

Psalm 5 - The Glorifying Prayer of the Suffering Saint

Tuesday, August 21, 2012

8:39 AM

Introduction

a. Sermon Introduction

- i. Providentially, we have been presented with several discussions of the persecution of Christians in our recent discussions as a church
 - 1) We saw the theme of persecutions come up in Zechariah 12 and Zechariah 14
 - 2) We saw on Wednesday night that Christians are not free from worldly troubles, but should rather expect them
- ii. So, if a Christian ought to expect worldly trouble and persecution, what should we do when we are suffering?
- iii. Psalm 5 is going to answer that question this morning
 - 1) Psalm 5 is the prayer of a suffering saint
 - 2) Here, David, pours out his heart before God and gives us an example of how we should deal with suffering

b. Passage Introduction

- i. There are five stanzas in this Psalm, each approximately the same length
- ii. We are going to look at these five stanzas as five points, and there are a couple ways of looking at them
 - 1) Arrangement 1 - Five Attributes of God
 - a) David's focus in this Psalm is first and foremost about God, so I've titled the five stanzas on the five attributes of God that David meditates on
 - b) We see the God who hears, the God who is holy, the God who loves, the God who judges and the God who saves
 - 2) Arrangement 2 - A Chiasmatic Poem
 - a) As with many Psalms (including Psalm 4 from last week) the type of poetry is called a Chiasm
 - b) A Chiasm is a poem with an odd number of stanzas (for example 5) that is a mirror image
 - i) In other words, the topics of the poem go ABCBA
 - c) The Chiasm is arranged to emphasize the central section, the one that is unpaired and the final section, the conclusion of the poem
- iii. The entire Psalm is a prayer to God, but there are two distinct types of praying in the Psalm
 - 1) The first and more obvious prayer is a petition, asking God to do something
 - a) We see several petitions in this Psalm scattered throughout
 - 2) The second type of prayer we see in this Psalm is a meditation before God, that is a recital of truth that God has revealed and a conscientious submission to that truth
 - a) We see three meditations in this Psalm that make up the middle three stanzas

c. Read Psalm 5

d. Proposition and Outline

- i. Proposition - When the godly meet troubles they cry out to God for salvation and orient their prayer towards the glory of God
- ii. Outline
 - 1) The God Who Hears - The Petition
 - 2) The God Who Is Holy - A Meditation on God
 - 3) The God Who Loves - A Meditation on the Righteous
 - 4) The God Who Judges - A Meditation on the Wicked
 - 5) The God Who Saves - The Response

1. The God Who Hears - A Petition (1-3)

- **In the first stanza of the Psalm this morning, David comes to present His petition before God**

- In doing so, he recognizes four things:
 - The reason for his prayer
 - The reason he ought to pray
 - The reason for which God would listen to his prayer
 - The reason he would continue in prayer

a. The reason for prayer - A recognition of suffering

- Phrases
 - 'Consider my groaning' (1)
 - 'Give attention to the sound of my cry' (2)
- This Psalm is not explicitly titled, so we don't really have any idea what situation David is writing about
 - We know, though, that David faced many struggles during his life - he was well acquainted with suffering
 - It could have been any of these situations that David prayed about here
 - The generality of the Psalm makes it very easy to apply to us
- David recognizes that he is suffering
 - This is something David is particularly good at
 - You don't get the picture in the Bible that David was one to paint a rosy picture about life
 - David recognized that we live in a sinful world and that we ourselves are sinners
 - And David recognized that the presence of sin means also the presence of suffering
 - He understood suffering and recognized it as suffering
- David brings his suffering before the Lord
 - David does not merely recognize suffering and despair, nor recognize suffering and simply 'man up'
 - He groaned and cried out to God because of His suffering
 - In recognizing the effects of sin in the world, David is again pushed toward God in prayer
- David prays earnestly and emotionally about his suffering
 - David prayer is a groaning and a cry
 - These are words of fervent and emotional application before God
 - David did not casually present his petitions before God, he groaned over his suffering before God
- So, David, firstly, recognizes suffering and it directs him to fervent prayer before God

