

Prayers of Desperation

November 2012 Pulpit Series



Prayers of Desperation

**The Pray God Answers,
*But No One Wants To Pray***

***Christ E Free Church Pulpit Series
November 2012***

Jesus Christ
Our Highest Calling,
Our Greatest Purpose,
Our Soul's Source and Joy
And Our All-Consuming Passion.

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Introduction

When we consider the goal of God for His people, what we would want and what God wants are often very different. Christians and non-Christians alike, tend to want and expect, good and blessed lives. WE tend to evaluate the good will of God, by the ease and abundance of His grace. Anything short of this, is something Christians tend to avoid at all costs.

Our nature causes us to tend to shy away and attempt from drifting into circumstances and hardship situations which might cause us stress or distress. The last thing any of us really want, and that which we might fight most vehemently against, is that which might bring us into the realm of desperation. And yet, it is desperation which brings about an acute awareness of our own weakness and renewed conviction of our need for God – that is, our desperate need for God.

We fight against desperation, yet it is the prayer of desperation that God answers. Ironically, this is the prayer no one wants to pray, because we do not like desperate situations. As you read this, consider desperation, not as something to be avoided, but a blessing from God which is intended to get us where He wants us to pray in a manner, so as to bring about His life changing, history making purposes.

“Oh, Lord, Hear My Cry”

Psalm 39

Nov.11, 2012

*Surely a man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nothing
they are in turmoil; man heaps up wealth and does not
know who will gather! "And now, O Lord, for what do I
wait? My hope is in you.*

-Psalm 39:6-7

INTRODUCTION The Value of Desperation

Have you ever been in a desperate situation? It causes us to act differently. It can help us to see things more clearly. Desperate situations can bring about desperate actions. This can actually be a good thing.

During 9/11 the people in 4 high jacked suicide planes found themselves in desperate situations. Only after several days of putting things together, we became aware that at this time of desperation, the passengers of those planes began frantically calling their travel agents and personal financial investors. – Of course not.

As they became aware of their own desperate circumstances, they began calling their family members and loved ones. Their situation somehow caused them to suddenly see things – the important things - more clearly.

Today we have 4 points with 4 lessons on desperation.

Point #1 WHEN FAITH FAILS US

We pray differently when we are in desperate circumstances. We are in desperate circumstances when we feel like life is out of our control and we do not like the direction we are going.

What does it take to get you to the point of desperation? Plans falling through? Hopes getting crushed? People letting you down? Good intentions proving futile? Elections?

Right Actions & Good Intentions

Psalm 39:1 To the choirmaster: to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David. I said, "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence."

With all the worldly influences around us, it is often extremely difficult to do what is right. We've been there and done that. Perhaps like David, at some point we may have resolved to do what is right.

Guard Your Ways

As Christians, we know we need to do what is right before God and man. We also know the influence of the wicked often influences us to live like they live and think like they think – that is, worldly or even *wickedly*. We have to be prepared to guard our actions. We have to be on top of our game at all times. It doesn't take much to be caught off guard and caught up in some action which is out of character and damaging to the cause of Christ.

Guard Your Words

We must be careful to refrain from causing offenses or sinning with our words. And while our actions are important, our attitudes

and thoughts are most likely to be expressed through our words first. We are all keenly aware, how that happens.

There are times when we take the right actions and have good intentions, we tend to expect things to turn out well. But life does not always work out that way. Even when we are able to bite our tongue and guard our words, things can still turn out unexpectedly. Right actions, good attitudes and gracious words don't always work out as we plan.

Wrong Outcome

<p>Ps.39:2 I was mute and silent; I held my peace to <i>no avail</i>, and my distress grew worse.</p>
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Things are not getting better, but worse. We think, “this is not how blessings are supposed to work.” Scripture teaches that we should be slow to anger and slow to speak¹. Attempting to do what is right, guard our words and please God do not always work out like we want. Good living and the Christian faith may seem like it is not paying off. At times we may feel as though “*Its just not working out for me*”.

David shares that even though he has held his tongue, and kept his my thoughts to himself, it doesn't seem to be paying off. “But I'm just minding my own business and things still aren't working out!”

For David, “living right” seems to be a waste of his time. How many times have we felt that way? “This *living by faith* thing is not going like I'd expected.” Perhaps we feel as though our faith is not benefiting us as we had thought. We may not feel like we are getting “blessed”. We may get the impression that our faith is failing us.

For David, things aren't simply not working, but matters are getting worse. This is when our faith is tested and our motives are revealed. Why are we doing what we are doing? Why are we living the life we are living? So things will work out for my good?

¹ James 1:19

Or am I living to please God, regardless of the outcome and personal affect it has on me?

At times like these, it may *appear* as though our faith fails us. But faith never fails, when we do, what we do, for the right reasons. Ultimately our faith is lived out, not for the outcome it may have on us, but because it is what God requires.

Sometimes it appears as though NO good can be seen. NO good outcome can be imagined. Desperation starts to seep in where faith once reigned.

***Lesson #1: Desperation is valuable
when it brings us to the end of ourselves.***

Point #2 WHEN WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN DO

Sometimes, all we can do is to talk things over with God. And its amazing what we can come up with.

Ps:39:3 (3) My heart became hot within me. As I mused, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue:

Frustration increases

How very easily our own anger, or fear or distress begins to build. Problems arise. Unexpected circumstances flood us with concern and frustration.

Heart is hot

The heat is turned up. Once this happens, our inner setting begins rising from simmer to a *roaring boil*. We are aware of what is going in inside of us. We feel lit. All we need is a break or a positive turn of events. How the inner nature can so easily flood us with so many of the fears we thought we had conquered. How soon despair can threaten to displace faith.

Mused

Once there is time to think things over and over and over, reality gives way to the unending “what ifs” of our worst imagination. How we were treated, or how a decision is going to work out or “what will he think of me” begins to flood our thoughts until its all we can think about. How many times have we been just like that? The longer we think about something, the hotter and more upset we become.

He Speaks

Ps. 39:3b-5 (3b) ...then I spoke with my tongue (4) "O LORD,

As things begin to escalate, he doesn't chew someone out or give someone a piece of his mind. Nor does he go around venting and gossiping about the people or the problem. He speaks out and he speaks to the right person – God.

Desperation can be valuable when it brings us to the end of our selves.

An Outcry of Desperation

Out cry #1 – the first of 3 outcries of desperation to God.

