

Psalm 9 • Those who know Your name put their trust in You

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One of the things that we're going to be looking at here in Psalm chapter 9 and actually in the following Psalm as well, is how much it affects our prayer life when we simply know who God is when we know His character. And when His character is so connected to our understanding of His actions that it creates a place where faith can dwell and actually affect our prayer.

We're going to see that here Psalm chapter 9. We're going to go ahead and read through the whole Psalm and then we'll come back and talk a little bit about what's going on here.

Psalm chapter 9 it is written to the choir master. It's a Psalm of David and it goes like this,

"1 I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

2 I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

3 When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence.

4 For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne, giving righteous judgment.

5 You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their name forever and ever.

6 The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you rooted out; the very memory of them has perished.

7 But the LORD sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice,

8 and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.

9 The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

10 And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you." (ESV)

I want to stop for just a moment to call your attention to verse 10. It's a key verse; and I'll say that. And so keep that in your heart. That's a key verse.

Verse 11,

"Sing praises to the LORD, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds!

12 For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

13 Be gracious to me, O LORD! See my affliction from those who hate me, O you who lift me up from the gates of death,

14 that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation.

15 The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught.

16 The LORD has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.

17 The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall (not always) not perish forever.

19 Arise, O LORD! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you!

20 Put them in fear, O LORD! Let the nations know that they are but men!" (ESV)

Let's just pray for a moment, shall we?

Heavenly Fathers, we get into these verses here in this Psalm, would you please open our hearts. And fill us LORD with understanding and insight and help us LORD also to apply the things that we're seeing here in this Psalm. We ask you to guide and direct our hearts into all truth. And we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

I don't know if you noticed or not, but as you read through the verses of this Psalm, it's interesting that David is largely talking about the Lord in these, in this prayer and doing very little of talking to the Lord. And that's okay. Sometimes that's the way these kind of things go.

But if you were to take this Psalm and you will reduce it down just to the petition part, just to the prayer part. Not where David is talking about the Lord, but where he's talking to the Lord. I'll show you what it looks like on the screen here. It's basically these verses, its,

Psalms 9:13-14, 19-20

Be gracious to me, O LORD! See my affliction from those who hate me, O you who lift me up from the gates of death, that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation. Arise, O LORD! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you! Put them in fear, O LORD! Let the nations know that they are but men!

Be gracious to me, O LORD! See my affliction from those who hate me, O you who lift me up from the gates of death, that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation. Arise, O LORD! (again, part of his prayer) Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you! Put them in fear, O LORD! (And he says,) Let the nations know that they are but men!

Interesting, isn't it? You take just from these petitions alone, you see that David is praying for relief from his afflictions. He's even asking to be spared from death. Did you see that? He asked the Lord to give him more time to be able to lift up praises to the name of the Lord. And then finally, he simply asks the Lord to move decisively on behalf of those who have set their hearts to oppose the purposes of God. And that's essentially the petition aspect of this Psalm. It's a very small portion of the Psalm.

The largest section of this Psalm is David talking about God in the midst of his afflictions, in the midst of his difficulties, in the midst of his challenges. He's just reciting over and over all these things that are about God. And you'll notice that in this Psalm also he uses multiple titles for those who he says are opposed to God. Let me put these up on the screen for you.

- **My enemies**
- **The nations (5x)**
- **The wicked (3x)**
- **The enemy**

He calls them **My enemies**. 5 times he refers to them as **The nations**. 3 times as **The wicked**. And then once as **The enemy**. And then if you contrast those titles with those of the ones who are being affected by the enemy, you come up with these next titles.

- **The oppressed**
- **Those who know your Name**
- **Those who seek You**
- **The afflicted**
- **The needy**
- **The poor**

The oppressed, Those who know your Name, Those who seek You, The afflicted, The needy, and The poor. You can see this is what David is talking about in this Psalm.

He's making reference to the wicked. He's talking about how they are constantly oppressing those who are poor and needy. And then David expresses his own issues and his own afflictions, and then makes his request to the Lord, that God might move and move powerfully.

Now, here's what's interesting. I find it very interesting about this Psalm. David makes several statements, you'll notice, that make it sound as if God had already brought judgment upon his enemies.

In other words, you see him praying in this Psalm about, here's what's going on; Lord, please deliver me; save me from my affliction; save me from the snares of death. Those are the words of someone who is needy. Right? Who needs God to act on his behalf.

But then did you notice how many times David actually makes reference to God having already moved. He, in other words, he talks about his enemies stumbling and perishing before the presence of the Lord. Look at verses 5 and 6. Here David makes it sound like the final judgment has already taken place. He says in verse 5, "*You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their names forever and ever.*"

Now notice that David doesn't say you will or you are going to, he says, you have, and you've done these things, you have rebuked, *"you have made the wicked perish, you have blotted out their name forever and ever."*

Look at verse 6. He says, *"The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you rooted out; and the very memory of them has perished."* Notice that language. Notice the tense of how he's speaking as if those things have already taken place. They've already happened.

And yet we get down to verses 19 and 20 as we already put up on the screen. If you look again in your Bible. And again, you see David's petition *"Arise. O LORD,..."* He's calling on the Lord to move to respond. Right?

He says, and look what he says here, *"Let not man prevail;..."* And then he says, *"let the nations be judged..."* Earlier he'd said that He'd already judged them. But now he says, *"let the nations be judged before you! Put them in fear."* And let them know how insignificant they really are; speaking about that, let them know that they are just men."

What I've shown you here are these interesting sort of statements that David is making related to calling upon the Lord to meet his need. But then declaring in the part of this Psalm that is not petition, declaring that the Lord has done it. That the Lord has accomplished it. That it is a done deal.

