

Psalms: Worshiping in All of Life

To You, O Lord, I Call

Psalm 28:1-9

The Psalms show us how to go through life, all of its highs and lows, and respond to the Lord through it all. We've looked at wisdom psalms, trust psalms, and thanksgiving psalms. This morning we want to take a look at a category of psalms called lament. These are the psalms where the song writer pours out the anguish of his heart to the Lord. These are psalms that express the struggle that we encounter as we go through the difficulties that are this life.

Let me word the question to you this way. Why do we live in the "land of lament?" We live in a land of struggle, sorrow, hurt, heartache, anger, abuse, envy, and evil. Why? Scripture points out that we live in this "land of lament" because of the consequences of sin and ultimately the loving correction of our Father, the Lord.

It is in this land of consequence and correction that our heart is revealed. Psalm 28 is a psalm that reveals the posture of our heart. There are really only two options open to us in this life. We will respond to the Lord in a posture of the heart that reveals our absolute dependence upon him, or we will respond to the Lord in a posture of the heart that reveals our absolute disregard of him.

In Psalm 28:1-2, the song writer calls out to the Lord. He pleads to the Lord to hear his prayer because if the Lord doesn't listen and respond he feels as if he will die. He displays physically the posture of dependence by lifting up his hands in prayer toward the Holy of Holies. It's as if he's saying, "Lord, I need and long for you, your presence.



Psa 28:1-2 (ESV) Of David. To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. [2] Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.

Psalm 28:3-5 reveals a posture of the heart that has no regard for God. The song writer defines them as wicked. What classifies someone as wicked? There is no regard in their heart for the Lord. The Lord has revealed himself as Creator in all that they see around them. He has blessed them as Provider and Sustainer on a daily basis by giving them freely all that they need for this physical life. The Lord has taken every measure to provide for them spiritually as Savior through the work of Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection. Yet, through all of this, they have no regard for the Lord in their heart. They have disregarded the Lord and chosen to live for themselves. This disregard has led to evil intentions that in turn are revealed through the actions that are displayed toward those around them. From the heart flows evil speech and evil actions.



Psa 28:3-5 (ESV) Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts. [4] Give to them according to their work and according to the evil of their deeds; give to them according to the work of their hands; render them their due reward. [5] Because they do not regard the works of the LORD or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and build them up no more.

The song writer comes back to his own personal reflection in Psalm 28:6-7. I want us to think about some of the imagery of the song for a moment and see how it also reveals the posture of the heart. Again, we live in a “land of lament.” There are consequences for sin that we are experiencing ever since Genesis 3 and there is the loving correction of our Father God. The pain of this life is intended to change the posture of our heart. The Lord wants us to return to him. He wants us to leave our self-made rule and to run to the Shepherd of our souls. How is this revealed in the imagery of the psalm? Verse 6 says, “Blessed be the Lord!” The Hebrew word “blessed” has the idea of kneeling in submission and adoration before the Lord. This physical act reveals the posture of the heart. Why does someone choose to call to the Lord? Because they are bowing their life in submission and adoration of the Lord. They recognize that he alone is Lord and he alone can help. We’ve already seen in verse 2 the image of the song writer “lifting his hands” toward the Holy of Holies. Why? Because he is longing for the person and presence of the Lord. He is acknowledging his absolute dependence upon the Lord. These physical displays reveal the posture of the heart. He knows that the Lord is his

strength and his shield. He is using a physical reminder to display his trust in the Lord.

It is in this posture of the heart that we truly experience victory. Ask yourself this question. What has changed for the psalm writer between verse 2 and verse 6? What about his situation is different? The answer. Nothing. In the space of time that it took him to write these verses nothing physically has changed about his situation. What has changed is that the posture of his heart—absolute dependence upon the Lord—is the victory. That's what changed. The song writer cried out to the Lord because he recognized he was absolutely dependent upon the Lord and that was when the victory was won.



Psa 28:6-7 (ESV) Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. [7] The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults (triumphs), and with my song I give thanks to him.

The song closes with an inclusion of the congregation. The Lord doesn't just want to be the strength and shield of an individual. He wants to be the strength and shield of a community. The Lord is the strength of his people. He is the saving refuge of his people. Psalm 28:9 concludes with four imperatives the writer directs to the Lord:

1. Save your people.
2. Bless your heritage.
3. Be their shepherd.
4. Carry them forever.

As I've said throughout, this psalm reveals the posture of a heart that calls on the Lord. We live in a land of consequence and correction because the Lord wants our heart. He wants to save us. That salvation can only come when we come to a place of bowing our hearts in submission and adoration to the Lord. When we run to Jesus as the Shepherd of our souls and bow before him he meets us at the point of our greatest need, the forgiveness of our sins, and saves us. Incredibly, when we bow our hearts in submission and adoration to the Lord, he blesses us with forgiveness and life. Isn't it utterly astounding that the Lord of all the universe would love us enough to condescend to bless us with forgiveness, redemption, and salvation?

When we bow our hearts in submission and adoration to the Lord, he shepherds us, cares for us, guides for us, protects us, provides for us. He leads us in victory as our hearts trust in him. There is one final image we need to see as we close the psalm. The psalmist implores the Lord to carry his people forever. Remember in verse two when he said he was lifting his hands in prayer toward the Lord and his holy sanctuary? The word “lift” is the same word for “carry” in verse 9. The Lord saves, blesses, shepherds, and carries us as we bow our hearts in submission and adoration before him.



Psa 28:8-9 (ESV) The LORD is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed. [9] Oh, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

Don't miss the concluding words of the Psalm:

“Be their shepherd and carry them forever.”

Now see how the Lord fulfills this imperative throughout scripture.



1Pe 2:25 (ESV) For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.



Joh 10:11 (ESV) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.



Rev 7:17 (ESV) For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

When we correctly understand our situation, we bow our hearts, kneeling before the Lord in submission and adoration. We return to the Shepherd of our Souls. Incredibly, this loving Shepherd makes all this possible by laying down his life for us at the cross and by rising victoriously from the grave. Bowing before the Lord puts us in a position of trust and victory now and for always. When we lift up our hearts in dependence before the Lord, he lifts us up and carries us forever. He was the Lamb that was slain so that he could be our salvation and our eternal shepherd. He gives us joy and victory in the “land of lament” and leads us to eternal life now and forever.