

Confident Prayer

Study Outline – Grace Bible Chapel

Psalm 86:1-17

Sunday – August 13th, 2017

CONTEXT of Psalm 86: - This is a Psalm of David. We do not know the exact circumstance, of which David had many, but it was likely during the trial where Absalom defected and sought to have David killed. David uses a number of quotes drawing together from other Psalms that he also wrote. In the midst of his affliction (Vs. 1) his central focus is upon God. It is no wonder he is known as a man after God's own heart. Now, I have placed basic outline sections to this prayer, but in actuality these are almost interchangeable as the entire prayer has elements that are found abundantly in the titles of each section. This is yet another portrait of a person who has been touched by God's grace, and who in the trenches of life's most serious battles is calling on God. There is one consistent theme throughout and that is "confidence" in God. It is stated from all angles – by His consistent care, character, compassion, and because David is an Israelite "servant" (Vs. 2), and "son of Your handmaid" (Vs. 16) he is also in a special covenant relationship to God. This prayer has consistent order of petition followed by reason, then praise followed by reason. By application and implication we are to have the same focus and attitude of confidence in God in all of life's difficulties, and turn our concerns into petitions, reason, and praise. From this Psalm we learn what it means to wholly have our focus upon God as our all in all.

Introduction:

- Anytime we approach Scripture – we should ask: why is this here? What is God communicating & why? What am I to learn from this?
- Psalms are personal, transparent, spiritual x-rays of the human heart that is dedicated to God.
- Christianity is always a heart issue – where is your heart? It is also a testing issue! Remember James 1:2 "Consider it all joy when brethren when you encounter various trials...perfect, complete, lacking nothing.
- This prayer has the mark of union with God – in that union we see petition, reason, praise, followed by more reason, praise & petition – all by relationship.

I. **Situation and Call upon God** (86:1)

- **Vs. 1** – We do not know the specific circumstance among the many in David's life – we know he was tested in numerous ways – hand-to-hand combat, living in exile, chased by King Saul, severe opposition from his own family (Absalom) – which from verse 17 I believe is the most likely situation we have in this prayer.
 - "Afflicted and needy" & (Vs. 14) "arrogant men...sought my life."

Point: David's life was not a flat line – it was mountains & valleys – the benefit to him was God's work in him, and to us it is how his great troubles are considered & handled.

Point: This prayer becomes another example for us in our personal troubling trials in our life – this prayer for God's help has a tone of confidence – so should our prayers, not based on us, but in who is our God – that is the life of faith.

- What does David do? He calls on the Lord!
- David has used similar language before (17:6; 31:2; 71:2) – the needs of God's people, those trusting in Him, have a claim on God's ear & thereby His mercy (Heb. 4:16) "let us draw near with confidence" or (Phil. 4:6-7).

Point: The issue is not God's willingness to hear our prayers, but our faith & confidence to call upon Him. David sought the Lord & so should we.

II. **Secure in God's Covenant** (86:2-7) – here is petition.

- **Vs. 2** – The word for "godly" here is used throughout the OT to describe the NT version of God's elect (Ps. 4:3). David was chosen of God under covenant to lead Israel, & was additionally a man trusting, knowing, loving God.
 - Wiersbe says this word in Hebrew is equivalent to the word for saints in the NT Greek. David was under God's covenant, & those in Christ (saints) are under the covenant of grace.

- The idea of covenant is also seen in the use of “servant” – the idea of one who is wholly given to the will of another – David saw himself under God’s covenant to serve His commands, & in accord with His revealed will.

Point: David is not calling on God based on his good works, but based on his understanding of the union God has by grace (for us the new covenant) with those who put their trust in Him. He pleads his case based on his relationship with God.

- **Vs. 3** – This point is made clearer in David’s plea to God – “be gracious” – this is a phrase that speaks not to deserving, but God’s infinite capacity for unmerited favor.
 - Additionally, “for You...day long” – this is another way of saying – all my confidence is in You. I am not looking anywhere else for help but only to You.
- **Vs. 4** – “Make glad the soul” – the reference to soul (Nephesh) in Hebrew is always a reference to the living intangible portion of a person – all that pertains to a person by nature, personality, character – his unique God-given self. It is not so much about fix my problem, but grant me peace.

Point: God gave us who we are, & He controls our very existence in all of life.

Point: to “make glad” is to give me Your peace in my inner self – the peace of God.

- **Vs. 5** – so far we have heard David’s petitions – now he adds praise: “for You...forgive...all who call upon You” – this would indicate two things:
 - It is likely this could be referring to something David believes he has done that has caused God’s disfavor & his current situation.
 - It could be a general statement of David knowing we are never worthy before the Lord, & once again shows he is not approaching God on the basis of our own worthiness, but according to God’s consistent character.

Point: One of the most wonderful considerations of our God is His willingness to forgive – I am not aware of any text that would indicate God is ever not willing to forgive – king Ahab, or the Ninevites (Jonah).

- Isaiah 55:6 – context of forgiveness – would indicate there are seasons & situations when men are incapable of seeking forgiveness – men must seek forgiveness while it is real in the heart.
- In Heb. 12:16-18 - Esau found “no place for repentance.”
- **Vs. 6-7** – Is a repeat of verse 1 to again emphasize the heart of David and his confidence in God.
 - The difference is “supplications” – always used of prayer, but of prayer in deep humility. God says “to this one I will look” (Is. 66:2).
 - **Vs. 7** – David’s confidence that God honors prayers in true humility when He is called upon – “You will answer me.”

Point: This entire section has a sense of the consistent care of God on those who truly seek Him, who come seeking true forgiveness in humility. How wonderful is this! We should never hold back praying in our times of significant trial.

