

## “God Hears Us, God Helps Us Psalm 5:1-12

It doesn't matter whether I'm shopping for groceries, attending a sporting event, or attending some theme park, I generally don't pay much attention to messages that come across the loudspeaker. I'm in my own little bubble, focused on why I'm there: to pick up a loaf of bread, enjoy the game, or have fun. It startles me then when I hear my name when I'm not expecting it.

It happened one year at Cedar Point. I had taken the youth group down for the annual trek to ride roller coasters and eat fair food. On my way to the Blue Streak or the Wild Mine Ride, I heard my name come across the louder speaker for all 20,000 or so thrill seekers to hear. I was to report to the security office. That got my attention.

**When you want to get someone's attention so that they will listen to you, what do you do?**

In **Psalm 5**, David wanted to get God's attention. He was encountering some life situations for which he needed God's help. **How does someone go about getting God's attention?** One simple way is to say His name. That's what David does in the opening of this psalm. Notice in **verses 1-3** that David petitions God for His attention.

### I. DAVID PETITIONS GOD FOR HIS ATTENTION – vv. 1-3

Some scholars suggest that this psalm, like **Psalm 3** which we covered last week, is related to the time Absalom attempted to seize the throne from his father causing King David to flee Jerusalem. They refer to **verses 9-10** to support that theory because they talk about deceit, intrigue and rebellion. But there is nothing specific to suggest that is the case in this psalm. The truth is, David faced a lot of enemies where what is stated in those verses could be the case. Regardless of the situation, David needed to get God's attention. In the opening verses David not only wants God to hear what he has to say, He wants God to hearken to his words and do something about his situation.

So, it's really hard to put some perspective or have some background behind the psalm other than to suggest that for application to us, it could be any number of things for which we need to get ahold of God so He takes notice of what we're going through. This is a one size fits all kind of petition so that no matter what you're going through, call on God.

Reading **verses 1-2**, we see that David's petition is compelling.

### A. David's Petition Is Compelling – vv. 1-2

In 1971 Carole King recorded this hit song:

When you're down and troubled  
And you need some love and care  
And nothing, nothing is going right  
Close your eyes and think of me  
And soon I will be there  
To brighten up even your darkest nights

You just call out my name  
And you know wherever I am  
I'll come running  
To see you again  
Winter, spring, summer, or fall  
All you have to do is call  
And I'll be there  
You've got a friend

When David was down and troubled and dark clouds loomed overhead and nothing seemed to go right he had someone he could call anytime, anywhere. He knew that God was always there to hear and respond. This isn't just a casual conversation from David – “Hey God, it's me just checking in with You” kind of prayer. He's got some troubling things on his mind that are urgent and he needs God to come to his aid. He didn't want God to just listen to him, he wanted God to do something about the predicament he was in. In what he says in these opening verses, you can sense his distress.

**“Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my sighing.”**

David asked God to ‘give ear.’ It means to broaden the ear with the hand. We've all done it. We cup our hands behind the ears so we can hear better.

**“Give ear to my sighing.”** The KJV uses the word **‘meditation.’** In this context, it means to murmur or whisper. The only other time this particular Hebrew word is used is found in **Psalm 39:3** where it’s translated **‘musing’**. It hints at prayer that is unspoken because of an aching and longing of the heart due to some urgency from sorrow, something that is beyond our ability to articulate in words.

Sometimes the need is beyond our ability to speak words and so it is a cry of the heart. That’s what Paul wanted to convey in **Romans 8:26-27** **“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”**

I think David is saying he doesn’t really know how to put in words what he wants to say as he moans about the situation he is in, but he knows God hears and understands the cry of his heart.

This is not a sigh of contentment like the refreshing feeling you get when you’re sitting out on the beach relaxing as you listen to the soft waves lapping up against the shore or feeling the warm breeze blowing against your face and being thankful that everything is going well in your world.

It’s not the sigh of contentment of a morning out on the porch sitting in your rocking chair with a hot cup of cocoa listening to the birds’ chirp as you watch the sun rise over the horizon content that life has been good to you.

David uses a word that means to emit a long, deep, audible breath expressing sadness, or sorrow, or tiredness. It’s an expression of exhaustion and pain. Whatever he’s going through right now, to use an old expression, he’s going through the ringer.