When we come to the point of desperation, it is often a turning point for a life changing encounter with God.

Ps. 39:4-5 (4) "O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am! (5) Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! Selah.
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He acknowledges that God is in control of all things and he is not. “*Oh Lord, make known my frailty..*” He realizes he needs to have God’s perspective. He prays that God would help him consider the brevity, purpose and duration of life. He gains a proper perspective of the situation and of life in general. This is a valuable reality check for any of us (v4). How many times has the well meaning Christian refused to acknowledge his weakness and consider his own need before God? How often have we failed to take note of our own frailty of life? When we get to this

point of desperation, we are closer to the plan of help of God than we had imagined.

He acknowledges that from God's perspective his life is only a few handbreadths (v5). This is not a long measurement. This is often man's perspective of God's purposes. The result is growing frustration.

In 1 Kings chapter 18, Elijah is praying for rain. His servant goes out in faith, to look into the sky. "*There is nothing*", is his reply. Seven times he went out until he can back with the report, "*a little cloud about the size of a man's hand is rising from the sea.*" That was what it seemed like from earth's perspective, about the size of a man's hand. But from heaven's perspective it may have been as big as the state of Texas.

Our perspective is often either inaccurate or incomplete. Either way, we are always in need of seeing things from God's perspective. With heaven's perspective David states, "My life is nothing to you". Not that God is not concerned with his life. But in light of eternity, this is probably not all that crucial. God is certainly not frustrated and thankfully He is not desperate.

"Mankind is a breath". We are here for a moment then our life dissipates and is gone. It's just that brief to God. If desperate situations don't bring us to this point, then the lesson has not been learned and the experience has been wasted.

Lesson #2: Desperation is positive when it causes us to see our own frailty in a fresh, God dependent way.

Point #3 WHEN ALL WE CAN DO IS NOT ENOUGH

When we realize that all we can do is not enough, then something deeper must take place in our lives. It can be life shattering when we realize there is nothing we can do to change things. Therefore

when changing *things* is not the answer, God may want to change *us*.

Life is too short to be frivolous

This is an important understanding to come to grips with. This is the crucial perspective God must bring us to. This is a turning point. This is where God can begin to change us.

Ps. 39:6-11 (6) Surely a man goes about as a *shadow*! Surely for nothing they are in *turmoil*; man heaps up *wealth* and does not know who will gather!

A Shadow

This is in reference to our life being like an illusion or a vain show. It is a man's futile attempt to keep up the appearance of something he is not. Working, laboring, striving, and sacrificing.. and for what? This is *visual*.

Turmoil

This means to make a commotion, a roar, or a loud clamorous noise. This may be bragging, exaggerating or tale telling. This may be the felt need to always be explaining or proving one's self. This is *audible*.

Wealth

Then there are the basic, generic vain pursuits which amount to nothing of any lasting value. One man makes it and another man spends it. This is the worldly or *material*.

Life apart from a meaningful purpose is a waste. Living with God's kingdom focus, enhances the Christian Life and gives meaning to an otherwise frustrated, meaningless waste of a life. There is something soberingly sacred, about living a holy life, consecrated to God, in a wicked, unholy and often antagonistic culture. It is often like spiritual adrenaline. It is living with purpose in an otherwise purposeless existence.

If you are living a meaningless life, then you may be living a life focused on things of lesser value and importance. God has good and meaningful things for each of us to be involved in for Him. These are things which are kingdom oriented and eternal in nature.

A Crucial Change Must Take Place

Out cry of desperation #2

My Hope Is In You

God is our only hope all the time. Yet only in times of desperation are we aware of this truth. Every human, every person and yes, every single Christian must come to this point.

Desperation is positive when it causes us to see our own frailty in a fresh God dependent way.

Psalm 39:7 "And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.
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This eternal, kingdom perspective acknowledges, that ultimately, I have all I need, because I have the Lord.

Deliver Me

This does not seem to be deliverance from his enemies, but from himself and from his own transgressions. "Keep me from" the wicked and the godless, as well as from my own sinfulness.

Ps.39:8 (8) Deliver me from all my transgressions. Do not make me the scorn of the fool!

And here is the crucial change- A proper realization.

God's Discipline

Our real turning point can occur once we realize we may be under God's discipline. This is a crucial awareness and now true change can take place.

Ps.39:9-11 (9) I am mute; I do not open my mouth, for it is you who have done it. (10) Remove your stroke from me; I am spent
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by the hostility of your hand. (11) When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him; surely all mankind is a mere breath! Selah.

We have to acknowledge that for all that God controls, He has a purpose.

God's Sovereign Purpose

Each of us must come to the acknowledgment of the sovereign purposes of God in our own situation. God is in control of the circumstances and is the source of my frustration and anxiety. Since God is in control of my unpleasant circumstances, then God has a purpose for these circumstances. And it may be that God is disciplining us. It seems like almost anything can be endured – even death, when God's eternal purposes can be trusted – not necessarily understood, but trusted.

Lesson 3: Desperation is beneficial when it leads us to understand God's purpose in our situation more clearly.

Point #4 GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS ON GODS TERMS

When God has us right where He wants us, it is in our most teachable condition. Desperation is beneficial when it leads us to understand God's purpose in our situation more clearly. This brings us to outcry of desperation #3.

Ps.39:12-13 (12) "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not your peace at my tears! For I am a sojourner with you, a guest, like all my fathers.

1. Lord, ***Listen*** to me! (v12a)
2. Lord, ***Answer*** me! (v12b)
3. Lord ***Notice*** me! (v12c - "my tears")

These are all things we need to know in times of our desperation. That God is listening. God will answer. He notices and that He is aware and He cares enough to be involved. And look where desperation takes us.

4. Lord , *I'm alone* with you. (v.12)

I am a sojourner in suffering. I am transient and only passing through. I am a stranger in this land. I don't know my way around. I need You as my guide. "I am alone with You."

"Alone with God"! No one but God and me and that is ultimately all that matters – *ever*! Not just in times of desperation. Then our heart can say....

Teach Me My Lesson

Desperation is beneficial when it leads us to understand God's purpose in our situation more clearly.

1. Turn your displeasure away (v13a)

<p>Ps.39:13 Look away from me, that I may smile again, before I depart and am no more!"</p>
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2. Cause me to rejoice again – Restore my joy.

