

Sunday, April 14, 2024 am

COMMUNICATING WITH GOD (10)

Examples of Prayer

David, a man of prayer

We have been studying about prayer, the avenue God has provided for us to communicate with Him. The past few lessons in this study have examined the “prayer life” of various Biblical characters – including Jesus, Paul and an examination of many in the Old Testament who prayed (Moses, Abraham, Hannah (Samuel’s mother), Daniel, Nehemiah and others. There is one more OT example of prayer I want to examine today – David.

I. David, a man of prayer

- a. David as a Bible character is mentioned more in scripture than anyone else, except Jesus. He is described as “a man after God’s own heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7, Acts 13:22). It is very evident that prayer was a part of this. We see that in many of his psalms which we will notice in a while.
- b. David prayed throughout his life.
 - i. 1 Samuel 23:11, on an occasion as he is fleeing from Saul, he inquires of the Lord for direction. The LORD answered him.
 - ii. Psalm 142 was penned by David as he was in a cave fleeing from king Saul (cf. 1 Samuel 22:1). The superscription says, A Contemplation Of David. A Prayer When He Was in the Cave.
 - iii. 2 Samuel 7:27 records David mentioning that he was praying to God. This is the text where the LORD promises to establish his kingdom after he requested to build a house for God (which Solomon would build). When Nathan told him what the Lord had said, his prayer is recorded in vs. 18-29.
 - iv. 2 Samuel 12:16 tells us as his illegitimate child with Bathsheba was ill, “*David therefore pleaded with God for the child.*”
 - v. 2 Samuel 15:31, as David in his later life must escape the city of Jerusalem because of an uprising by his son Absalom we find David praying that the counsel of Ahithophel be turned into foolishness.
 - vi. 2 Samuel 24:10, 17, after another sin, David takes responsibility and goes to the LORD and prays for forgiveness. As a plague is afflicting the people David prays specifically to the LORD again, asking that he be the one held responsible and receive the punishment (he cared about the people). The LORD gives him further direction and the plague stops.
 - vii. These are specific prayers, mostly at times of crisis, clearly, he prayed continually.
- c. He encouraged prayer – Psalm 62:8 -*Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.*

II. The psalms and prayer

- a. David often declared that he was praying to God.
 - i. He often declared that he would pray – Psalm 4:1, *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.*
 - ii. Psalm 5:1-2, *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.*

- iii. Psalm 6:9, *The Lord has heard my supplication; The Lord will receive my prayer.*
 - iv. Psalm 17:1-3, the superscription is, "A prayer of David." *Hear a just cause, O Lord, Attend to my cry; Give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips. Let my vindication come from Your presence; Let Your eyes look on the things that are upright. You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*
 - v. Psalm 35:13 – he prayed for his enemies; *But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart.* Psalm 109:104, *In return for my love they are my accusers, But I give myself to prayer.*
 - vi. Psalm 55:16-17, *As for me, I will call upon God, And the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.*
 - vii. Prayers in psalms – 55:1, *Give ear to my prayer, O God, And do not hide Yourself from my supplication.*
- b. What did David pray for?
- i. **He praised God** – Psalm 36:5-10, after expressing his concerns for the wicked, David acknowledges various qualities of God. WHEN we pray in praise to God, we would do well to study the psalms and therein learn HOW to praise God in our prayers. Psalm 138:1-2, *I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods I will sing praises to You. I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name...*
 - ii. **He thanked God** – Psalm 30, attributed to "the dedication of the house of David". The timing of this psalm is uncertain, but reading it clearly applies to times in David's life as he is delivered (again). It begins, "*I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my foes rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried to You, and You healed me... Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me; Lord, be my helper!*" You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, **I will give thanks to You forever.**" Psalm 100 calls for thanksgiving to Him, (4-5) *Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.*
 - iii. **In repentance and confession** – Psalm 38:1. David uttered several psalms of repentance. Most prevalent is Psalm 51, ("*Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions...*"). But let us notice a few verses of Psalm 38. These psalms are related to his sin with Bathsheba, the cover-up and the consequences of his sins. LESSON: When we acknowledge our sins, how FULLY should we admit what we are guilty of? Remember, you CANNOT hide from God (Hebrews 4:13, psalm 139:7ff, *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?*
 - iv. **A psalm of vindication** – Psalm 26. The occasion is not mentioned, but David is ABLE to approach God know his integrity and righteousness (NOT self-righteousness). When we are troubled, we CAN ask God for strength and help. How He answers, is up to Him!
 - v. **A prayer for deliverance** – Psalm 143. David is troubled and prays that God deliver him, possibly there is some forgiveness involved.

- vi. ***A general prayer*** – Psalm 86. As a concluding example of David’s prayers, we notice a prayer that includes many of the qualities we have noted. He praises and thanks God. He requests that God be with him and guide him. He asks for mercy and ultimately that god be glorified no matter what, even in him.

III. What can we learn from the prayers of David?

- a. Recall, how at the outset we noted that David was “a man after God’s own heart.” We read that BEFORE we are actually introduced to him. This tells us that he had already been faithful to God. He communicated with God.
- b. WE can learn from David HOW to pray. Looking at the psalms, we find many examples of what to pray for. We also see different ways to praise God. A good exercise in proper prayer is to read and study the psalms. Note the wording of a particular psalm and make it personal to you.
- c. Write out your prayers. A good exercise in learning how to pray (or broaden the scope of your prayers), is to write them out. Such prayers are well thought out and can have as great an impact as the prayer uttered extemporaneously.

Truly, David was a man of prayer. With more than any other we get insight into what that meant and how it was done. His prayers kept him humble and gave him access to God, though he was far from perfect. Let us learn from his example both when and how to pray. Think about it!