uses something called parallelism. I want to talk about this for a minute, because I think it's going to help us all summer and hopefully in the years ahead as we read the Psalms. Maybe even in your personal study of them. David uses something called parallelism.



Parallelism in Hebrew poetry means the author will pen one line and he'll make a statement. So in verse 1, "***Listen to my words LORD,***" and then he'll make a second line or a second statement, but that second statement is meant to provide understanding for the first statement. So as a definition, parallelism, its essence, is the connection with an intent to develop and deepen meaning.

Now easily we can read this and say, "Oh, David is just repeating himself. He's just making emphasis." But there's more than that. It's not just mere repetition, it's developing and deepening what's happening here. So as an example, here in verse 1, we have these words. "***Listen to my words, LORD; consider my sighing.***" So line one of David's request of God is that he listen to his words. Then in line two David uses parallelism to deepen and develop what means by this.

So if you can see the diagram up there, the word *listen* (marked with the letter *A*) is tied to the word *consider*, (marked with the letter *A*, to see the connection). Then, *my words* (marked with a *B*) is connected to *my sighing* (*B*). What is David saying here? He's saying, "I don't just want to be heard, but I want to be paid attention to." I want you to look over. I want you to provide careful consideration to what I am bring before you, God."

And what's David bringing before him? Not just words, but sighing. The word here refers to inaudible thought. In this context it means audible groaning. So when David is praying, he's not just using words;



he's groaning from his soul to be heard by God. He's praying with such intense fervor, and he wants the personal and ever close God to give special awareness to what's going on in his life. That's how this psalm opens.

Verse 2. ***"Pay attention to the sound of my cry."*** Hopefully, you can hear the parallelism continue, because the first line of verse 2 is actually the third line of the parallel to the first verse. ***"Pay attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for I pray to you."*** This is the first reason that David expects God to answer. Because David is praying to him.

David asks his King and his God to listen, to consider, to pay attention to his words, to his sighing, to his cry, all of which he labels as prayer. Now, have you ever been in that awkward Christian small-group moment, where the leader looks at the group, smiles, the discussion is over the appetizers are all finished, the kids are playing in the background, and then they say these words that above any other, in any small group, ever can strike fear into the hearts of human beings. You ready? "Let's pray."

Why? Because we get stuck on what we think we're supposed to say. I mean, for some of us we grew up in church, so we've been in church a long time. For some of us we grew up listening to people pray in the King James Version. Somehow that felt more holy than others. For others we listened to the folks who have a gift for language and words, and they address the throne room with what seems like psalms



written in real time out of their imagination. For others we get so confounded thinking we've got to say the right words in the right order that we just stay quiet and listen.

Do you know what the gift of Psalm 5 is? The gift of Psalm 5 gives us the grace and freedom to know that there are no right words. Because what does David say? He says, "Listen to my words, consider my sighing (David's not even using words), and then he says, "Pay attention to the sound of my cry." David's just crying out from his soul. All of these words he uses and then he blankets them under, in verse 2, "my prayer to you." All of these things become David's language of prayer.

That is to say, he's not concerned with the disposition of his words. He's concerned with the status of his heart. The main reason David expects an answer is because he's praying to the King and God of the universe. You'll see the word God there in place of Lord. This is further providing clarity and deepening our understanding of who David is praying to.

He is praying to the ever close and personal God who happens to be King of all Kings and the almighty Creator of the universe. Because David is praying to God, he expects an answer. He's not praying to any false gods. He's not praying to the idols of the neighboring nations. He's praying to the Almighty One and true King of the universe, the King of God's people.



He's articulating his dependence upon the King who rules in heaven. He seeks refuge and comfort, not in the little false remedies the world might offer but to the one who can actually change things, who's in charge. Perhaps one of the reasons we take for granted the gift that prayer is to us is because we find in the world the things that are attentive to our soul and our sighing.

That is to say, to whom or to what do you find yourself turning to in moments of distress. If prayer is not our first inclination when the world seems to overwhelm us and instead we turn to substances, or to shopping, or to social media, or you fill in the blank with your tiny little thing, perhaps that's one of the other reasons we take prayer for granted.

But David expects an answer because he commits to praying to God in the moment of his distress. He's not seeking refuge or safety in anyone or anything else. This is the first reason he gives for expecting an answer. Because he is simply offering a prayer to the ever close and personal almighty King of the universe.

Verse 3. It's because of this he can pray confidently, ***"In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice..."*** That is, David is telling us when he prays, as we sang earlier. ***"...in the morning I plead my case to you and watch expectantly."*** The ESV I believe says, "offer my sacrifices to you." That is, in the morning David is getting up and praying and worshipping God to begin his day, and he is waiting expectantly for God to answer.



