

Psalms 86

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 86 - and as we make our way to the 86th Psalm...

...I should take a moment to point out that - this is the first - and only song written by King David - in the third section of the Psalms.

The last Psalm written by King David was the 70th Psalm - which is found in the second section of this book.

And the next Psalm written by king David is the 101st Psalm - which is found in the fourth section of the Psalms.

It's also interesting to note that this is the second of three Psalms - that are introduced as a prayer of David.

What this means is that - this Psalm is not only a hymn - - it's also a prayerful petition...

...that King David presented to the LORD God of Israel.

And listen - we not only find King David - presenting prayerful petitions...

...but we also find him presenting the reasons for why the Lord should respond to his prayer requests.

I like the way that Pastor Albert Barnes put it - in his commentary - where he described this Psalm in this way...

It is made up of earnest prayers, with reasons why those prayers should be answered; and perhaps the leading practical suggestion which would properly follow from the psalm is, that it is proper for us, in our prayers, to urge reasons why they should be answered: the reasons why we pray at all. We cannot, indeed, suppose that we can suggest anything which would not

occur to the divine mind, but in all our prayers there is some reason why we pray; there are reasons why we ask the particular things which are the burden of our supplications, and it cannot be improper, in order that our own minds at least may be suitably impressed, to mention those reasons when we come before God.

More simply put - when we pray - we should present our petitions like King David...

...by introducing the reasons for why the Lord should respond to our supplications.

And with this as our goal - let's consider the way that King David presented this prayer.

With this as our focus - let's turn our attention to the lyrics that we find here in the 86th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where King David declared...

Psa 86:1 A Prayer of David.
Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me;
For I am poor and needy.
Psa 86:2 Preserve my life, for I am holy;
You are my God;
Save Your servant who trusts in You!

Here in the beginning of this Psalm - we find King David - asking the Lord to hear his prayer.

And as we consider how David asked the LORD to incline His ear - so that He might listen to his prayer...

...there should be no doubt that David had a humble view of his place before the LORD.

In other words - he didn't present this prayer - as the King of Israel - - who deserved to be heard.

No - instead - he humbly asked the Lord to listen to his prayer - because he was a servant - who was poor - and needy.

In other words - David was asking the Lord to listen to his prayer...

...because - he was distressed - and in need of help.

I like the way that the scholars who created the Amplified Bible rendered verse 1 - they put it like this...

Psa 86:1 Incline Your ear, O LORD, and answer me,
For I am distressed and needy [I long for Your help].

From this - we can see that - David wasn't demanding an audience with the LORD - because he was the anointed king of Israel...

...no - instead - he was humbly asking the Lord to listen to his prayer...

...because he was distressed - and in need of help.

In light of his example - we too should also present our prayers - with heartfelt humility.

Remember - God resists the proud - but He gives grace to the humble.

And so - when we pray - we should humbly ask the Lord to listen...

...as we present Him with the reasons for our request.

Not only that - but - we should also present our prayerful petitions - with a heart that is filled with faith.

Let's consider King David's example - found there in verse 2 - it's there where he declared...

Psa 86:2 Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God;

Save Your servant who trusts in You!

Now - I should take a moment to point out that - this might not be the best translation of the Hebrew.

And we would be wrong to think that King David was asking the Lord to help him - because he was HOLY.

No - instead - David was simply describing himself as being devoted to the Lord.

I like the way that the scholars who created the New International Version of the Bible rendered verse 2 - they put it like this...

Psa 86:2 Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God;

Here in this verses - we find King David - describing his devotion to the Lord...

...and not only that - but - he also encouraged the Lord to listen to his prayer...

...and the reason why was because - he placed his trust in God.

In light of his example - we too should present our prayerful petitions - with a heart filled with faith.

I like the way that Paul put it - in Hebrews chapter 11 - - it's verse 6 where he declared...

Heb 11:6 ...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Christian - listen - the Lord isn't listening to the prayers of those who really don't trust in Him.

And so - when we pray - we must not only believe that God exists...

...but - - that He also rewards those who truly trust in Him.

And just like King David - it doesn't hurt to tell the Lord that we trust Him...

...to respond to our prayer requests - with a righteous response.

We should also consider how King David appealed to the goodness of God.