b. The reason to pray - A recognition of Lordship

- Phrases
 - 'O Lord' (1, 3)
 - 'My King and my God' (2)
- In addition to recognizing suffering, David recognizes the God who is enthroned and sovereign over suffering
 - David recognizes who God is
 - God is Lord
 - This is God's covenant name from Exodus 3, Exodus 20, and Exodus 33/34
 - In Exodus 3 and 33/34 God's covenant name is associated with His sovereignty
 - In Exodus 20 God's covenant name is associated with His salvation
 - So, in recognizing God as Lord, David acknowledges that God is sovereign over suffering and the one who can save from suffering
 - God is King
 - When David recognizes God as King, it is very similar to recognizing Him as Lord, but I think there is a subtle difference
 - Lord refers to sovereignty and salvation, King refers to rule
 - God is the one who has the right to rule over all things
 - God is God
 - David recognizes God as the transcendent, self-existent being

- 2) David acknowledges his relationship to this God
 - a) Notice the possessive in verse 2 - it is MY Lord and MY God
 - i) David not only recognizes who God is, he submits himself to God
 - a. He submits himself to God as his Lord - his sovereign savior
 - b. He submits himself to God as his King - his rightful ruler
 - c. He submits himself to God as God - his creator
 - b) Henry: *Observe how David here styles him: O Lord, Jehovah, a self-existent, self-sufficient, Being, whom we are bound to adore, and, "my King and my God, whom I have avouched for my God, to whom I have sworn allegiance, and under whose protection I have put myself as my King."* We believe that the God we pray to is a King, and a God. King of kings and God of gods; but that is not enough: the most commanding encouraging principle of prayer, and the most powerful or prevailing plea in prayer, is to look upon him as our King and our God, to whom we lie under peculiar obligations and from whom we have peculiar expectations.
- iii. So, David, secondly, recognizes and submits to God as Lord, King and God

c. The reason to hear - An acknowledgment of need and supply

- i. Phrase
 - 1) '**For** to you do I pray' (2)
 - 2) The implication of this phrase is that 'to you and to you only do I pray'
- ii. In this phrase, David does several things
 - 1) David acknowledges that he is not sufficient
 - a) When David brings his request before God, he acknowledges that he is not sufficient to deal with his suffering on his own
 - b) He must seek God to deal with his suffering
 - 2) David acknowledges that God is sufficient
 - a) When David brings his request before God, he acknowledges that God is sufficient to deal with his suffering
 - b) He seeks God, because God is the one who will answer
 - 3) David acknowledges that no one else is sufficient
 - a) When David rejects other sources to bring his request before God, he acknowledges that all other securities and all other god's are nothing
 - b) Only God is the one sufficient to deal with David's suffering
- iii. This is the only reason that David gives God to hear his prayer
 - 1) First, let's notice all the things David did not list as reasons to hear his prayer
 - a) He didn't list his own righteousness
 - b) He didn't list the worthiness of his cause
 - c) He didn't list his own
 - 2) David only lists one reason for God to hear his prayer - that He is praying to God
 - a) David lists this reason, because in praying to God, God has the chance to demonstrate that He is the Lord, King and God as David has acknowledged Him
 - b) David lists this reason, because in praying to God, God has the chance to glorify Himself in salvation
 - c) David lists this reason, because in praying to God, God has the chance to demonstrate that He is not like the other gods
 - d) So, David does not hold up himself as any reason to hear his prayer, but he holds up God's glory as a reason to hear his prayer
- iv. So, David, thirdly, recognizes His need and God sufficiency to fulfill it