In verses 4 through 6, he's going to give us the next set of reasons why he expects an answer. Beginning in verse 4 he's going to provide the contrast for us. ***"For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil cannot dwell with you. The boastful cannot stand in your sight; you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who tell lies; the LORD abhors violent and treacherous people."*** The second reason David gives for the expectation that his prayer is going to be answered, or why he's praying to God, is longer. And here it is, ready? It's because God detests sin and sinners, so they have no access to his benevolence and to his presence.

We've got to remember David's immediate context. He is dealing with a rebellion and a rising up against his kingly authority. He is faced with the boastful. He's faced with those who delight in wickedness. He's faced with those who are pursuing evil. He's faced with those who are telling lies. If you remember from Psalm 3, they lied about God and they lied about David, saying that there was no help to be found for David in God.

So here in verses 4 through 6 David tells us that God finds no pleasure or delight; in fact, he hates those who pursue these things. If you look at verse 5 we've got some work to do because common Christian language has hurt our understanding of Biblical truth. Look at verse 5. ***"The boastful cannot stand in your sight."*** On board with that. Yep, we know that God does not like the prideful. Pride is a big deal. It's



what caused us to fall in sin in the first place and continues to wreak havoc in the lives of human beings and Christians. Pride is a problem.

But look at the second line and consider parallelism, ***“You hate all evildoers.”*** Verse 5 stands in contrast to the oversimplification when we say, “God hates the sin, but loves the sinner.” The difficulty with that phrase is that we cannot chapter and verse it. We cannot open the Book and say, “Yes, that’s true.” God hates sin and loves the sinner. What we have is Psalm 5:5 that says, ***“The boastful cannot stand in your sight; and God hates all evildoers.”***

In fact, verse 6 gets worse. ***“The LORD abhors violent and treacherous people.”*** Those who personify violence and treachery, God abhors them. This describes everyone who is outside the gospel of Jesus Christ, remaining in their sin under God’s wrath and judgment. See, this is important. It’s another reason for the catechism because it helps clarify what Christian teaching actually is apart from the cultural language that kind of gets into our belief system.

Why is it important? Why would we spend this much time on verses 5 and 6? Because we will never grasp the greatness of God’s love and mercy until we first understand his hatred and wrath for sin and sinners. God’s anger against the unrepentant sinner is never popular. It is, however, the bedrock and foundation of the gospel. It is the reason why the gospel is good news.



Because listen, if you think it's no big deal for God to save you because you were already a pretty good person, then the gospel will just be ho hum news. Big deal. God's probably lucky to have me if I were honest. You see, the good news is not good unless you understand that God is furious and against each and every sinner.

I've said it this way before, "The good news doesn't become great news until the bad news becomes real news." And the bad news is that because of sin, because of our disobedience to God's Word, his will, and his way, God is furious with us. God doesn't just hate the act of sin. But the sinner himself stands under God's wrath and judgment. That should feel heavy. That should suck some oxygen out of the room. That should put us in a fearful and humble spirit.

What are we going to do? If the ever so close and personal and relational God, who happens to be the King of Kings, Master of the universe, in charge of all of it, hates who we are and what we've done. Aren't you glad Psalm 5 doesn't stop there?

Look at verse 7. One of my favorite words in the whole Bible begins verse 7. The word *but*. Why? Because without this word we remain stuck in verses 4 through 6, under God's wrath, judgment, and hatred. But verse 7 provides us an alternative. Listen to verse 7. "**But I...**" David is speaking for himself as opposed to the wicked and the treacherous and the violent. "**But I enter your house.**" The wicked, the



sinner, the treacherous, the violent... They can't even get near the porch, but David gets an invitation to sit on the couch, enjoy refreshments, and spend time in relationship with God. Why?

Verse 7 continues, ***"I enter your house by the abundance of your faithful love."*** David declares that he has access to the presence of God through the abundance of God's faithful love. The phrase *faithful love* here is a terrible translation in English. Because there's no good English word, which is why you can open up an abundance of English translations and they all wrestle to figure out what this word means.

This word for faithful love, that the CSB uses, is used over 240 times in just the Old Testament, and it is especially frequent here in the Psalter. This term is the most important term in the vocabulary of the Old Testament. If you're going to learn any Hebrew at all, this is the word; it's the word *hesed*.

There are three basic meanings to this word: strength, steadfastness, and love. And we need all three to truly understand what God's people are talking about when they use this word. If we just use love by itself, it can become sentimentality, it can be universalized. It can be applied, especially in English, to everything.