With this as our focus - let's pick up our study of the 86th Psalm - beginning there at verse 3 - where David declared...

Psa 86:3 Be merciful to me, O Lord,
For I cry to You all day long.

Psa 86:4 Rejoice the soul of Your servant,
For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

Psa 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

Here in these verses - we find King David - asking the Lord to be merciful to him.

That word - merciful - found there in verse 3 - it's translated from a Hebrew word...

...which was used in reference to those who graciously bend down in kindness - in order to show favor to an inferior.

When David cried out - Be merciful to me, O Lord...

...he was asking the Lord to graciously condescend to his level...

...so that his soul could be lifted up - with the undeserved favor of God.

From this - we can see that - King David fully understood that he didn't deserve the favor of the Lord.

And so - rather than appealing to some perceived idea that the Lord owed him something...

...David simply appealed to the fact that the Lord is a good God - Who is abundant in mercy.

Notice with me again - there in verse 5 - where David declared...

Psa 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

Here in this verse - we find King David - appealing to the goodness of God...

...as the reason for why the Lord should stoop down - and show favor to His servant.

And according to King David - the Lord is a God Who is ready to forgive...

...and the reason why is because - His has an abundance of mercy...

...waiting for those who call upon Him.

I can't help but to wonder if King David was thinking about the way that the Lord revealed Himself to Moses.

It's in Exodus chapter 34 - beginning at verse 5 - where Moses described the day - when...

Exo 34:5 ...the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

Exo 34:6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

Exo 34:7a “keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”

Christian - listen - the God of Heaven and Earth is NOT a merciless Lord - Who can't wait to cast us into the fires of hell.

No - instead - He is a merciful LORD - Who is longsuffering with us...

...because - it's His will for us to receive His gracious goodness.

I like the way that King David described it - in the 103rd Psalm - it's beginning at verse 7 - where he declared...

Psa 103:7 He made known His ways to Moses,
His acts to the children of Israel.

Psa 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

Psa 103:9 He will not always strive with us,
Nor will He keep His anger forever.

Psa 103:10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

Psa 103:11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

From this - we can see that - the LORD our God is a merciful and gracious God - who is slow to anger - and abounding in mercy.

And knowing that we've all sinned against the Lord - - the last thing that we should do...

...is to ask the Lord to answer our prayers - on the basis of what we deserve.

What we deserve is the perfect punishment of the Lord.

Thankfully for us - the LORD is merciful and gracious - slow to anger - and abounding in mercy.

And as we pray - we should appeal to the Lord - on the basis of His mercy...

...so that we might receive a response - that's based on the gracious goodness of God.

At the same time - we should also realize that - the LORD God of heaven and earth is the only God Who is able to answer our prayers.

Let's consider how King David put it - here in the 86th Psalm - look with me - beginning there at verse 6 - where he declared...

Psa 86:6 Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
And attend to the voice of my supplications.

Psa 86:7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
For You will answer me.

Psa 86:8 Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord;
Nor are there any works like Your works.

Psa 86:9 All nations whom You have made
Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
And shall glorify Your name.

Psa 86:10 For You are great, and do wondrous things;
You alone are God.

Here in these verses - we find King David - once again asking the Lord to give ear to his prayer.

And it's there in the second half of verse 6 - where he asked the Lord to attend to the voice of his supplications.

That word - supplications - was translated from a Hebrew word which - in this context...

...was used in reference to the earnest prayers - presented by those who solicit the favor of God.

This is the same word that King Solomon used - in 2nd Chronicles chapter 6 - it's beginning at verse 19 - where he declared...

2Ch 6:19 “...regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You:

2Ch 6:20 “that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place.

2Ch 6:21 “And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive.”

Much like his father - David - King Solomon also presented prayerful supplications...

...as he humbly approached the true and living God - Who alone is able to answer our prayers.

Let's consider again how King David put it - here in our text tonight - look with me again - there at verse 7 - it's there where David declared...

Psa 86:7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
For You will answer me.

Psa 86:8 Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord;
Nor are there any works like Your works.

King David didn't call upon the false gods of Egypt - and he didn't cry out to the false gods of the Philistines.