d. The reason to continue - An intention to come and anticipation of reply

- i. Phrases
 - 1) *'In the morning you hear my voice'* (3)
 - 2) *'In the morning I prepare a sacrifice and watch'* (3)
- ii. David states two things in these phrases
 - 1) That he will continue to petition God
 - 2) That he believes God will hear and answer
- iii. In other words, having made the last three recognitions he takes them to their logical conclusions
 - 1) David has recognized suffering and brought it to God
 - 2) David has recognized God as His King who is Sovereign over His suffering
 - 3) David has recognized God as the One sufficient to deal with His suffering and called on Him to glorify Himself through it
 - 4) So, David is confident that God will answer, confident enough to keep praying, sacrificing, and watching until such time as God deems right to answer

e. Applications

- i. We too should recognize suffering and allow it to direct us to prayer
 - 1) I Peter 5:6-7 - *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*
 - 2) This is opposite of denying suffering
 - 3) This is opposite of stoically bearing through suffering
 - 4) This is recognizing suffering and turning to God
- ii. We too must recognize and submit to God as Lord, King and God in our prayers
 - 1) Consider the start of the Lord's prayer
 - 2) Matthew 6:9-10 - *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*
 - 3) Christ Himself calls us to recognize God as the one in heaven (that is God), the one who is hallowed or set apart (that is Lord), and the one whose kingdom ought to come (that is King)
 - 4) Only by explicitly acknowledging and submitting to the Lordship of God can we properly come before Him
- iii. We too must direct our prayer to and only to God
 - 1) Zechariah 10:1 - *Ask rain from the LORD in the season of the spring rain, from the LORD who makes the storm clouds, and he will give them showers of rain, to everyone the vegetation in the field.*
 - 2) As we discussed back in Zechariah, we ought to very intentionally direct our prayers to God for the fulfillment of His promises and reject all other methods of obtaining them
 - 3) In our culture, this probably doesn't mean we don't pray to other gods, but it does mean that we don't trust money or wealth or wisdom or education, or whatever we might trust in, to save us, we call on God and trust Him alone
- iv. We too must dedicate ourselves to continued prayer and anticipate God's reply
 - 1) Colossians 4:2 - *Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.*

2. The God Who Is Holy - A Description of God (4-6)

- David's first meditation is on God and calls God to glorify Himself in holiness

a. The description of God

- i. Holiness (4)
 - 1) First, David meditates on the total separation of God from evil
 - 2) God has no delight in wickedness
 - a) There is nothing in the character of God that takes any pleasure in wrong doing
 - b) This is really the most significant description of God that can be given
 - i) It is something we cannot really understand - even in our best thoughts, there is mixed that which desires evil
 - ii) But God is not like us, He is pure to the nth degree
 - 3) Evil cannot even dwell in His presence - Again, emphasizing the radical holiness of God
- ii. Wrath (5-6)
 - 1) David then meditates on what the holiness of God requires
 - a) It requires an intolerance of those who exalt things other than God
 - b) It requires a hate of those who do delight in wickedness
 - c) It requires destruction of those who delight in that which is false
 - d) It requires abhorrence of those who fail to revere the life which God has given and those who fail to testify to the truth of God
 - e) Literally, evil cannot dwell in God's presence, God will destroy it
 - 2) This section should stand to correct our mistaken thoughts about God
 - a) We cannot say, without proper reservation, that God loves the sinner but hates the sin
 - b) David is very clear here, God hates all those (that is persons) who do evil
 - i) Sin is not an abstract concept that can be disconnected from a sinner
 - ii) So, His holiness requires hatred of persons, persons who defy and dishonor Him
 - c) God is assuredly a God of love and shows love to sinners in Christ, but He is also a God of holiness and wrath
 - i) God is a God of both love and hate
 - ii) To characterize God as one without the other is to grossly mischaracterize Him

