

But You Lord, Are a Compassionate and Gracious God

Psalms 86:1-17

¹ *Hear me, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.*

² *Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God;*³ *have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long.*

⁴ *Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you.*

⁵ *You, Lord(Adonai), are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.*

⁶ *Hear my prayer, LORD; listen to my cry for mercy.*

⁷ *When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me.*

⁸ *Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours.*

⁹ *All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name.*

¹⁰ *For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.*

¹¹ *Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.*

¹² *I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.*

¹³ *For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead.*

¹⁴ *Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me— they have no regard for you.*

¹⁵ *But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*

¹⁶ *Turn to me and have mercy on me; show your strength in behalf of your servant; save me, because I serve you just as my mother did.*

¹⁷ *Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.*

Introduction

⁷ *When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me.*

Over the past few weeks, we have been learning a lot about prayer. In the book of Psalms, there are many prayers from people in distress. The intensity of the trouble may vary, but when in distress, the people of God turned to God in prayer. It is their conviction that the Lord whom they serve will answer their prayer; He will deliver them.

Likewise, we also face troubled days. The intensity of the trouble varies, but these troubles nevertheless rob us of joy and peace. The more we read the news, the more we are aware of what is happening around us, the more we feel troubled. The same happens when we start to take on more responsibilities at home or at work. A lot of what is happening around us is out of our control and not going the way it should. (cf. vs. 1, “*Hear me, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.*”)

Matthew 9:37-38

³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Jesus asked His disciples to pray that the Lord will send out more workers to preach the good news. The good news is, in Jesus Christ we are no longer harassed or helpless. Jesus loves us and He cares for us. God invites all people to find rest in Him.

¹ Hear me, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

David is free to acknowledge that he is ‘poor and needy’ before God, simply because God is compassionate and merciful. Jesus invites everyone to discover how gracious and compassionate He is. “Cast all your care on Him for He cares for you.”

3 Cords that Hold the Relationship

¹ Hear me, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

² Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; ³ have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long.

1. Covenantal Love:

The Lord (Yahweh) answers me. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God who entered into a covenant with us. He has tied Himself to us with cords of faithfulness. The nature of God’s covenant with us is seen in God’s determination to deliver us and establish us as His people. The parable of the prodigal son richly illustrates the depths of God’s covenantal love.

2. Master and Servant:

God’s faithfulness in keeping His covenant leads us to be his faithful servants. The relationship of God being the Master and we being the servant is unlike anything we have seen. David has always known the Lord as the gracious master who loves him and cares for him. (God’s loyalty is fully expressed in Jesus Christ.) His service to God is an expression of wholehearted devotion to the One he loves and worships.

3. Trust:

No relationship can thrive without trust. God can be trusted. God is the One in whom David trusts.

What does the word “Covenantal Relationship” mean to you?

The Character of God

⁴ Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you.

⁵ You, Lord (Adonai), are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.

⁶ Hear my prayer, LORD; listen to my cry for mercy.

⁷ When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me.

1. David is making appeal to God’s character. God will answer because He is gracious, loyal, and trustworthy. It is an important reminder that our prayers should be based on God’s character. He answers because of who He is.
2. ‘Bring joy to your servant’: David prays with the hope of celebrating the character of God in worship.
3. Verse 5 is a testimony to the character of God:

You, Lord	Adonai: supreme authority, matchless, all powerful
are	Forgiving Good Abounding in love to all who call on you

David prays because his faith finds rest on a God who is powerful and loving.

4. In verses 6-7, David appeals to the Lord to hear his plea and answer his prayer in his day of trouble.
 - A lot of people turn to prayer in their days of distress. We tend to look up when we have no other place to go. In those times, we want God to be real to us. The sad thing about this is, as things get better, the need for God diminishes.
 - This is not that type of prayer. David prays as one who is in a covenantal relationship with God. God has called him, blessed him, and has appointed him to be ruler over a covenantal nation.
 - God is never absent. He is always present with His people. The whole history of the Jewish people is shaped by the presence of God. Therefore, much of David’s pleas echo the prayers of those who have gone before him. His prayer is part of a larger story of faith and redemption.