Charles Stanley has stated that joy is a "sense of contentment with what God is doing" Lord, Hear me. Answer me. Teach Me. Restore me.

God's purpose in difficult circumstances may be my own discipline. If we fail to at least consider that possibility, we will continue to suffer the same things over and over and over again, until desperation grows so unbearable that we cry out for mercy – not to bring it all to an end, but to bring the lesson to heart.

<p><i>Lesson #4: Desperation is crucial when it can bring us to terms with God and His dealings in our lives.</i></p>
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And the prayers of desperation are crucial, whether or not God actually answers as we had hoped or not. We are brought to the end of self. We are brought to the raw edge of faith in God alone and we are positioned to learn our lessons most effectively. At this point, we are raised to new levels of faith and intimacy with God, having been in His presence and stilled by His spirit.

There is unimaginable and unexplainable power in prayer, whether or not our prayers are ever answered. Prayer drives us to meet with God at greater depths. It helps us learn deeper lessons. And it changes us, whether or not we get the answer we sought.

Desperation in the presence of God is better than living a life of ease and health and plenty, with God at a distance. We typically choose and fight for the latter.

Prayers of Desperation: *Prayers That God Answers, but No One Wants to Pray*, because we do not willingly allow ourselves to get into desperate situations.

Off the Page and Into My Life

- 1) What are the circumstances around me that are frustrating and increasingly so?
- 2) When was the last time I really had an intimate talk with God in which I gave no orders for the things I wanted?
- 3) What things are you unable to change or control, that God may be using to get your attention?
- 4) How long am I willing to go, before resigning myself to the sovereign will, purposes and control of God upon my life?
- 5) How close am I to being desperate in my relationship with God and choosing to learn the lessons that only desperation can teach?


Remember: More than getting what we want in prayer, is meeting with God and being changed by His presence.



“The Goal of Desperation... *Restoration and Worship*”


Psalm 51

Nov.18, 2012



Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. (9) Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. (10) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (11) Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. (12) Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

- Psalm 51:8-12



Theme: Repentance and Restoration

INTRODUCTION

Desperation has a variety of effects on people. It may express itself in anger, criminal activity, or even giving up on an important relationship. It is not often that desperation results in repentance.

Revivals of old, were often the ripple effect of Holy Spirit conviction from sin, personal repentance and people who were desperate for renewal. In Psalm 51 we have the story of David and Bathsheba. David was king of Israel and Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah, one of David's most loyal and faithful soldiers.

One day David was out on his balcony and he saw Bathsheba, bathing in a nearby building. David and Bathsheba had an affair and she became pregnant. In order to cover things up, David had

Uriah sent to the front lines of battle, where he was killed in the intense fighting. This was David's purpose. At this point, it

seemed as though David has covered his tracks and he could breathe a sigh of relief. (2Sam.11)

Soon, a prophet named Nathan came to David and told him a story about a rich man who took the only lamb of a poor man, had it slaughtered, just to provide a meal for one of the rich man's visitors. When David heard the story, he was filled with anger and declared, "that man deserves to die". Nathan, said, "David, you are that man." The story was intended to illustrate David (as the rich man) taking one soldier's only little lamb, Bathsheba, and taking her to be his own, at the poor man's (Uriah the Soldier) expense. And David had just declared himself to be deserving of death.

**This story can be read in full in 2 Samuel chapter 12.*

Once David realized he had been caught, he cried out, "*I have sinned against the LORD*" (2 Sam.12:13). It is believed that out of this statement, David wrote Psalm 51, a desperate prayer of repentance.

Today I'd like to clarify a couple of terms for us. Repentance and restoration are almost unknown concepts among our culture today, and sadly even among some who consider themselves to be Christians.

Repentance involves the awareness and concern of sin in our lives. It involves the confessing of our personal sin against God and choosing to turn away from that sin and live differently.

Restoration is a result of repentance. Restoration is, as a result of repentance, a person is brought back into a right relationship with God. When that happens their relationship with God is restored, but also their worship then becomes acceptable to God.

Repentance and restoration are all-important elements in the Christian faith and yet are often times, overlooked and considered unnecessary. God's Word teaches differently.

AWARENESS OF SIN

When we become desperate over our conviction of personal sin, it can cause us to throw ourselves upon the mercy of God. This desperation must begin with an awareness or a consciousness of the specific sin which has been committed.

Sin Brings Desperation

In David's situation, sin brings about a desperate cry for God's mercy.

Psalm 51:1 To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

David makes his passionate appeal to God.

First, his prayer expresses his total dependence upon God's mercy and steadfast love. His prayer is that God will not deal with him according to justice, but according to God's mercy and love. In desperation, he throws himself upon the mercy of God.

Now, he appeals a 2nd time to God's abundant mercy. Don't give me what I deserve. Give me what I do not deserve – Your mercy.

Blot Out

Blot out transgressions. In Exodus 32:33, God states, "whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of My book." Perhaps David is thinking of that when he is faced with his own sin and in his desperation he pleads with God to blot out his transgression, rather than blotting him out of God's book of life. Blot out my sin, but not my name. David needs forgiveness, or *else*.

David has come to the point that every person must eventually come to – that is, the point of stark awareness of our own sin before a holy God. This is not a time to make deals with God. Nor

is it a time to smirk at our sin, expecting God to turn a blind eye and pass over our sinful behavior. It is foolish for anyone to think God will in anyway, turn a blind eye to our sin and turn away His judgment against us. That can only happen as a result of genuine repentance.

God's Conviction

The goal of awareness of sin is to bring about conviction. The goal of God's conviction is intended to bring about repentance and restoration to God.

<p>Psalm 51:2 (2) Wash me thoroughly and cleanse me from my sin!</p>

This is prayer is for complete and thorough cleansing, which desires complete and ultimate reconciliation and restoration. Forgiveness is crucial in our relationship with God. Forgiveness from God, results in the removal of the obstacle of sin in our lives. Sin is an obstacle that separates us from God, and is also a barrier in experiencing personal, Christian joy.

There are some who go day to day, living their lives apart from God, yet thinking they are OK. They wear some religious label, or have had some religious experience or uphold some pretense, but in fact have never repented from their own personal sin, and are living a lie and deceiving themselves.

When we become desperate over our conviction of personal sin, it can lead us to true repentance and cause us to throw ourselves upon the mercy of God.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SIN

Acknowledgement of Sin and Judgment is a necessary part of repentance. In Psalm 51, sin is mentioned 10 times . Here, David acknowledges his sin.