I mean consider we're going to use the word love today a couple of different ways. "Mom, I love you."

"Mom, we made you this quiche. I hope you love it." Are we implying that we hope that our mom loves



the quiche the way we love her? Absolutely not. Nor the way my wife loves being a dog mom. I hope not.

We also need to emphasize strength and steadfastness, but apart from love, this just becomes an obligation. Which is one of the reasons why this word is so difficult to render into English. Consider the different renderings. In the ESV it says *steadfast love*. The CSB, as we read, uses *faithful love*. In the NIV '84, in the King James, and in the New King James it just simply uses the word *mercy*. In the American Standard Bible, it uses *lovingkindness*. I think that one is my favorite. And in the New Living Translation (this one is good too, I think), *unfailing love*.

We could put all of those together, as I did in my main idea, to say this. We can pray to the God of the universe because he will surround us with the shield of his faithful, steadfast, abundant, great, unfailing, and (we could add in there) merciful love. This is the good news! Why? Not because David has earned this place. He hasn't.

Don't get me wrong here, David is not positioning himself in contrast to the wicked and saying, "Well, I'm so awesome that God invited me over for drinks and I got to stay." No, what he's acknowledging here is how incredibly amazing God's love is. This word, *hesed*, is not a matter of obligation; it's a matter of generosity. It's not a matter of just loyalty, but also mercy. It implies a personal involvement and commitment to the relationship beyond the law. It is a covenant.



That's why almost every time it's used in Hebrew the author pairs it with words that mean truth, reliability, and faithfulness. It is one of the most central characteristics of God himself. It is his lovingkindness offered to his people who need redemption from sin, enemies, and troubles and rescuing from his judgment and wrath and hatred.

It applies to God's primary particular love for his chosen and covenant people exclusively. While covenant can carry with it this idea that we owe an obligation, and we do, the obligation is gratitude, but it never qualifies us for the love. Here's what I mean, what Paul clarified in his letter to Timothy in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 13 when he says, "**...if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.**" This is the *hesed* covenant love of God. It is this love that God freely bestows upon David that allows David to pray to him.

That allows David to move from a wicked, treacherous, rebellious sinner into a member of God's covenant, unfailing love. Therefore, in verse 7 we read David's response, "**I bow down toward your holy temple in reverential awe of you.**" Why? Because David didn't do anything to earn it.

Sin has so stained our soul that not even a mother's love could cover it. It is only God's covenantal commitment and love to us that can. And as we should be in awe of the way our moms have loved us,



and we should bestow them gracious gifts today, we should make sure they know how appreciated they are, how much more gratitude and appreciate do we owe to the Creator of the universe for loving us?

This brings us to the second half of Psalm 5. Verse 8, ***"LORD, lead me in your righteousness because of my adversaries; make your way straight before me."*** Here's David's new request. Remember I told you that there are two prayer requests, Psalm 5:1-2 and then Psalm 5:8. So here's the second request. What's the request? Change my life! Lead me and make my way straight.

Get this. In the midst of a rebellion and surrounded by the wicked liars, David desires God to make clear what the next right thing to do is. "Lay out before me what I should do. I patiently wait and expect you to answer, God. Lead me in the path that is straight. There are crooked paths all around me. You saved me from a crooked path. Now lead me in your righteousness."

Verse 9, we're going to go back and we're going to further develop the traits of the wicked from verses 4 through 6. Again, there's parallelism among the lines and then there's parallelism in the structure of David's prayer. Verses 4 through 6 parallel verses 9 through 10.

David is going to give us further clarity as to the description of the wicked. ***"For there is nothing reliable in what they say..."*** They couldn't even give you directions to the gas station around the corner. ***"...destruction is within them; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongues. Punish***



them, God... That's David's prayer. ***"...let them fall by their own schemes. Drive them out because of their many crimes, for they rebel against you."***

This is an interesting point about God's authority. While David is facing an earthly rebellion (That is, there are those who are part of his kingdom who are trying to grab his throne that God has set him upon), David sees their rebellion ultimately as a rebellion against God. This is the way spiritual authority works. God has put authorities in place, and he has gifted them some of his authority to steward and lead in creation.

For bonus Bible points, who are the first authorities that God has put in place over your life? Parents! Mom and Dad. We're celebrating Mother's Day today, next month we'll do Father's Day. Creation itself, the world around us, acknowledges there's something unique and special about the role parents play in the lives of their children, and the things that is important is that is a God-instituted value.

