



Psalm 86:  
David Teaches Israel How to Pray

# Psalms: A Book Of Prayer

- Psalms was the inspired prayer and praise book of the Old Testament.
- Of the 238 direct quotations from the O.T. in the N.T., 116 of them are from the Book of Psalms.
- It was the second most often quoted book by Jesus from the O.T.

# Psalms: A Book Of Prayer

- Psalms is a versatile book dealing with every emotion in the human spectrum.
  - The Psalms are models of devotion, sources of doctrine, songs of comfort and hope, and prayers of righteous men
  - The Psalms are men speaking to God about the things that God had already spoken to man.
  - “Prayer is pleading the promises of God.” (Ashley Johnson 1897)
  - They show us how to effectively and acceptably pray to and praise God.
  - They can be used effectively to teach and minister to others

# Psalms: A Book Of Prayer

- It is important that we learn to “speak God’s language” as we communicate with Him. We can do this by saturating our mind with scripture
  - Col. 3:16-17 - “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

# Psalms: A Book Of Prayer

- Cultivate the habit of pleading the promises of God to Him
  - Psalm 143:1 - “Hear my prayer, O LORD, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, And in Your righteousness.”
  - Use all Bible prayers as models of your own, not just the Psalms.

# Psalms: A Book Of Prayer

- Consider Paul's prayer
  - Col. 1:9-12 - "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."

# Psalm 86: David Teaches Israel How to Pray

- Psalm 86 has 15 petitions to God driven by a strong sense of urgency
  - Psalm 86:1-7 - David cries out for God to hear and act on his behalf.
  - Psalm 86:8-10 - David praises God as the only true God
  - Psalm 86:11-13 - David asks God to teach him His way and to move his heart to reverence
  - Psalm 86:14-17 - David appeals for mercy and grace for deliverance

# Psalm 86: David Teaches Israel How to Pray

- Psalms was as much of a prayer book for Israel as it was a song book
  - God was teaching His children how to pray at a time when they relied on priests and prophets to do their praying for them
- The Psalms, especially Psalm 86, teach us how to pray better
  - Why should we pray?
  - To whom should we pray?
  - How should we pray?
  - For what should we pray?

# Why Should We Pray?

- We should pray because we have great needs.
- Psalm 86:1 - “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; For I am poor and needy.”
  - David urgently cries out to God for a response.
  - Humankind has always expected God to answer their cries swiftly, decisively, directly
  - **Lesson one** - God will answer the prayer in His own time and in His own manner
  - **Lesson two** - The children of God will have to patiently wait for it

# Why Should We Pray?

- Psalm 86:2, 16 - “Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; Save Your servant who trusts in You! ... 16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me! Give Your strength to Your servant, And save the son of Your maidservant.”
  - The fact that he cries out for God to save him shows that David knew he could not save himself.
  - ***Lesson three*** - Prayer is a confession that we are not sufficient to meet all of our own needs

# Why Should We Pray?

- David speaks of trouble and violent men seeking his life
- Psalm 86:7, 14 - “In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, For You will answer me... 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”
  - ***Lesson four*** - Prayer is our healthiest response to fear and our best defense against evil
  - ***Lesson five*** - Prayer should be our first resort

# Why Should We Pray?

- Why do we often fail to pray for our greatest needs?
  - Our pride blinds us to how needy we really are, so that we rely on ourselves or on others or on some secular means to overcome our troubles.
  - “You can do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.” (John Bunyan)

# Why Should We Pray?

- Another reason people do not cry out to God to save them from their sins is that they do not see themselves as sinners.
- Not only sinners, but the saved are also vulnerable to sin
  - 1Peter 5:8 - “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

## Psalm 86:

### David Teaches Israel How to Pray

- God inspired the Psalmists to teach His people how to pray.
- Every Christian, man and woman, can learn to talk to God in prayer in a more Biblical, spiritual, effective, and moving manner by studying AND using the prayer Psalms.
- We considered “Why Should We Pray?”
- Let us now examine:
  - To whom should we pray?
  - How should we pray?
  - For what should we pray?

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- We should pray to the only true God, great in power, love, grace, and mercy.
  - Psalm 86:5, 15 - “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You... 15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.”

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- God is the only true God, great in power
  - Psalm 86:8-10 - “Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; Nor are there any works like Your works. 9 All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name. 10 For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.”