III. Secure in God’s Character (86:8-10)

- **Vs. 8** – Once again David turns to praise - “no one like You” – first of all there are no other gods – but most importantly is the idea of there is no other place to turn – no one to turn to but God.
 - Think of the important words of Peter (John 6:68) “Lord, to whom shall we go...” There is no place to turn. This is the dilemma of those without God – nothing but emptiness. It is not so for us - Isaiah 46:5; Ex 15:5-11
- **Vs. 9** – Here is a promise reflecting the future coming kingdom – Ps. 2; Rev. 15:3 “every knee shall bow...Lord” (Phil. 2:10-11).

Point: It is just a matter of time before all the people of the earth will act in unison of their understanding of the One true God. This too reflects the confidence of David. His momentary

afflictions will pass – God will prevail. He will delight in being aligned with God. That should be a continual encouragement to us!

- **Vs. 10** – This is the theme verse of the confidence David has in God – this is reason - these are simple but comprehensive absolute truths of which to rely:
 - God is great – a statement so simple, almost feeling too slight – but glorious.
 - God does wondrous deeds – God is actively involved in the affairs of man – another glorious truth! He did not just wind up the earth & let it go!
 - God alone is God – there is no other person or anything to look to like God – no one eclipses Him, no one can do what He alone can do – He is the highest court, the final answer, the only hope!
- IV. **Secure in God's Compassion** (86:11-13) – God has reached down to mankind in a manner He was never obligated – He deals with us according to compassion. To those with a right heart this is embellished and appreciated.
- **Vs. 11** – “teach me Your way” a petition – our issues in life's journey are instructive – David realizes this & wants more and more to understand God. Our church theme verse is Paul's desire “that I may know Him.”
 - To know Him is to love Him, to be closer to Him – “in His presence.”
 - David focused on his personal walk with the Lord – it was always at the forefront of his thinking – “unite my heart to fear Your name” – is an undivided mindset fixed on God – fearing or reverencing Him more than anything. Point: this is never the priority of anyone except those in His grace.
- **Vs. 12** – The next two verses are filled again with praise – this shows us that a significant part of every prayer, & every right heart before Him is gratitude.
- **Vs. 13** – “lovingkindness” is a word referring to God's covenant faithfulness – once He has spoken His covenant is fixed & bathed in His compassion.
 - His relation of greatness is through His compassion of covenant faithfulness – we are under the new covenant in Christ's blood.
 - God is the One who “delivers” us from every situation. But more, He will deliver us from the hell we deserve – by His grace. Nothing is better than this.
- V. **Secure in God's Consistent Care** (86:14-17)
- **Vs. 14** – Now he presents the contrast of himself to these who are set against him. He calls them “arrogant” – (Prov 21:4 “proud,” Mal. 4:1) they are depicted as those who are set against God.
 - “violent” – literally terrible men – fierce, lawless, tyrannical – the idea is they don't act according to what is right but instead by their own selfish whims.
 - Also by contrast they “have not set You before them.” They do not fear the Lord, have no regard for God – no relationship with God.
- Point:** This is the point of contrast – David's claim is his trust in the living God, & by trusting in Him he puts his confidence in the fact “will not the judge of the earth do what is right.” David has aligned himself with God. These others are aligned against God (Mat. 12:30 “He who is not with Me is against Me” – so are all unsaved.
- **Vs. 15** – Unlike the “violent” men – God is “merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.” This verse is one of the most comprehensive declarations of the character of God & is especially encouraging to those in relation to His covenant in Christ Jesus.
- **Vs. 16** – Here David makes his final petition to God for help – it is based on Vs. 15 naturally following who God is - a prayer in accordance with God's character.
 - What does he ask for? – strength! This reminds me of the study in Acts. The early church did not ask for the opposition to go away, but for strength to deal with it in faithfulness to

God. In this regard he says “save” – that is I know that unless You intervene I shall perish. But he also attaches:

- “the son of Your handmaid” – Ps. 116:16 – the idea is having been born into a covenant relation to God (as an Israelite), & one chosen even to be king – he has been chosen for service from his birth. He is even from his mother’s womb the servant of the sovereign Lord. It means the most devoted servant.
- No doubt this is also prophetic as David is a type of Christ.

Point: It is because of David’s relationship to God that he calls on Him, & that He has confidence in Him. It is not because of himself, but because of the relationship God has sovereignly made – the same is true of us today. We have no merit, but our relationship is strictly via His sovereign grace.

- **Vs. 17** – He is asking God for evidence in his personal trial that God is with Him, & that others may know God is with Him.
 - This could be in the circumstances of living in a trial – it is not so much asking God to relieve the trial as much as give him assurance.
 - And not just personal assurance, but that others may know that God is with Him-in David’s situation (likely Absalom) those surrounding him had decided that God had indeed abandoned him – that he was cursed of God.

Point: David, in the majority of his life (as with killing Goliath) was shown to be a man whom God was with in all circumstances. In this circumstance it is apparently not clear to others. More than anything David wants to be known as God’s man!

- More than this - David desires God’s glory to be known by others – of course there is a day coming in which the whole world will know & worship God.

Closing:

- It should be natural to us, in Christ, to desire the obvious presence & work of God in our lives.
- In times of difficulty we fall back on our relationship with God, the character of God, & the knowledge of His consistent care for His own.
- It should further be natural to us, in Christ, to desire the glory of God not only to be seen surrounding us, but to be seen by others.
- I hope you see this prayer as rich, deep, understandable as a child of God, & applicable to all of us as well in our challenges and relationship with God.