**My mom had one of those ringer washers. The clothes would go through the wash cycle and then after it was done, she would take the clothes and run them through those ringers to squeeze out all the**

**water so she could hang them on the clothesline.**

If I were a betting man, I’d bet that each of you has been through the ringer of life a time or two. Your circumstances have squeezed you and you need someone to call on. I hope, like David, you have learned to call on the Lord in your sighing.

**“Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to You I pray.”**

In **verse 2** he asks God to **‘listen’**. In the KJV it’s the word **‘hearken.’** That literally means to pick up the ear. We’ve all seen a dog perk up his ears listening to some sound that we can’t hear.

The word **‘cry’** means to call out for help, to deliver or save. David says “don’t just hear me, do something.”

He wasn’t asking for the kind of help the Beatles sang about.

**Help! I need somebody**

**Help! Not just anybody**

**Help! You know I need someone**

**Help!**

**Help me if you can, I'm feeling down**

**And I do appreciate you being 'round**

**Help me get my feet back on the ground**

**Won't you please, please help me?**

David didn’t call his advisors.

He didn’t need a self-help book.

He didn’t reach out to his allies.

He didn’t even rely on his own personal experience or expertise.

Here is David who is the King of Israel. He is the most powerful person in the world. And yet he knew there was only one person who could help him. He called on God His king.

Notice the personal nature of this relationship and notice that this is a habitual practice, something he did regularly. From his youth, God was personal to him. God was someone he spoke with regularly. Everyone in the kingdom bowed to him, but He bowed to God. Everyone was subservient to him, but he knew he answered to one higher than him. God was his sovereign king and ruler. There was only one person to whom he called for help.

Here's some advice from something Jeremiah experienced. It's found in **Jeremiah 33:1-3**.

King Zedekiah had thrown Jeremiah in prison where he remained under guard until Jerusalem fell at the hands of the Babylonians. God, the one who created the universe says in times of trouble call on Him and He will answer you.

**What are you going through right now that you need help with? Have you cried out to God?**

Notice that David's petition is not only compelling, it is with confidence.

## **B. David's Petition Is With Confidence – v. 3**

Have you ever watched a basketball game where the opposing team scores 15 or 20 unanswered points and you wonder when the coach is going to call a timeout?

David didn't wake up the next morning after the crisis had hit and say to himself "I think I'll see how this plays out through the day before I call on God." Instead, he began his day, in the morning, crying out to God. He began his day seeking God's help.

Jesus had the same practice.

**Mark 1:35 "In the morning, a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."**

David didn't wait to see what would happen in the day to see if he needed to pray about what was going on, he started his day crying out to God about his situation.

Tony Evans gives us some sound advice: **"The more dangerous, difficult, and desperate the circumstances, the more urgent it is to begin each day seeking God's intervention and watching expectantly for Him to answer."**

David's first thoughts each day were about prayer. Later on, David would write these beautiful words: **"O God, thou art my God, early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh longs for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."** (Psalm 63:1)

Instead of **'early'**, the NIV translates the word **'eagerly.'** The word early can refer to time, but it can also be a desire. David is saying he couldn't wait to begin his day with the Lord. I think we can take **Psalm 5:3** to mean both, he was eager to start his day with the Lord and bring his need to God's attention.

Remember the lyrics of the song we sometimes sing:  
In the morning when I rise,  
Give me Jesus.

Spurgeon wrote: **"Let us give God the mornings of our days and morning of our lives. Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night."**

But let's make clear we understand that when David is petitioning God here, he is doing so in faith. He has every confidence that God not only hears, but answers. **How do we know that?** Look at the end of **verse 3 "in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation."**

**Psalm 27:14 "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."**

**Matthew 21:22 "And all things, whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."**

It's confident faith. My ESV study Bible describes it as **"looking around and ahead with expectant faith."**

The writer of Hebrews put this kind of expectant faith in these terms **"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."** (Hebrews 11:1)

The author continues by telling us in **verse 6** that faith believes that God exists and that He will reward those who diligently seek Him. David is seeking God early in the morning, expectant that God will answer him.

David's petition is compelling, but it is with confidence as he seeks God's attention. **Why does David cry out to God?** He wants God to act.