How in the world do we reconcile these statements that appear almost to be at odds? Well, we reconcile them in what I like to call, the language of faith. Because in the language of faith, that which is future in the Lord, is already accomplished.

Now that's a difficult thing for you and I sometimes to lay hold of. We are so, caught, for lack of a better word, in time. We live within the context of time. As I've said to you many times. And we don't have the freedom to move outside of time, except by faith. And that is what you're hearing David do in this Psalm, where he speaks of what is going on in his current life. And he speaks of the difficulty that it's causing. And he calls upon the Lord to move and deliver him but then he moves beyond time by faith. And he speaks of the actions of the Lord as if they are accomplished.

And the reason I'm bringing this out in this Psalm is because this is a very common tool that David employs in the context of his prayers. Many, many times you'll see what appeared to be a contradiction. Where he asks something of the Lord and then talks like it's already done.

But he's doing that on purpose because he's using the language of faith, which for David, and this is very important, is based upon knowing God and who He is, and His character, and His promises. And understanding that God is a righteous God who will judge the wicked. David had absolutely no doubt about the fact that God is going to judge the wicked. There's no question in his mind.

He can talk of it as if it's a done deal. He can speak of the judgments of the Lord as if they're past. Even though he, in his own prayer, he's calling upon the Lord to judge the wicked. But he speaks of the Lord as if they've already occurred.

Listen again to verses 7 and 8. Look with me there. He says, *"But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice; and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with righteousness."* Do you hear what he's saying here? David is declaring the just nature of God. He's saying, in essence, if you and I were to summarize verses 7 and 8, we would simply say, God is just.

And what that means is, He can't sweep anything under the rug. It's not possible. God can't sweep it under the rug. Since that's the case, we can speak of His judgments, we can speak of His justice as if it is a finished deal. Which is what David does, even though it has not yet occurred.

Now this is what many times sets our prayers and David's prayers apart. Because you see, we don't usually take that leap of faith to look beyond our current circumstances. And what we do is we just fixate on our current circumstances. And we look at the bleakness of what's happening in our lives. And it can be very bleak at times and that's just where we live. That's our residence.

Well, David understood the bleakness of the right now. But he also firmly laid hold of the not yet, by faith in his life, but he spoke of it as if it were the already. And that is what really sets his prayers apart.

In fact, you'll notice in verse 18, David actually reconciles his faith in the finished work of God with the not yet. In other words, the present, where he's still hurting, people are still hurting. And he says in verse 18, *"For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever."*

Isn't that an interesting statement? Because David is admitting right here, by saying that, the needy will not always be forgotten. That right now it looks like they're being forgotten. And right now, it looks like the poor are perishing. But that's not always going to be the case.

And David is once again injecting his faith in the future work of God and the justice of God by essentially saying, something that my wife loves to say, anytime a difficult season of life presents itself. She says, it won't always be this way. She likes to tell me that because I'm a wimp. And like if I get a cold and I've had a cold for like two days, I act like I've had a cold for my entire life. I've never lived a day in my life when I didn't have a cold. That's the way it feels. And so, I don't think I'm the only man, wimp here. Well, anyway, she likes to say to me, it's not always going to be this way. And you know what? She's right.

And David is essentially saying it, but he's saying it for different reasons. He's saying it's not always going to be this way, because God. Because God is just. Because God is not a God who's going to sweep things away or sweep things under the rug or forget to bring about his righteous judgments. God will do these things.

And so this is where we come back to verse 10 which I told you when we were reading through it, to pay attention to because it's a key part of the verse. Look at verse 10 with me one more time. *"And those, he says, who know your name, put their trust in you,...* I want you to think about that. *"...those who know your name..."*

It doesn't mean those who know His name as in His name is Jehovah or something like that. It means to know God's name is the same thing as to believe in His name or to trust in His name. It's to trust, to believe, and to know everything He has declared to be true about Himself.

David is saying here, those who know Your name are going to put their trust in You. Well, guess what? The converse is also true. Those who don't know His name are not going to put their trust in Him. Why? Well, we've already answered the question. Because they don't know who He is and they have not applied who He is to their situation. In other words, they haven't applied God's character to their personal situation.

How does God's character affect your personal situation? Well, you go through... This is where a study in the attributes of God, the character of God really bears great fruit. To know and understand and to go through and really study God's loving kindness, God's patience, God's mercy, His grace. And on and on and on. We could go on and talk about all the different attributes of God. To know those things is to apply them to our understanding that God is good.

You hear people say that a lot of times after, when they've just told you something that's very challenging in their life. They'll say, well, but God is

good. And fundamentally, that's a, that's an important statement for them to make. Because what they're doing is they're saying, here's the situation as it appears through my eyes. But, as we look at this situation through the character of God... Okay, in other words, in this particular case, they're focusing on His goodness. They're saying it takes on a different perspective through the goodness of God.

Well, the same... David was doing the same thing. But instead of saying, the wicked are, seem to be in control. But instead of saying, but God is good, he's saying, but God is just. You see? He's injecting what he knows to be true into a difficult situation because it causes faith to rise up. And to put my trust in the character of God rather than fixating on the difficulty of the current situation.

This is huge you guys. I mean, this is enormous. This is the difference between praying and praying with faith. And, we know that just praying isn't always enough. James tells us that the man who prays but doesn't expect anything in return shouldn't expect an answer. Right? (James 1:6-7)

In other words, it's possible to pray and not to receive. Because we haven't prayed with a heart of faith, believing and so forth. And what are we talking about believing in? We're talking about believing in the character of God. We're talking about the knowing the name of the Lord. And I want to just, let's just look at verse 10 one more time. And that is, "*...those who know your name put their trust in you...*"