Beyond your parents, you have civic authority which God has installed. We think of teachers in the classroom, policemen, government officials. We could climb every ladder of authority that exists and, ultimately, at the top of it is going to be God.

When we rebel and reject, against that authority... Think about in one of the worst lists of all sins in the book of Ephesians. Do you know what my favorite is to quote to my children? Among, like, liars and



murders and treacherous and *those who are disobedient to their parents...* Lumped in with that group of people. Why? Because disobedience to our parents is ultimately rebellion against God.

David recognizes that among the wicked here in verses 9 and 10, that ultimately rebellion is against him, against God and so David asks for God's justice to rain down upon them. Verse 11. There's my favorite word again. What is it? *But!* But. In contrast. That is, in contrast to those you are going to punish. God, in contrast to those who only seek wickedness and the way that it leads. In contrast to all of that. Verse 11, ***"But let all who take refuge in you rejoice..."*** Refuge from what? Refuge from God's wrath and judgment. There is a way of escape through the bad news; it is through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

David continues. What does it mean for them to rejoice? It means to, ***"...let them shout for joy forever."*** Listen, I know Sunday mornings can be tough. You've got to get here. You've got to put on your church face. You've got to tell everybody, "I'm fine" when maybe you're not. When maybe Monday through Saturday did not go the way that you'd asked the Lord that it would go.

It can be difficult to sing. But it can be difficult when we let all those circumstances get in the way of the truth that we're called to remember, that we have a refuge from the wrath of God in Christ given to us so that it will enable us to sing for joy forever. Which, by the way, is job number one for all eternity: to sing and enjoy the presence of God. When we sing together on Sundays we get to practice that. We're one big choir practicing. We hold rehearsals Sunday morning from 10:00 to 11:15.



Then David continues his reasons. “May you shelter them, and may those who love your name boast about you.” This is evangelism. May those who love you talk about you. And then verse 12, **“For you, LORD, bless the righteous one...”** This is an allusion to Christ, who alone is righteous. **“...you surround him with favor like a shield.”** The word here that David uses for shield in Psalm 5 is different than the word he used for shield in Psalm 3.

In Psalm 3 David has the small shield, the one that is easily movable upon the warrior. Here in verse 12, he has a larger body shield, one in which the soldier can hide his whole self behind, which is what we need when it comes to being rescued from God’s wrath and judgment.

Not a part of us can be exposed to is because we could not stand in it, so we need the shield that covers all of us. What is that shield? It is Jesus Christ himself who, in our place, bore the wrath and judgment of God, bore the hate of God in the cross, in our place, for us. This is where God’s justice is met by his righteous kindness to sinners.

For all those to take refuge in God it doesn’t mean a temporary shelter, like we’re going to get out from the rain. It means to commit your life and destiny to him, to rely on his power and his protection now and in all circumstances. This is why prayer becomes our life-giving source in times of difficulty and



distress. Because it is us seeking refuge behind Christ, who allows us to enter into the presence of the all-powerful, ever close, present, relational God.

This is the essence of trusting God, the saving faith, that everyone who runs to him in prayer will find joy, protection, and favor, just like when we ran to Mom. To receive this refuge, to receive this joy, to receive this protection and favor there are two things you must believe and one thing you must do.

1. **You must believe the bad news.** That sin has placed you under God's wrath and judgment and that you cannot help yourself. You can't make yourself pleasing enough to God. You can't clean yourself up enough. You can't attend church enough times. You can't go to community group enough times. You can't do enough good works to make yourself pleasing, to overcome the debt that sin has placed upon your soul. That's the first thing you've got to believe, that you're in trouble.
2. **You must believe that Christ is able to do what you cannot do.** That he lived the righteous life that you cannot. That he died the atoning death that you deserve. That he was raised to glory that you can only imagine. That he ascended to the throne in all power. That he sent his Holy Spirit in generosity to fill you and empower you to live new and make you spiritually alive. And that he has promised to come back some day and make it all right.



If you believe this second thing, the final thing you must do is ***you must call upon the name of Christ as Lord, leader, and master of your life.*** Psalm 5 talks about taking refuge in God. It means submitting our life to him as Lord and Savior. In Romans, chapter 10, verses 10 and 13 it helps us when we consider this. It says, ***“One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. [...] For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*** Let me pray for you, church.

God, thank you for your Word this morning. Thank you for its power to save through the gospel of Jesus Christ. God, I pray that where I have said anything that would distract from that would you cause us to forget it, and where I have said things that would lead people into your care and into your salvation and into greater hope and confidence, would you give us the ability to remember it. Above all, we ask that you would receive all of the glory from it. It is through Christ I pray, amen.