b. The purpose of David's meditation

- i. To exalt God
 - 1) David first turns to meditate on God to glorify God
 - 2) David's meditation on the holiness and wrath of God is terrifyingly glorious
 - 3) God is exalted as the Holy Judge of the universe
- ii. To give comfort in trial
 - 1) David believes that it is due to evil that he is suffering
 - 2) Whether he is envisioning specific evildoers who are persecuting him or general evil that causes suffering, David views evil as the enemy
 - 3) So, the God who is separate from all evil is the God who will defeat his enemy
- iii. To encourage prayer
 - 1) Notice how David starts this section - *'For you are not a God who delights in wickedness'*
 - 2) This continues from the previous verse, where David committed himself to continue seeking God and watching for His response
 - 3) David will continue seeking God and watching for His response, because He knows God's character

c. Application

- i. We ought to meditate on God's holiness, especially in prayer
 - 1) This is the first phrase of the Lord's prayer, to meditate on how set apart God is
 - 2) Matthew 6:9 - *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*
 - 3) We ought not to approach God without realizing who He is, the awesome, holy God
- ii. We ought not to mischaracterize God's holiness, especially to try to 'rescue' Him from Himself
 - 1) The God who is Love unashamedly hates all evildoers because He is also the God of righteousness
 - 2) God sees no contradiction in those attributes
 - 3) Therefore, we should also see no contradiction in those attributes and should not, in the name of love, minimize God's wrath and hatred for sin

3. The God Who Loves - A Description of the Righteous (7-8)

- David's second meditation turns to the righteous and calls on God to glorify Himself in loving provision

a. The cause of the righteous (7a)

- David starts his mediation on the righteous with the reason the righteous are not destroyed by God
- Again, notice what David does not say
 - It is not, 'But I, because of my righteousness'
 - Nor is it, 'But I, because I have taken your side'
 - Nor is it, 'But I, because of my right cause'
 - Nor is it even, 'But I, because I pray to you'
 - There is nothing in this verse to indicate that the reason for the difference between the wicked and the righteous exists in them
- David does say, '*But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love...*'
 - David recognizes that the reason that he is not counted as one of the wicked is solely due to the steadfast love of God
 - This is actually a quote from Exodus 34:6-7 - *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*
 - David has meditated already on the second half of God's name, the God who will by no means clear the guilty
 - Now he meditates on the first half of God's name, the God who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness
 - It is this aspect of the character of God, and nothing about the righteous, that makes the righteous the righteous
- So, once again, in prayer, David acknowledges and meditates on the fact that glory in salvation belongs to God and not to man - it is God's steadfast love that keeps the righteous from being the wicked

b. The actions of the righteous (7b)

- After acknowledging that God's steadfast love is the only reason he is counted among the righteous, David turns and lists three characteristics or actions of the righteous
- The public worship of God
 - The first thing David notes about the righteous is that they go up to the house of God
 - When David says that he will enter God's house, he is referring to the public worship at the temple
 - He would go up with the people of God to worship at the house of God
 - Those to whom God shows steadfast love love to join together to worship God
 - This is the consistent testimony of David
 - For example, Psalm 122:1 - *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"*
 - The steadfast love of God prompts worship, especially public worship
- The worship of God in His temple
 - The second thing David notes about the righteous is that they bow down toward God's holy temple
 - In this phrase, David focuses on how the righteous worship God
 - The righteous worship God in His holy temple - I want to say two things about this
 - First, this means that the righteous do not worship in any other way other than by bowing to the place that God has put His name for worship
 - So, this statement is first a rejection of all other false forms of worship
 - Second, this means that there is a way that the righteous ought to worship, and that is by bowing down towards God's holy temple
 - We know that Christ put Himself forward as the ultimate antitype of the temple of God
 - He is the one who bears God's name and through whom we must worship God
 - Henry: *From the instituted medium of worship, which was then the temple, here called the temple of his holiness, as a type of Christ, the great and only Mediator, who sanctifies the service as the temple sanctified the gold, and to whom we must have an eye in all our devotions as the worshippers then had to the temple.*
 - The steadfast love of God prompts worship at His temple, that is worship through Christ