Read the following verses and reflect on the Old Testament stories they point to:

Psalm 86:8 <i>⁸ Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours.</i>	Exodus 8:10 <i>¹⁰ “Tomorrow,” Pharaoh said. Moses replied, “It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God.</i>
Psalm 86:11 <i>¹¹ Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.</i>	Exodus 33:13-14 <i>¹³ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.” ¹⁴ The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”</i>
Psalm 86:15 <i>¹⁵ But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.</i>	Exodus 34:6 <i>⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,</i>
Psalm 86:17 <i>¹⁷ Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.</i>	Exodus 3:12 <i>¹² And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”</i>

Sovereignty of God: For You Alone are God

⁸ *Among the gods there is none like you, Lord;
no deeds can compare with yours.*

⁹ *All the nations you have made
will come and worship before you, Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.*

¹⁰ *For you are great and do marvellous deeds;
you alone are God.*

1. Reflecting on God's sovereignty led David to worship. He looks to a time where the whole world will come to the same conclusion; only Yahweh must be worshipped. Israel is to be God's instrument in bringing the knowledge of God to all nations. The New Testament writers tell us that this is fulfilled when Jesus came.

Isaiah 42:6

*"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you;
I will give you as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,*

2. There are other gods that seek to take the place of God. Satan is a spiritual being (gods) and many of the foreign gods are representations of these spiritual beings. These gods have held nations under their control. God's light will pierce the darkness.

2 Corinthians 4:4

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Matthew 4:16

the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

Teach Me Your Ways

¹¹ *Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness;
give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.*

¹² *I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart;
I will glorify your name forever.*

¹³ *For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths,
from the realm of the dead.*

1. David begins with a petition for deliverance from a time of trouble. His petition is anchored on the character of God. As he reflects on the character and greatness of God, he starts worshipping the Lord; looking to the day when all nation will worship Him alone. This stirs David's heart to know the Lord more intimately.

2. David's petition changes and is followed with praise because God is his deliverer.
 - a. Teach me Your ways so that I may rely on Your faithfulness
 - b. Give me an undivided heart that I may fear Your name
 - c. I will glorify Your name forever
 - d. You have delivered me from the depths

As we seek the Lord's help in our days of trouble, in the midst of our prayer, there is a deep realization that our God is great and mighty. We begin to thirst and hunger for more of Him; believing the more we know Him, the more our hearts are anchored in His love and goodness. We are also reminded that in Christ, we stand delivered from the power of death and sin, and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

Arrogant Foes

¹⁴ Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me—they have no regard for you.

¹⁵ But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

¹⁶ Turn to me and have mercy on me; show your strength in behalf of your servant; save me, because I serve you just as my mother did.

¹⁷ Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

God's people suffer because of the injustice that are taking place in the world. We grieve for the injustice, the racial crimes, and the persecution of Christianity. There are many wrong and unfair practices taking place in our workplace; there are arrogant people who do as they please, seeking their own profit while depriving others of what is due to them. We live in troubled days and we must pray.

In prayer, we seek God who is

- Compassionate, gracious, and merciful
- All powerful
- Faithful(loyal)
- Advocate and deliverer
- Help and comfort

Before you pray, take some time to reflect on who you are praying to.

Prayer Items

1. When I am in distress, I call to You, because You answer me (v. 7)
2. Teach me Your ways so that I may rely on Your faithfulness (v. 11)
3. Give me an undivided heart that I may fear Your name (v. 11)
4. Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness
5. Church
 - Guidance on restarting services at church
 - Renovation
 - Ministries
 - Community
6. Workplace
 - We will be salt and light
 - Empowered by the Holy Spirit to make a difference
 - Godly leadership
 - Deliverance from greed, injustice and corruption
7. Covid-19 pandemic
 - Deliverance
 - Front-liners: medical officers; armed forces
 - Leaders (government & companies): wisdom, compassion, righteousness
 - Economy: especially those who are badly affected: poor, homeless, more vulnerable people (refugees, foreigners)
8. Salvation of souls; opportunities & courage to witness