<p>2Sam. 12:13 David said to Nathan, "<i>I have sinned against the LORD...</i>"</p>
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Sin deserves Judgment.

Exo 32:33 But the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book."

Desperation over sin, that cannot be shaken, can lead to repentance and forgiveness.

Un-ignorable sin

Ps.51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is *ever before me*.

David was aware of his sin and he acknowledged that he had sinned against God. He couldn't shake his conviction. He knew God could not simply look the other way. He could not pretend this obstacle between He and God didn't exist. He couldn't pretend everything was "OK". His sin was *un-ignorable*. That is what conviction of sin is intended to do.

Conviction of sin is not intended to fill a person's life with unrelenting, unresolved misery. Conviction of sin *is* however, a blessing from God, because it makes us uncomfortably aware of our sin and can compel us to properly repent from that sin, in order to be restored to God and resolve our misery.

God is Offended by Sin

Ps.51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

There is an acknowledgment of his sin and that he was guilty of offending a holy God with his behavior. David knew that whatever the outcome, he would deserve what he would receive from God. And if God withheld his mercy and executed His judgment against David for his sin, God would be perfectly justified in it all. David knew he would only be receiving what he deserved.

This is the state of each one of us. We have all offended God through our own personal sinfulness. When God looks on our sin and carries out His judgment on us, we will only be getting what we deserve.

In this we learn that sin is serious business with God. And His judgment for our sin, should drive us to do serious business with God, as it did with David. It should even drive us to desperation.

Our Core and Content

Sin is the core and content of our human nature. We are born with it. We naturally tend to grow in that direction.

Ps.51: 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
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This is not just David's situation, but is the state of all humanity. We are not better than we expected. We are more desperate than we had imagined. We have all sinned and will be judged for our sin, ^[Rom.3:23] if we do not find forgiveness.

Responding to Conviction

Desperation over sin that cannot be shaken, can lead to repentance and forgiveness and to a restored relationship with God.

1) God delights in the truth of conviction.

Ps.51:6 Behold, you delight in <i>truth</i> in the inward being, and you teach me <i>wisdom</i> in the secret heart
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Conviction of sin is the Holy Spirit convincing us of our own personal sin and need to confess that sin to God.

2) Conviction teaches truth in the classroom of personal desperation. Desperation can be a blessing when it drives us to do serious business with God. Desperation causes us to take seriously the conviction from the Holy Spirit, making us uncomfortably aware of our personal sin and need for cleansing from God. We have sinned against God, therefore the forgiveness

must come directly from God. No person can take of this for us, no matter how holy they may seem or what title they may hold. Only the person of Jesus Christ, God's only Son and our only Savior can perform that task.

Who do you turn to for forgiveness of your sin? Who do you trust to intercept God's judgment for you sins? Upon whose feet do you cast yourself, in seeking heavenly mercy rather than justice? If we seek that anywhere else or from anyone else, it is a false forgiveness and we are still in our sins.

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” - John 3:17-18

Personal faith in Jesus Christ alone, is God's answer to our sin. Anyone or anything other than Jesus must be rejected as false.

CLEANSING OF SIN IS ESSENTIAL

Cleansing or forgiveness is mentioned 9 times in Ps. 51.

If we are offered hope in the Christian life, which does not bring us to the awareness, acknowledgment, conviction, repentance and confession of our own personal sin, that “hope” is a false hope, and is no hope at all.

A Fresh Cleansing

Ps.51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

A desperate plea to purge, cleanse, or wash us from our sins, leads us to genuine forgiveness. Without personal confession and repentance from our sin, there is no hope, no matter how good it may sound, no matter how spit polished the “preacher” may present it.

Hope without acknowledging our sin, sounds good, makes us feel comfortable, sells books and gets great ratings on TV. But if we do not do serious business with God regarding our sin, then we have no hope, and we are hopelessly on our way to feeling good, about eternal judgment for our sins.

Bring Back Your Joy

This is not the joy that comes from the false hope of having a great time now. It is the joy that only comes from God and the salvation from sin that we receive, having been cleansed from sin by Him.

Ps.51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

Sin is not only a barrier between us and God. Sin is a barrier between us and any joy that might come from God.

Charles Stanley has said that Joy comes from a contentment with what God wants or is doing. Imagine the joy that can result from being assured that there is no, no condemnation or judgment to be received from God for those who are believers in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Hallelujah what a Hope! Hallelujah what a Savior!

Do you possess that hope right now? Do you have Jesus as your sin forgiver and soul saver?

Removing Obstacles

Sin is an obstacle to our relationship *with* God. Because of that, sin is also an obstacle to our lasting joy *from* God..

Ps.51:9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Isaiah 59:2 tells us that our sin is an obstacle between us and our God and that sin keeps God from hearing our prayers. That is why sin is a genuine joy stealer.

God's remedy in Jesus Christ is to give full and complete forgiveness, to any and all who would desire to remove the sin obstacles between you and God and your joy.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. - 1Jn. 1:8-9

Like David, it means...

1) Confessing to God your awareness and your regret for your sin.

"Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."(Ps.51:4a). *"I have sinned against the LORD"*(2 Sam.12:13)

2) Acknowledging that God would be perfectly justified if He judged you for your sin. *"..You may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment."* (Ps.51:4)

3) Praying to God in desperation for mercy rather than judgment. *"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy..."* (Ps.51:1)

4) Asking God, humbly, to forgive you. *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."* (Ps.51:7)

Then we can rejoice with thanksgiving that we have received mercy rather than judgment. And that we are being restored in our relationship with God. This is true joy!

TRANSFORMING CHANGE

Change is mentioned 6 times in this psalm. Desperation is essential to genuine change. Change is essential in genuine forgiveness. It is non-negotiable. God does not consider an unchanged life as an option to the truly cleansed child of God.

Beyond Change

David evidences the heart that God desires in everyone who has

sought His undeserved mercy and forgiveness, that is a changed life. Genuine repentance, **will** result in a changed life. No exceptions.

Ps.51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

David's repentance results in deep desire to change his behavior. His plea is not just an adjustment or an exchange. His request is for a new heart all together. He asks God to create something that has not been there... – "create".

Different Desires

When God cleanses and changes us, He changes our desires to remain in His presence.