- iv. The fear of God
 - 1) The third thing David notes about the righteous is that they worship in the fear of God
 - 2) So, not only does the steadfast love of God prompt public worship of God through Christ, this worship ought to be colored by the proper reverence and awe of God
 - 3) We do not come into the presence of God glibly to worship, but soberly, recognizing who God is
 - 4) The steadfast love of God prompts the proper fear of God in worship

- c. The prayer of the righteous (8)
 - i. David finishes his section on the righteous by directing another petition to God
 - 1) He petitions God to lead him in God's righteousness and to make God's path straight before him
 - ii. This prayer again recognizes the cause of the righteous - that it is God's steadfast love that makes David counted among the righteous
 - 1) Therefore, David desires God to continue keeping Him in the way of the righteous and not being counted among the wicked
 - iii. He prays this as a prayer of vindication over His enemies
 - 1) David's enemies are those from stanza 2 who love evil
 - 2) Therefore, David desires God to vindicate him over his enemies so that his enemies will not despise God
 - 3) If God allows David to fall from the path of the righteous, then the wicked will scorn God
 - 4) So, even in this petition, David is looking to the glory of God, not merely to his own well-being

- d. Application**
 - i. We ought to humble ourselves before God, especially in prayer, recognizing it is only by His grace that we come before Him
 - 1) Again, we come back to I Peter 5:6-7 - *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*
 - ii. We ought to worship God in Christ with proper reverence and awe
 - 1) Hebrews 12:28-29 - *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.*
 - iii. We ought to continue in prayer asking God to lead us in His paths in order to glorify His name
 - 1) This is the logical response to the fact that God is the one who makes the righteous righteous
 - 2) This is a prayer even commanded by Christ at the end of the Lord's prayer
 - a) Matthew 6:13 - *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

4. The God Who Judges - A Description of the Wicked (9-10)

- David's third meditation in Psalm 5 then turns to the wicked and calls on God to glorify Himself in judgment

a. The meditation on the wicked (9)

- i. In David's meditation on the wicked, he recounts the themes from up above
 - 1) The wicked forsake truth, are devoted to destruction, love death and spread falsehoods
- ii. But he even intensifies the themes
 - 1) Not only do the wicked forsake truth, they have totally abandoned truth
 - 2) Not only are they associated with destruction, their innermost being is destruction
 - 3) Not only are they associated with death, their throats are themselves open graves
 - 4) We would call this theme total depravity - that the wicked are totally given over to sin so that there is no righteousness in them at all
- iii. David's goal is to point out that these wicked men are antithetical to God's nature
 - 1) These men are God's enemies, they have rejected His nature entirely and work against His rule

b. The identification of the wicked

- i. As we think about David's description of the wicked, we must decide who he is talking about
- ii. Fortunately, Paul makes this very easy for us
 - 1) Paul quotes this in Romans 3:13 - *Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.*
 - 2) Paul starts this section by identifying who these quotes refer to, Romans 3:10-12 - *as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."*
- iii. So, we should be careful to represent who the wicked are rightly
 - 1) Therefore, the wicked are everyone - everyone has rejected God's rule and worshipped a lie instead

c. The petition for the wicked (10)