## **II. DAVID PRAYS TO GOD FOR HIS ACTION – vv. 4-6, 9-10**

In these verses we get a picture of the distress that

David was undergoing and the reason for his crying out to God for help and what he hopes God will do. In **verses 4-6** David acknowledges God's attitude about the wicked.

### A. David Acknowledges God's Attitude About the Wicked – vv. 4-6

David focuses on God's holiness.  
He doesn't take pleasure in sin.  
He doesn't live with the wicked.  
The arrogant won't stand in His presence.  
He hates all who do wrong.  
He destroys those who lie.  
He abhors those who are bloodthirsty and deceitful.

The bottom line is that God doesn't tolerate sin, He doesn't take pleasure in wickedness.

That word **'abhor'** is a very strong word. It shows up in a few places throughout the Bible. **Romans 12:9** gives some direct instructions when it tells us to **"Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."**

It means to regard with disgust, horror, or hatred or to find detestable. It can mean to shudder when you think about it or to render foul or loathsome. In his little booklet *My Heart, Christ's Home*, Robert Munger describes the word **'abhor'** as making someone sick to their stomach. Sin is repugnant to God. It is an offense to Him.

David says God's holiness is such that He hates it. Sin is anything that is contrary to His character.

David sees what is happening to him as sin and not that God needed a refresher course on the subject, David brings these sins to God's attention and asks him to do something about it because of His holiness.

There are those who look around at all the rampant wickedness, corruption, and vileness in the world and wonder why God, if He is supposed to be all powerful, can't do anything about all the sin. They conclude that God isn't as powerful as He is made out to be.

Others believe that God is off in some other corner of the universe unconcerned about what is going on down here on little planet earth, just waiting for us

to self-destruct.

That's essentially what Israel thought as Isaiah explains: **"Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God'?" (Isaiah 40:27-28) Don't you see what's happening? Don't you care?**

If God is really there and if He really cares and if He is all powerful, He could do something about all this sin. But as one author pointed out, God is not neutral about sin and David understands God's attitude toward sin. He is appealing to God's holiness. We don't have to go very far in our reading of the Bible to know how much God hates sin. We learn from **Genesis 3** that God banished Adam and Eve from His presence and cast them out of the Garden of Eden because of their sin. In **Genesis 4** He put a curse on Cain for killing Abel. He gave the Israelites laws to live by and said they would be punished for their disobedience. Throughout the Bible we see His abhorrence of sin. His holiness requires His justice. His hatred for sin demands His judgement.

**Do we have that same kind of hatred toward sin, or have we gotten so accustomed to it that we are just overlook it either in our own lives or in what is going on around us? Or are we willing to call on God to act in His holiness?**

That's what we see in **verses 9-10**.

### B. David Asks God's Actions Towards the Wicked – vv. 9-10

The wicked people David was having to deal with were speaking words of deceitfulness. They could not be trusted. He knew what Jeremiah would later state that **"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (or desperately wicked), who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)** Solomon would encourage us to **"Guard our heart, above all else, for it is the wellspring of life." (Proverbs 4:23)**

Jesus said that whatever comes out of a man's heart is what makes him unclean (**Mark 7:14-23**).

A footnote in my study Bible says that **"the most**

frequent weapon against the psalmist is the tongue.”

**Psalm 12:1-4**

**Psalm 57:4** likens the tongue to a sharp sword. **“I am in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts – men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.”**

**Psalm 64:3-4** **“They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim their words like deadly arrows. They shoot from ambush at the innocent man; they shoot at him suddenly, without fear.”**

**James 3:8** says that **“no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”**

We have all felt the stinging barbs of words and all of us have most likely said the same.

But let’s be clear here, David isn’t asking God to take revenge on his enemies for him. He was asking God to mete out judgment that was in keeping with His holiness.

Let’s heed the advice of the Apostle Paul who wrote: **“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” (Rom 12:19)**

David writes **“Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall. Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against You.”**

David is saying that their rebellion was really rebellion against God. And David was asking that their own wicked schemes would come back on them. That’s what happened to Haman. He plotted evil against the Jews in the book of Esther. He wanted the praise of the people and yet he had to lead his enemy, Mordecai, around on a horse and give him the praise he thought he deserved. He wanted Mordecai to hang, so he built a lofty gallows but he ended up getting hung on it instead.