Psalms 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

True life transformation:

- 1) Restores us Into the Presence of God
- 2) Renews us through the washing by the Holy Spirit

Restoration of joy

God wants each of His children, to experience the joy that only can

come from being restored in our relationship with Him and by receiving the joy that only His presence can give.

Ps.51:11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. (12) Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Some reference to joy is mentioned 9 times in this chapter.

Restore Joy

Now that repentance has taken place and we have been cleansed and forgiven, the obstacle of sin that was keeping us separated from God and from His joy is removed. Now we can experience true joy, that comes from true hope.

Ps.51:12 Restore to me the *joy of your salvation*, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

David's prayer is for a joy that is a result of forgiveness of sin and assurance we are restored with God. He asks for the joy of God's salvation to return to His inner being. Again, without dealing realistically with our personal sin, true hope and lasting joy for God cannot be experienced.

Uphold Me

"And uphold me with thy free Spirit." Conscious of weakness, mindful of having so lately fallen, he seeks to be kept on his feet by power superior to his own. That royal Spirit, whose holiness is true dignity, is able to make us walk as kings and priests, in all the uprightness of holiness; and he will do so if we seek his gracious upholding. Such influences will not enslave but emancipate us; for holiness is liberty, and the Holy Spirit is a free Spirit. In the roughest and most treacherous ways we are safe with such a keeper; in the best paths we stumble if left to ourselves. The praying for joy and upholding go well together; it is all over with joy if the foot is not kept; and, on the other hand, joy is a very upholding thing, and greatly aids holiness; meanwhile, the free, noble, loyal Spirit is at the bottom of both.

- "Treasure of David", *Charles Spurgeon*

If Desperation does not bring cleansing from sin and renewed depth in our relationship with God, then we have been led down the wrong path and deceived. Even some TV preachers and Christian counselors may be the cause.

PERSONAL CONSECRATION

Consecration is mentioned 3 times in Ps.51.

Personal consecration is a desire for God to be pleased to use us for His service. If desperation does not lead us to active service for Christ, then we have not truly repented, nor have we been genuinely changed or restored to God in any eternal way.

The Goal of Restoration is restored and renewed *Worship of God & leading others to Him.*

Active Service

When repentance, cleansing and change take place, the door is opened for something else – something far deeper and far greater than we have pursued before. God changes us for a purpose. His purpose is to use each of us for His honor and kingdom purposes.

Ps.51:13-15 (13) Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. (14) Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. (15) O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

As a Christian, simply being a “good” person is not enough. Our visual testimony is quite important, but so is our verbal testimony. The visual without the verbal, only serves to cause others to think we are “good” or nice people. That alone, does nothing to cause others to glorify our Father who is in heaven.^[Mat.5:16]

Notice what David is expecting or even desiring to begin to take place as a result of this life change.

Effect

I will teach and sinners will repent. Deliver me and I will sing of you. Now our new and willing spirit leads us to pursue God’s purposes for our lives and to make a kingdom difference for eternity.

The power of personal testimony of our fallenness and Gods faithfulness is irrefutable. The personal story of advancing from hopelessness to hopefulness through God's grace and mercy must be part of our sharing of Christ and of our personal testimony.

A renewed interest and intent to sharing the goodness of God with any and all who will hear is a reasonable response from anyone who has received God's mercy and been spared His righteous judgment for our sin. When God moves or touches or helps or answers prayer, we are obligated to make His faithfulness know.

The Delight of God

That which is pleasing to God, results from desperation that brings genuine repentance and personal restoration to God.

Ps.51: 16-17 (16) For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. (17) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

v.16) sacrifices are not the goal, but evidence of the problem – SIN.

Sacrifices and offerings are because of our repentance. Sacrifices and offerings are not the answer, as anyone could offer sacrifices and offerings and yet still have a heart which is unrepentant. Merely going to church or attending a Bible study is not the cure for our sin or the proper path towards being restored to God. They are results of that restoration. They may be a means to being drawn to God or being convicted towards desperate repentance, but they are not steps to be taken which will win any points from God. We cannot side step or omit the genuine steps of desperation shared from Ps. 51.

Awareness, acknowledgment, cleansing, change, and consecration are necessary steps towards becoming the effective, God pleasing believer God wants us to become.

Sacrifices and offerings are to be an outward evidence of a truly repentant and restored heart for God.

A broken and contrite heart over sin is God's delight.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

A broken and contrite heart is the key component to offering sacrifices and offerings to God effectively. The goal of desperation from conviction of sin is repentance from sin, and restoration to God. When that occurs, true joy and genuine worship can begin to take place.

Prayer for God's Delight

In closing David offers prayer for God's good pleasure to be demonstrated in the lives of His own people. His prayer reflects the desire of a "willing spirit" guiding his hearts intent, that God be truly worshipped.

Ps.51:18-19 (18) Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; (19) then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

The proper order seems to be:

- 1) A Right Heart – convicted and repentant.
- 2) A Right Relationship – forgiven and cleansed.
- 3) Right offerings – our resulting spiritual interests and activities.
- 4) Right Worship – evidencing a restored relationship with God.

Off the Page and into my life - application

The ultimate goal of being restored to God is proper and appropriate worship.

What about me?? Things I personally, have been considering.

1) Is there any ongoing, known sin in my life which I have come to accept? *I must repent.* _____

2) Have I put off or considered trusting Jesus Christ as not necessary for me? *I must believe and be saved.* _____

3) What level would I rate my joy as a Christian? *I must do my part to remove all sin obstacles of joy from my life.*

4) Is my worship acceptable and pleasing to God? *I must not simply feel good from “worship”, I must be assured I have given to God all He is worthy to receive.*

“Search Me Oh, God”

by James E. Orr, 1936, Public Domain

Search me, O God, and know my heart today,
Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray;
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from every sin, and set me free.

I praise Thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin;
Fulfill Thy word and make me pure within;
Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame;
Grant my desire to magnify Thy name.

Lord, take my life, and make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine;
Take all my will, my passion, self and pride;
I now surrender, Lord, in me abide.

O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee;
Send a revival, start the work in me;
Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need;
For blessings now, O Lord, I humbly plead.

Taken from a prayer from the Scriptures – Psalm 139:23-24

Psalm 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!
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“Prayer Too Desperate For Words”


1 Samuel 1:1-12

Nov.25, 2012

Theme: Restoration of heart and spirit



1 Samuel 1:3-7 Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. (4) On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. (5) But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. (6) And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. (7) So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever stopped to consider how important is our human ability to communicate? Imagine having no words to communicate your thoughts or no means of expressing your inner most joys or burdens.