- i. David's desire is to see the wicked judged by God
 - 1) David understands his enemies to be enemies of God because David understands that evil is rebellion against God
 - a) In their wickedness, evil men have rejected God as king and set themselves up as kings
 - b) And in this rebellious state, they have turned against the righteous, making David their enemy
 - c) The fact that these men are David's enemies are secondary, they are only David's enemies because they are first God's enemies
 - 2) Therefore, He desires for God to vindicate His holy name by judging them
 - a) God will vindicate His name partially by vindicating David
 - b) God will vindicate His name by destroying those who are in rebellion against Him
 - 3) But, notice clearly that David only calls on God to judge, he does not state any purpose or desire to take vengeance himself
 - a) None of the imprecatory Psalms express a desire to personally show vengeance, but rather look to God to right the situation by bringing the necessary judgment
 - b) David understood rightly Romans 12:9 - *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*
 - c) This is a very important point to remember about the imprecatory Psalms - they do not call us to exhibit any vengeance against the wicked, but to put it into the hands of God
 - i) Nor do the imprecatory Psalms deny or invalidate other commands of Scripture such as Luke 6:27-29 - *But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either.*
 - ii) So, even though we desire God to vindicate Himself in judgment we ought also to pray for repentance for those who persecute us, that perhaps God will show them mercy as He has shown us
 - a. Although these seem like very dissimilar prayers, they are actually related - both call on God to exhibit His nature in a glorious way, both even call on God to judge sin, but the prayer for mercy calls for God to judge sin in the person of His son instead of the person of the sinner
 - b. So, without contradiction, we can both pray for the destruction of the wicked and the salvation of the wicked

- ii. If you find the imprecations of the Psalms hard to swallow
 - 1) Consider your view of Scripture
 - a) Imprecations are clearly taught in Scripture
 - i) Nearly 25 Psalms have imprecations associated with them
 - ii) There are similar desires expressed in the New Testament as well in Galatians 1:8-9, 5:12, Revelations 6:10, 18:20, and 19:1-3.
 - b) If we recognize Scripture as the Word of God, then the matter should be clear to us
 - c) Even if we don't understand, we should be able to affirm that imprecations are a godly thing
 - d) So, consider your view of Scripture, will you submit to its teaching or not
 - 2) Consider your view of God
 - a) Throughout the Bible and even in our Psalm this morning, God is held up as a righteous judge
 - b) If we see that God is perfectly holy and that God is perfectly just, how could we desire anything else from God
 - c) For God not to judge evil would be for God to deny His very nature
 - d) So, consider your view of God, is He truly just or not
 - 3) Consider your view of evil
 - a) Since we are surround by evil all of the time and even we ourselves are stained by it, it is easy to have too low a view of sin
 - b) But Scripture calls us to see sin as a truly horrid thing, a revulsion to the entire universe, especially to a just and holy God
 - c) For evil to remain unpunished would be a travesty of unthinkable proportions
 - d) So, consider your view of evil, is it truly horrid or not
 - 4) If we view Scripture, God and evil rightly, then we will understand rightly the place of the imprecatory Psalms
 - a) They call on God to honor His nature
 - b) They call on God to deal with sin rightly
 - c) Thus, in reality, they call on God to glorify Himself particularly in His just judgment

d. Application

- i. We ought to rightly view ourselves before a holy and just God
 - 1) Paul was very clear that all of us fall into these verses
 - 2) So, our first response should be to recognize that we are the sinner and that, apart from the steadfast love of God, we are the ones who are liable to judgment
 - 3) We'll pick up this application at the end
- ii. We ought to desire that God would vindicate His holy name
 - 1) Our chief desire must be the demonstrated glory of God
 - 2) God's glory will come when He rightfully puts down the rebellion of man, and judges those who are guilty
 - 3) So, we ought to desire to see the day when God finally judges the wicked
- iii. We ought to be careful not to seek vengeance on our own, but to give it to God in prayer
 - 1) Remembering, '*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.*'
 - 2) Instead of seeking vengeance, we can trust God to judge rightly and then we can pray for our enemies and do good to those who persecute us

5. The God Who Saves - The Response (11-12)

- David's last stanza returns to the initial petition and the answer that God gives and calls on God to glorify Himself in salvation

a. The one whom God answers (11a)

- i. David identifies the subject of the last stanza with a simple phrase - *those who take refuge in you*

b. Four promises to the one who takes refuge (11-12)