And one reason why is because - the gods - - or - the Elohim of the pagan nations weren't able to hear his prayers...

...nor did they have the power to answer them.

This was precisely the point that the Lord made in Deuteronomy 4 - it's verse 28 - where He described the Elohim of the pagans as...

Deu 4:28 “...the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.”

The Elohim of the pagan nations aren't able nothing more than the work of men's hands.

And with that being the case - they can't hear our prayers...

...nor can they answer them.

Rather than wasting his time - praying to the pagan gods who cannot hear...

...King David called out to the LORD God of Israel - and the reason why was because...

...Yahweh is the true and living God - Who is able to answer our prayers.

This was precisely the point that the Lord was making - in Jeremiah chapter 33 - it's beginning at verse 2 - where He declared...

Jer 33:2 "Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD is His name):

Jer 33:3 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

Those who call upon the Lord can rejoice in knowing that He is able to hear our prayers.

And not only that - but - He is also able to answer our prayers in ways we do not know.

King David expanded upon this point here in this song - - as a matter of fact - look with me again - there at verse 9 - where he declared...

Psa 86:9 All nations whom You have made
Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
And shall glorify Your name.

Psa 86:10 For You are great, and do wondrous things;
You alone are God.

Kind David was describing the way that people from every nations will come and worship before the Lord...

...and the reason why is because - He alone is God.

There is no other God - Who is worthy of our praise.

Not only that - but - He is the God Who is able to guide us - according to His truth.

Let's consider how King David put it - here in the 86th Psalm - look with me - there at verse 11 - where David declared...

Psa 86:11 Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.

Here in this verse - we find King David - asking the LORD - to teach him how to walk in the way of Truth.

And while it's true that there's a way that seems right to man...

...it's also true that this is the broad way that leads to destruction.

Please trust me when I tell you that - our natural tendency is to traverse that broad road that leads to destruction.

And it's for this reason that we should pray like David - - OH LORD - Teach me Your way - and I will walk in Your truth;

And as we pray this prayer - it's important for us to remember that - Jesus is the TRUTH - incarnate.

That being the case - those who walk in the truth of the LORD...

...are walking by faith - with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should also consider how those who trust in the Lord - will be delivered from the second death.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 12 - it's there where King David declared...

Psa 86:12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.

Psa 86:13 For great is Your mercy toward me,
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

Here in these verses - we find David - singing the praises of the One Who delivered his soul from the depths of Sheol.

Just to be clear - that word - Sheol - was translated from a Hebrew word - which was used in reference to the abode of the dead.

We find this word in the Old Testament - 65 times - - and almost half of the time - - this word is rendered - hell.

For example - it's in Psalm chapter 9 - verse 17 - where King David declared...

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

And in Proverbs 27 - verse 20 - King Solomon declared...

“Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.”

Knowing that Sheol is the place where the wicked are sent to receive the punishment they deserve...

...King David rejoiced as he realize that the LORD had delivered him from hell.

And not just from hell - - but from the lowest hell.

Here's how Brenton's Septuagint renders verse 13...

Psa 86:13 For thy mercy is great toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Not just from hell - but from the lowest hell.

According to Jewish tradition - God created Hell on the second day of creation.

This tradition also includes the belief that hell was divided up into seven different regions - one beneath the other.

These seven regions of hell each include seven subdivisions - which are supervised by ninety thousand Angels of Destruction.

And each subdivision also includes seven rivers of fire and seven of hail.

Jewish tradition also informs us that there are five different kinds of fire in hell.

One devours and absorbs - another devours and does not absorb - while the third absorbs and does not devour.

There is still another fire - which neither devours nor absorbs...

...and furthermore a fire - which devours fire.

There are also coals big as mountains - and coals big as hills - and coals as large as the Dead Sea, and coals like huge stones.

There are rivers of pitch and sulphur flowing and seething like live coals.

And then there are the scorpions - let's not forget about the scorpions.

And no - they will not rock you like a hurricane.

In every compartment of hell - there are believed to be seven thousand caves...

...and in every cave there are seven thousand crevices - and in every crevice - seven thousand scorpions.

Every scorpion has three hundred rings, and in every ring seven thousand pouches of venom...

...from which flow seven rivers of deadly poison.

And if a man handles one - he immediately bursts...