So much of our human ability to even reason and experience emotional healing, depends upon our ability to express our thoughts and feelings. And when it comes to prayer, how important it is to be able to share all our desires and

disappointments, all our joys and heartbreaks with our loving heavenly Father. Verbal prayer has a very literal and very powerful effect on restoring our human soul.

But what happens when we cannot find the words in prayer? What do we do when we cannot find the expression we need? What happens when the burdens within us are inexpressible?

The story of Hannah is one of inexpressible burdens. Her prayer is a prayer too desperate for words.

HANNAH'S CIRCUMSTANCES

One of Two

Hannah was one of two wives. Most of us are not familiar with this problem. However there are certain organizations in our culture which condone multiple spouses. It is rare for the practice of one wife having multiple husbands, but not so rare for one husband with multiple wives.

<p>1Sam 1:1-2 There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. (2) He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.</p>

Multiple Spouses

The Bible does not condone multiple spouses. What is often true, however, is that early on in OT Scripture, God does not come down as hard as we think He should, on those who do have more than one spouse. But we shouldn't allow that to distract us from the Truth of Scripture or the character of God. There are times, where, if we give God time, we will see that many of the examples in Scripture of men who had multiple wives, learned God's lesson the hard way.

Scriptural Insight

Elkanah was the husband in this story and he had two wives – Hannah and Peninnah. The names here are interesting.

Something in a Name

There was significance in their names. Peninnah's name means ruby, pearl or "*jewel*" in general. Hannah's name means "*favored*".

There was also significance in their order. Verse 2, refers to "the one" or first. Hannah, the favored was "*the one*". "*The other*" was Peninnah. If the names weren't enough, their order was enough to create a relational rift.

Then there were their places. Elkanah provided adequately and responsibly for Peninnah and "all her sons and daughters". Not only did Hannah get double portions of the sacrifice leftovers, but of Hannah, Scripture records, "*he loved*".

Can you imagine the problems this would stir up. "Let me introduce my wives to you. This is Peninnah my jewel, but this is Hannah, my *favorite*. How long would it take that scenario to eat away at family relations? While Peninnah was a valuable person and possibly a treasured Jewel by Elkanah, nevertheless, as good as she could be, she was forever second place. And second place is still the first loser!

So what brings Hannah to the point of desperation?

Hannah and Her circumstances

1Sam. 1:3-7 Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. (4) On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. (5) But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb.

Husband and Wife

v.2) “And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children”

At the beginning we can read a bit into the adversarial relationship, possibly beginning with their names and their order. But more so, is that Paninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

We aren’t told how many children Peninnah had but it seems there were many. Scripture doesn’t mention their names or that there were 2 or 3 but v.4 refers to “*all her sons and daughters*”, which sounds like there were several. So we have a fertile Myrtle and a barren, childless Hannah.

Special Treatment.

When Hannah’s husband would go to worship the Lord and offer his animal sacrifices, the portions they were allowed to keep as food, Elkanah he “*would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. (5) But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb.*”

So her husband was not oblivious to Hannah’s grief over being childless. In his way, he was genuinely attempting to console her and express his clear favoritism toward her as wife *Numero Uno*.

And each time this would occur, no doubt Peninnah received plenty for her family, but still she was clearly second to Hannah.

The Adversary

1Sam 1:6-7 (6) And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. (7) So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.

It is important to realize, Hannah was not a whiner or a complainer. She is not presented as an emotional weakling. She appeared to have good reason for her desperation.

What was the point of Peninnah's provocation and Hannah's grief?

Reason for Grief

Reason #1 was that she had no children (v2) as God had closed her womb (v5). Reason #2 was that her adversary gave her no end of prodding and mocking and troubling.

Her *rival* = troubler, adversary, affliction, anguish, provoked. The result was that Hannah wept and didn't eat. Peninnah was the "in house" adversary against Hannah. Peninnah was the troubler who tormented her.

Hannah was #1 wife. She was the favored one. She received double portions of food from her husbands sacrifices. She was the one whom the husband truly loved. But for Hannah, that did not console her. Ultimately, Hannah was favored by her husband, but did not perceive herself to be favored by God. She needed both.

Antagonized Frequently and Faithfully (v6)

It is important to understand that Hannah is not pouting or having a pity party. "*Year after year*", her torment continued.

1Sam. 1:3 Now this man used to go up *year by year* from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh.....

The idea here is that Elkannah frequently and faithfully sacrificed to the Lord. And as faithful and frequent was Elkannah's practice of worship and sacrifice, so was the faithfulness and frequency of Peninnah's irritating and provoking of Hannah. It was not a one time or occasional situation, it was frequent.

Anyone in your life like that? A troubler? A provoker? An agitator? It can drive anyone to the point of desperation.

1Sam.1:7 So it went on *year by year*. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her.

* It seems that things that are ongoing and long lasting with discouraging or disheartening effects on the human spirit – these

are the things that most often bring about a sense of desperation and no hope of resolution.

We have all experienced things like that. We have all been there. Some may be there now. You may have an ongoing, frequent and faithful kind of troubling of your spirit, leading you to a point of desperation.

I heard of a Christian man who was in prison for stabbing another man. The story was that the man got into some altercation with his divorced wife and the new man in her life. In the man's distress and emotionally desperate state, he got into a fight with the man and stabbed him. Even Christians can find themselves in desperate situations when they find it difficult to control their actions.

Is there a person in your life who is a provocator or a burr under your saddle? Peninnah was that person to Hannah.

THE PRAYER TOO DESPERATE FOR WORDS

Hannah was childless, provoked and troubled, being consoled by her husband, but there was more.

Mis-Understood suffering

Hannah was misunderstood on two important relational levels. If there is anything that can make most any difficult situation worse, it is being misunderstood. Hannah was misunderstood on two fronts.

Misunderstood By Her Husband

It is not that she does not appreciate her husband. But her husband simply does not understand her distress. This is not unusual between husbands and wives.

<p>1Sa 1:8 And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"</p>
--

First, she has an unfulfilled longing for a child. She is grieving. On top of that she has an unrelenting and inescapable adversarial relationship within the family. She is distressed. But also, her husband does not fully grasp her longing

An unfulfilled longing is much the same emotional suffering as the death of a loved one – sorrow. This is grief over an unfulfilled longing, death of hope, loss of a precious treasure, though that treasure was never possessed. She was misunderstood by her husband.