- i. Those who take refuge in God rejoice and sing for joy
 - 1) Even though they may suffer for a season, God gives them joy in their suffering and promises them eternal joy
- ii. Those who take refuge in God are protected by God
 - 1) Even though God's enemies may persecute them, God protects them from ultimate destruction
- iii. Those who take refuge in God are blessed by God
 - 1) Even though God's enemies may revile them, God blesses them
- iv. Those who take refuge in God are shown favor by God
 - 1) Even though God's enemies dishonor them, God covers them with favor
- v. So, the last stanza emphasizes that God does hear the prayer of the suffering saint and provides salvation to the one who takes refuge in Him

c. The purpose of the promises (11b)

- i. Once more, David reiterates the theme that runs throughout the Psalm
- ii. The purpose of the suffering saint is to glorify God
- iii. Here the theme is expressed as the purpose of salvation is to bring glory to God
- iv. Verse 11b - *that those who love your name may exult in you*
- v. This is always God's purpose in salvation, to exalt Himself and bring Himself glory

d. Application

- i. We ought to take hope in suffering because God does hear our prayer and will save us
 - 1) I Peter 1:3-7 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith---more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire---may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
- ii. We ought to give God glory even in the midst of persecution
 - 1) We do this by showing that God is our joy in the midst of our persecutions
 - 2) Hebrews 10:32-34 - *But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.*

Conclusion - How is this Psalm or my message Christocentric?

- I am concluding by asking this question, because as I wrote my notes, I realized that I was making very few mentions of Christ, and I didn't want to leave this Psalm without showing how this Psalm, as all of Scripture, points directly to Christ

a. Sometimes in the Psalms there are clear pictures of Christ (e.g. Psalm 22 - *My God, my God...*), but other times in the Psalms, Christ is not quite as clear on the surface

- i. But, I think we can always find Christ in the unanswered questions, those questions that the Psalmist simply assumes the answer to
 - 1) For example, Psalm 32 - *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.*
 - 2) You find Christ in the unanswered question - why can God forgive transgression and cover sin?
- ii. In the Psalms, as in much of the Old Testament, these questions are unanswered because the writer may not know exactly what the answer is
 - 1) David may not have known exactly how God could forgive his transgression, but he believed that God would
 - 2) But, as New Testament believers, we can see the work of Christ and go back and answer the unanswered questions that anticipate Christ

b. Five unanswered questions from the five stanzas

- i. Why does God hear David's prayer when David prays to Him?
 - 1) Only in Christ can we approach God to pray with any assurance that he will hear us
 - 2) Hebrews 10:19-22 - *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*
 - 3) Interesting - Psalm 5:2 is roughly quoted by Thomas in John 20:28 about Christ (*My Lord and My God*), indicating that this prayer is meant to be directed through Christ who is My King and My God
- ii. Why is God's holiness a comfort and not a terror to David?
 - 1) Only by the peace of Christ can David meditate on the holiness of God with joy and not terror
 - 2) Romans 5:1 - *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - 3) It is Christ who stands between us and the holiness of God and makes God's holiness a delight
- iii. Why does God show an abundance of steadfast love to David?
 - 1) Only in Christ and through His work does God show love to His chosen people
 - 2) I John 4:9-10 - *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
 - 3) It is 'in Christ' that God shows love to His people
- iv. Why is David not judged as part of the evildoers?
 - 1) Only through the imputation of Christ's righteousness is a sinner judged not one of the evildoers
 - 2) I Corinthians 5:21 - *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - 3) So, it is only in Christ that God counts anyone as righteous
- v. How does God give refuge to His people?
 - 1) It is in Christ that God's people find refuge
 - 2) Hebrews 6:18-20 - *we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*
- vi. So, even a cursory glance at the unanswered questions shows that Christ is implicated all over this Psalm

c. Apart from Christ, this Psalm is a sad irony

- i. Apart from Christ suffering exists without relief
- ii. Apart from Christ the prayer to judge the unrighteous falls on the petitioner's head
- iii. But, thanks be to God who has provided us a Savior in Christ that makes this Psalm a comfort and blessing