The psalmist declared grounds for a guilty verdict. They were liars and murderers and deceivers. But if we just let God do what He does in His timing, it will all turn out. David believed that God’s judgment was just and appropriate.

Matthew Henry notes that **“God causes the wicked to be judged and his plans to backfire.”**

Sure, go ahead and pray about the wickedness of others, but leave the final verdict and judgement to God.

There is a lot of wickedness that’s going on all around us. Our justice system seems broken when people get away with crimes or they walk out without a guilty plea on some technicality. **But can we leave the final judgment to God to mete out? Can we wait for Him to act in His holiness?**

David looked around at those who were wicked and found pleasure in evil, who were out to do him harm with their words, but David has one more thing to say. It’s a note of praise for God’s attributes.

### **III. DAVID PRAISES GOD FOR HIS ATTRIBUTES – vv. 7-8, 11-12**

In spite of what is happening to him, he finds reason to praise God. In **verse 7-8**, David praises God for His mercy.

#### **A. David Praises God For His Mercy – vv. 7-8**

The dictionary defines mercy as compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one’s power to punish or harm.

Mercy is a divine attribute of God. **Ephesians 2:4** says that He is rich in mercy while **II Samuel 24:14 (Daniel 9:9)** says that His mercy is great.

**Lamentations 3:22-23** tell us that we are not consumed because of His mercy.

GotQuestions notes that **“Mercy is revealed in the actions God takes to relieve suffering and demonstrate His faithfulness and steadfast love. A brief biblical definition of mercy is “the gift of God’s undeserved kindness and compassion.”**

Mercy can also be defined as God not giving us what we deserve. So when we read in Scripture about God’s lovingkindness, favor, steadfast love, or compassion, they are describing God’s mercy toward us. David understood God’s mercy. But just as justice is a divine attribute of God, so is His mercy. If God had no mercy toward us, all of us

would be found guilty and stand before God for His judgment. But His mercy is also a divine attribute which balances out His justice, so that those who seek His mercy and forgiveness through Christ's finished work on the cross will not be brought into condemnation.

Because of God's mercy, David could come into God's presence at the Tabernacle and show reverence to God by submitting to Him. Reverence is a recognition of who God is and the mercy He shows.

Matthew Henry writes that **"The mercy of God should ever be both the foundation of our hopes and the fountain of our joy."**

**When was the last time you praised God for His mercy?** Every day we ought to give thanks that His mercy and compassion are new every morning, otherwise we have nothing to expect but His judgment and He would be just in meting it out on us. David praised God for His mercy.

God's mercy stems from His righteousness and David wanted to be led by that righteousness instead of being led by his own emotions which might cause him to seek revenge on his own and go against God's plan for the wicked.

Let's keep in mind that God wants to extend mercy to everyone so that no one will perish.

### **Ezekiel 18:20-23**

He gives each person the opportunity to experience His profound and eternal love by admitting sin and trusting Christ as Savior. **(II Peter 3:9; John 3:16)** How we respond to God determines whether we will receive His mercy or His judgment.

**Psalm 32:1-2 "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."**

David wanted to be led by God's righteousness which he acknowledges is the right path.

David then closes this psalm with praise for God's protection.

## **B. David Praises God For His Protection –**

The wicked will find God's hand heavy against them in judgment as they are punished, but those who choose to follow God will experience His protection. They will find Him to be their refuge. They will find joy in that security a joy that offers praise to the Lord.

Spurgeon notes that the wicked may be glad now, but there will be a day when they will weep because of God's judgment on them. But, while the believer may weep now because of some trial, there is a day and for eternity when they will be joyful.

And because God surrounds the righteous like a protective shield, there isn't anything that can rob us of that inheritance. We think of a shield as something that is held out in front of the soldier, but David describes God as a shield that surrounds us.

David has both confidence and hope in the mercy of God.

### **Have you experienced the mercy of God?**

If you have, then give Him praise.

If you have yet to know God's mercy, He is waiting for you as He did the guy in the Temple who cried out **"God, have mercy on me a sinner."** He stands ready and willing to both receive you and forgive you.

There are only two options, two destinies.

We can receive His pardon, or we can receive His punishment. We can be led by His righteousness or be led in His wrath.