Misunderstood By Her Priest

Finally she is misunderstood by the priest.

1Sam. 1:9-14 (9) After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. (10) She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. (11) And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head." (12) As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. (13) Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. (14) And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put away your wine from you."

How much deeper the pain and sorrow, how evasive the emotional healing, how much greater the frustration when no one seems to understand your troubles. With everything else, now the priest thinks she is drunk, moving her lips, but making no sounds.

The sense of grief, agitation, misunderstanding and unfulfilled longing – all ongoing – all building within her a sense of

desperation, which would eventually bring her to the point of desperate prayer.

Hannah's Prayer

It seems as though Hannah's prayer of desperation was what God was waiting for, in order for Him to answer in a manner that would affect, not just Hannah's emotional state, but would affect all of Israel for the good.

Her Deep Distress (v10)

She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. "Lord, do you notice?" "Are you aware of my misery?" Why are people treating me this way? It seems like no one really understands.

Her Desperate Vow (v11)

v.11 is a vow to God, and a commitment to dedicate her child to the Lord if He should so see fit to answer her prayer. She was willing to give up, what she was pleading to God to give her.

* Too often we intend to hold onto what we ask for in prayer. It was desired, prayed for, sought after and we intend to keep it to ourselves. Otherwise, why would we desire it so desperately. But Hannah vows to dedicate that answer to prayer back to God.

Speechless Desperation

Hannah's Silence in prayer (v12)

"As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. (13) Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard."

Hannah was speechless before God. How many times have you been like that before God in prayer? You can't come up with the words to adequately convey what you mean or how you feel. "Am I wasting my time and God's?"

In prayer, words are not necessarily for God's benefit but, for our own. God doesn't need words to hear our prayers. Words are

often for our benefit. That is why there is often such miraculous power in prayer, and healing of the soul, whether God answers our prayer or not. Because prayer does not simply get things from God. It brings us into God's presence and changes us.

As a result of that change, what we pray for may or may not be the issue. Simply entering into God's presence is most often our greatest need, we just don't realize it in the beginning. So we see Hannah silent before God. Grief stricken, in pain, longing, hurting and burdened beyond words.

Silent prayers and Spiritual Groans

Scripture teaches us about silent prayer and spiritual groanings. Spiritual groaning in prayer is coming before the Lord's presence with a deep, overwhelming and inexpressible burden. You *want* to talk to God – you feel you *must* talk to God, yet you cannot find words to express your thoughts or your feelings adequately to God.

Sometimes God wants us to come to the point of silent desperation or prayer without words in order to get us quiet and stilled, so we might hear what He has to say to us. Prayer is not us telling God what we want or expect. Prayer is intended to be reciprocal communication between God and His children.

Once we are quiet, we are more able to hear His response to what we have been feeling or experiencing. In prayer, words are not necessarily for God's benefit but, for our own. God doesn't need words to hear our prayers. Words are for our benefit and part of healing expression for the troubled soul.

This is intimate spiritual therapy. This is meaningful life changing Divine counseling, complete with inner healing and restoration of the human spirit. This is processing and communing with God, while experiencing the comfort and soothing of a troubled spirit from our Wonderful Counselor.

GOD KNOWS

No matter what our problem or how deep the pain may go, God knows our silent desperation. Hannah has deep longings, crushed dreams, troubled relations, along with feelings of being misunderstood – all of which can bring us to the point of deep desperation when all we can do is groan before God in silent distress.

There are times in our prayers, we are left with no means of appropriate expression. We can't seem to come up with the words. *That may be God's plan all along.*

The Silence

Rom 8:25-26 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (26) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought..."

Ever had one of those one-sided conversations with someone, when the other person does all the talking. Their story, their thoughts, their experience, and their ideas. You can't get a word in edgewise. I wonder if it's not like that for God sometimes – waiting for us to quiet down so we can hear from Him.

Weakness (v26)

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness"...

We are weak because we are human. Speechless in prayer is prayer too desperate for words. It may reveal our weakness or our inability to come up with the resolution that we are attempting to instruct God to come up with.

The Truth is God is not waiting for us to pray in order to help Him come up with the answer to our problem. Prayer that reveals our weakness is a prayer that sees our need only to be met in God. Silent prayers and spiritual groans evidence weakness in prayer.

Ignorance (26b)

“For we do not know what to pray for as we ought”...

Silence in prayer is an awareness of our lack of understanding for what needs to take place or for what God's will may be in my desperate situation.

Silence is Golden

Rom 8:26-27 (26) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

“the Spirit helps us in our weakness...”

Spiritual Help

This is true spiritual help. If we are weak, what is obviously our need? Strength! It is specifically the Spirit of God, in our times of desperation, who has the help we need. When we are weak and when we are silent in our prayers and desperate in our spiritual groaning, it may be then that we finally get to the point, where the Holy Spirit can speak to us in a manner in which we can hear and will receive. This point of speechless desperation is often the breakthrough of God in the prayer life of His child.

Weakness in Ignorance...

Specifically we are weak in information or knowledge or wisdom.

v.26) “The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought....”

Sometimes prayer is like a one sided conversation with God. God can't get a word in edgewise. We are so busy asking for or telling God what He needs to do or giving Him the magic answer, we are not able to receive the strength or the answer He has to us. At times like these, Silence is Golden.

His Assurance

Rom 8:26b-27 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (27) And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

From this we learn that **God's Spirit Intercedes for us** (v26b & 27b) “with Groans too deep for words...” . However we interpret this, we know for sure, it involves absolutely no words of any kind. – “*groans too deep for words*” This speaks of the breakdown of human communication. It speaks of no word, no utterance, no sound of any kind other than of deep silent prayers and inner spiritual groanings which have no words or adequate expression.

This is the opportunity for Gods Holy Spirit to step in, and help us in our prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who is God, who knows our desperate circumstances fully – who is able to pray perfectly, and who knows the will and purposes of the Father in Heaven. It is He who is completely capable of praying in a way that meets our needs and fulfills God's purposes. All this comes in a manner in which we could never have prayed or accomplished.

It is possible that at times, our own prayers get in the way of God meeting our needs and addressing our situation. If there is any consolation in this. #1) , it is that in our silence, God can intervene and intercede, privately and perfectly, in a manner that changes us, as well as changes our prayer, in order that His will and purposes are accomplished.