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- Seven times in this psalm, David uses the name, Adonai, or Lord (3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15), emphasizing God's lordship and sovereignty.
  - By referring to “the gods” in verse 8, David speaks of those things that men view as gods, whether idols, demons, or themselves. Nothing compares to God and His true power
  - 1John 4:4 - “We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”
  - **Lesson six** - We can pray with confidence to the only God of power

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- God Who is great in love, grace, and mercy.
  - Psalm 86:3, 5, 15-16 - “Be merciful to me, O Lord, For I cry to You all day long... 5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You... 15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth. 16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me! Give Your strength to Your servant, And save the son of Your maidservant.”
  - David entreats God to be gracious to him 4 times

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- Ex. 34:6-7 - “And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.’”
- This great self-revelation of God is one of the most frequently quoted texts in the Old Testament (Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Psalm 103:8, 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2)

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- *Lesson seven* - We can pray with the confidence that God will benevolently, compassionately listen to our prayers
  - Heb. 4:16 - “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- Psalm 86:2 - “Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; Save Your servant who trusts in You!”
- David asks God to preserve his soul and adds “for I am a godly man” He is appealing to the (hesed) covenant love he and God share toward each another. He is not boasting, but speaking of his effort to keep his part of the covenant, pleading God to keep His, too

# To Whom Should We Pray?

- ***Lesson eight*** - The righteous can expect the Divine to hear and answer their prayers
  - 1John 3:21-22 - “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”
- ***Lesson nine*** - God’s lovingkindness, grace and mercy are inexhaustible; there will not be a time when He will be unreceptive to His children’s prayers

# How Should We Pray?

- Pray earnestly
  - “Those who come to God out of custom and formality, going through the motions of prayer, are less likely to be heard than those who earnestly pray out of the anguish of their souls.” (John Bunyan)
  - **Lesson ten** - Pray intensely from the heart or don't pray at all
  - Matt. 26:39 - “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”
  - Luke 5:12 - “And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

# How Should We Pray?

- Pray continually
  - Psalm 86:3 - “Be merciful to me, O Lord, For I cry to You all day long.”
  - 1Thes. 5:17 - “Pray without ceasing”
  - “Without ceasing” does not mean non-stop; rather, the word was used of a hacking cough and of repeated military assaults.
  - ***Lesson eleven*** - Prayer is more of an occupation than an invocation

# How Should We Pray?

- Pray thankfully
  - Psalm 86:12 - “I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore.”
  - 1Thes. 5:18 - “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
  - ***Lesson twelve*** - A prayer of faith is more about “Thank you, God, for what You have done for me,” than it is about “This is what I need You to do for me now”

# How Should We Pray?

- Pray humbly
  - Psalm 86:3, 16 - “Be merciful to me, O Lord, For I cry to You all day long... 16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me! Give Your strength to Your servant, And save the son of Your maidservant.”
  - Psalm 86:2, 4, 16 - He refers to himself as God’s servant and in need. These were not the kind of things a king would want to put in print for everyone to read
  - ***Lesson thirteen*** - Prince or pauper, it matters not who one is when he is on his knees before the Divine

# How Should We Pray?

- Pray in faith
  - Psalm 86:7, 13 - “In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, For You will answer me... 13 For great is Your mercy toward me, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.”
  - Faith is not a matter of closing your eyes to reality and leaping into the dark. Rather, faith rests on God’s revealed character and on how He has answered prayer so often in the past.

# How Should We Pray?

- Pray in faith
  - Faith does not presume to command God; faith knows if something is for our spiritual good and God's greater glory, He will do it
  - Luke 22:42 - "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."
  - ***Lesson fourteen*** - The petitioner knows that his prayer is less about what he wants than it is about what the wisdom of God wills

# For What Should We Pray?

- Pray for salvation - Psalm 86:2, 16
  - God answered this prayer through the Person of Jesus - Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10; 1Tim. 1:15
  - ***Lesson fifteen*** - Pray often for what is of ultimate importance.

# For What Should We Pray?

- Pray for joy in trials
  - Psalm 86:4 - “Rejoice the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.”
  - “We ought either to be rejoicing in the Lord, or pining after him! Ask God to make you miserable, unless His conscious presence makes you happy.” (C. H. Spurgeon)
  - ***Lesson sixteen*** - Prayer is a confession we will wait gladly for the Divine to answer, however long it takes and whatever form the answer takes.

# For What Should We Pray?

- Pray for a teachable, obedient, single-minded, reverent heart
  - Psalm 86:11 - “Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.”
  - Most of us instinctively pray for quick deliverance, but David prays that he will learn God’s ways so that he will walk in obedience to God’s truth. He prays that his loyalty will not be divided in his heart and mind
  - ***Lesson seventeen*** - Prayer helps us to remain unwavering during the trial, refusing to succumb to doubt

# For What Should We Pray?

- Pray for God's glory and supremacy over all
  - Psalm 86:9, 12 - "All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name... 12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore."
  - God allows trials to enter our lives, and we call on Him and glorify Him when He rescues us
  - Psalm 50:15 - "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

# For What Should We Pray?

- So in all of our troubles, we should be looking for ways to magnify the Lord, so that others will be drawn to Him
  - Psalm 86:5 - “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.”
  - ***Lesson eighteen*** - Pray that God will be glorified by others when they witness God answer our prayers, regardless of whether His answer and our requests are the same or not

# For What Should We Pray?

- President Abraham Lincoln prayed often through the burdens he faced during the Civil War. He later said, “I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had absolutely no other place to go.”