...as every limb is torn from his body - his bowels are cleft asunder...

...and he falls upon his face.

Now - listen - these are all extra-biblical beliefs - that can be found in the Legends of the Jews.

The reason I bring this up is because - when King David tells us that the Lord delivered him from the lowest depths of hell...

...these traditions help us to understand what he may've been thinking.

And while we don't really know how horrible hell will be - what we do know is that...

...it's a place of torments - where the fire is never quenched and the worm never dies.

With that being the case - we can rejoice in knowing that God the Father sent His only begotten Son...

...to receive the punishment that we deserve - so that those who trust in Him - can be delivered from the lowest hell.

And it's for this reason that King David praised the Lord with all of his heart...

...knowing that his deliverance was further evidence of our Savior's mercy.

That being the case - David was ready to glorify the name of the Lord - forevermore.

With this as our focus - let's consider the way that King David glorified God - here in the 86th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 14 - where David declared...

Psa 86:14 O God, the proud have risen against me,
And a mob of violent men have sought my life,
And have not set You before them.

Psa 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious,
Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

Here in these verses - we find King David - singing the praises of the One Who delivered him from every enemy.

And as he recalled the way that the Lord saved him from those who rose up against him...

...King David proclaimed the praised of the God - Who is full of compassion.

That word - compassion - found there in the middle of verse 15 - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which was used in reference to the tender affections of the Lord.

And as we consider the affection love of the Lord - we can rejoice in knowing that He is full of compassion.

David also sang the praises of the God Who is gracious.

That word - gracious - found there in the middle of verse 15 - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which was used in reference to the way that God responds to the repentant...

...as He spares them from the punishment they deserve.

David also described the Lord as being Longsuffering.

That word - Longsuffering - found there in the middle of verse 15 - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which can also be rendered - patient - or - slow to anger.

And isn't it nice to know that - the Lord is patient - as he waits for sinners to repent.

We should also notice that King David celebrated the God who is abundant in mercy and truth.

That word - mercy - refers to the goodness - and lovingkindness of the Lord.

While the word - truth - refers to His unwavering faithfulness...

...as well as the veracity of His judgments - and His testimonies.

Now - as we consider how the Lord our God is full of compassion, and gracious, - Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth...

...then - it only makes sense for us to spend time - prayerfully seeking His help.

And while it's been said that - Prayer is the last refuge of a scoundrel...

...I encourage you to realize that - prayer should be our first response to every problem.

And the reason why is because - the Lord is the One Who can help us in every situation.

Let's consider how King David explained it - here in the 86th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 16 - where he declared...

Psa 86:16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!
Give Your strength to Your servant,
And save the son of Your maidservant.

Psa 86:17 Show me a sign for good,
That those who hate me may see it and be ashamed,
Because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Here in the final stanza of this song - we find King David - asking the Lord to strengthen him and save him from the enemy.

And as we consider this final prayer request - we must not fail to notice that...

...King David was counting on the One - Who had already helped him in the past.

And not only that - but - he also remembered the ways that the Lord had Already comforted him.

Now - as we consider the words - help and comfort - - I can't help but to think about the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Let's consider how the Lord Jesus put it - in John chapter 14 - it's beginning at verse 16 - where He declared...

Jhn 14:16 "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

Jhn 14:17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Jhn 14:18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Here in these verses - we find the Lord Jesus - describing the Holy Spirit as our Heavenly Helper.

And we can rejoice in knowing that those who trust in Jesus - will receive help - from the Helper.

It's also interesting to note that the Greek word translated Helper - can also be rendered - Comforter.

So we see that the Helper is also the Comforter...

...Who was sent to comfort Christians - in our time of need.

This was precisely the point that the Lord Jesus was making - in John chapter 16 - it's verse 7 - where He declared...

Jhn 16:7 "I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

I like the way that the scholars who created the Amplified Version of the Bible rendered this verse - they put it like this...

Jhn 16:7 I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengthener, Standby) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him (the Holy Spirit) to you [to be in close fellowship with you].

The Holy Spirit is our Helper - and our Comforter - He is our Advocate - and our Intercessor...

...He is our Counselor - and our Strengthener.

And He is here to help us pray in the way that we should.