And secondly, it is God's intercepting and redirecting of our prayers, that can ultimately lead us to praying according to His will and receiving answers that first and foremost glorify God. In order for that to occur, our own fallen, broken, sinful, human

desires and prayers must be overruled. This is also the process of God meeting and addresses our deepest needs.

OFF THE PAGE AND INTO MY LIFE - application

What was the outcome of Hannah's Prayer of Desperation? Now we learn the rest of Hannah's prayer story. God *does* give Hannah a son.

1Sam. 2:1-10 And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. (2) "There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. (3) Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. (4) The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. (5) Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. (6) The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. (7) The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. (8) He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world. (9) "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. (10) The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed.'

For a woman who was initially speechless before God and whose prayer was too desperate for words - the outcome of her circumstances brings her to a new challenge – that is adequately praising God for all that He is and for all that He has accomplished.

No Short Cuts Around the Valley

Passages like these are not written by those who have heard about God from the testimonies of others. Praise like this cannot come from the heart of someone who has only read about the story of a missionary in some far off place. This kind of prayer with this kind of personal praise – comes only from one who has passed through the valley of desperation with God. *We cannot arrive where Hannah is without that valley of desperation.*

This kind of prayer with this kind of praise comes only from one who has found themselves in that valley– and who in that state, prayed to God in speechless desperation – had the Spirit of God Himself, step in and fill in the gaps – hearing those un-utterable heart broken, gut wrenching communications that only come directly from the groaning spirit of the desperate to the generous spirit of our Heavenly Helper - and who affirms the hurt. Then Spirit God Himself, addresses the need, stands in the gap between broken humanity and exalted, enthroned deity and at that point illuminates our blind eyes, speaks to our broken spirit, and gloriously transforms the prayer of desperation into the proclamation of personal praise to God. *This kind comes only through prayer and desperation.*

There are no short cuts. There is no such thing as microwave solutions to desperate situations.

The result of Hannah's desperation and her prayer too desperate for words.. God heard and answered and brought a godly priest and leader to Israel.

<p>1Sam. 3:19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.</p>

Samuel grew into a man of great wisdom and great influence and blessing for the entire nation of Israel.

-----Thinking Things Through -----

What is your desperate situation?

You may have more than one. List or think about those situations.

What would have to happen in order for those hopeless situations to turn to hopeful situations? _____

-----*Praying It Through*-----

- 1) Express to God all you can express. There is value in expression. Perhaps write your prayers down in a private journal. No one will ever see it, but it can help you to work through expressing yourself adequately to God.
- 2) Take time in silent prayer for God to speak to you and for His Holy Spirit to perform His needed work of perfect intercession on your behalf. There is value in silent prayer.
- 3) The Father Knows Best! Trust God to work on your behalf, in your own specific situation. There is value in assurance.
(Heb.11:6)

Dear Lord, life seems so out of control. Please take my heavy burdens and broken situations and make something out of them that is not a disaster. I am trusting in you.

*In Jesus name,
Amen!*

“He has made everything beautiful in its time.”
-Ecclesiastes 3:11



Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --
Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come from
God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life. --*John 3:16*

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to die
in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal
life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- *Romans 6:23*

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus
Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us. ---*Romans 5:8*

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- *Rom 10:13*

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he
gave the right to become children of God, - *John 1:12*

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are
truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

***Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your
sins and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.***

Some Simple ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

We have a free booklet on:

Water Baptism: *The First Step of Believer's Obedience.*
and also

A New Creation: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*

***It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be, your
greatest purpose, your highest calling, your soul's
source and joy, and your all-consuming passion.***

Other Free Booklets downloadable at www.ChristEFCA.org

1 PETER, pt.1-2 (2Vol): *Suffering in Sojourning*
1 PETER, pt.3-5 (3Vol): *The Church God Always Wanted*
A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*
ADVENT: *The Submission of Christ*
AMERICA ADRIFT: *A Culture in Crisis and the Challenges Before the Church*
BALANCING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: (2VOLS) *Growing together in the Basics*
CHALLENGES OF FAITH *From Characters in the Bible*
CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM: *What Will Be Will Be*
CPR Evangelism: *Helping others Step from Death to Life*
DIRTY DISCIPLESHIP: *Preparing the Soil of the Heart for the Seed of the Word.*
ETERNITY: *What Will It Really Be Like?*
GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: *A Match Made in Heaven*
GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE FAMILY: *The Intelligent Divine Design*
GROWING THROUGH GRIEF: *When Pain Won't End and Hope Seems Lost*
HOLY WEEK 2011: *Questions About Christ and His Resurrection?*
HOLY WEEK 2012: *Questions about Life and Death?*
HOLY WEEK 2016: *Events Surrounding the Passion Week*
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ALMIGHTY: *Life Transforming Prayer & Communion*
IN THE SHADOW OF THE SHEPHERD: *Sheep Becoming Like the Servant Shepherd*
INTERESTS AND INQUIRIES: *Curious Cultural Concerns for The Future*
JAMES (4Vol): *Faith That Makes A Difference*
JUDE: (2Vol) *STANDING FIRM, When the Rest of the World is Falling Away.*
KINGDOM VISION: *Seeing the World and God's Kingdom as God does*
LIFE MATTERS: *What It Means for Others To See Jesus In You*
MAKING LIFE WORK (2Vol): *Discovering Your God Focused Purpose in Living*
MISSIONS 2016: *THE MINISTRY OF JONAH and God's Heart for the Nations.*
MISSIONS: *100 Years, So Where Are We Now?*
PRAYERS OF DESPERATION: *Prayer God Answers But No One Wants To Pray*
Ruth: *Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD.*
SURVIVING THE STORMS OF THE SOUL: *The Presence of God in Times of Trouble*
THE 12: OUR SPIRITUAL ANCESTORS – *Their faith and failures*
THE HOLY SPIRIT: *The Friend You Need To Get To Know*
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: *Seeing and Living the Kingdom of Heaven*
THE WONDER OF IT ALL: *The End Times of Trials, from Mark 13*
TRAGEDIES OF LIFE: *Things God Allows & Blessings from Heaven's Perspective*
WATER BAPTISM: *The First Step of Believer's Obedience or Disobedience.*
WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER: *A Handbook for Pre-Marriage Considerations*
YOUR LIFE IS LIKE...: *The Challenge to Disciple A Community*



May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit in His Church and throughout our mission field.