

PSALMS

Songs from the Heart

Psalm 71

OVERVIEW OF PSALMS

- The word Psalms is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *mizmor*. It signifies “music accompanied by stringed instruments.”
- The word *mizmor* is found 57 times in Psalms, so the translators used it to describe the whole book.
- Cymbals, timbrels, wind instruments, and stringed instruments are all named in the Psalms.
- There were Levites who were professional ministers and musicians for worship at the tabernacle and later the temple. There must have been large Jewish orchestras and large families of God-ordained musicians and singers constantly preparing, practicing, and then leading worshipers in the Psalms.
- Unfortunately, the exact musical instruments or the music they played are no longer in existence.
- The Hebrew Bible uses the phrase “Book of Praises” for the Book of Psalms, and decided to focus on the content of the Psalms rather than the form, since stringed instruments and the music are the least important part of the book.
- The book of Psalms is filled with 150 Divinely led and inspired songs and prayers.
- They are the recording of the intimate interaction of worship offered up to God by individual Psalmists and later the nation of Israel. Many of the Psalms are attributed to King David himself.
- Not all Psalms written are gathered in the Book of Psalms. There are songs of Moses and Miriam in Exodus, songs of Deborah in Judges, a song of Jonah in Jonah, and even of a song of David in 2 Samuel that have been left out.
- They’re expressions of praise, faith and joy, of sorrow, doubt, and frustration. They cover the gamut of human thought, emotion, and activity. They are, as I’ve described it, “Songs from the heart.”
- Each Psalm is a template for us in how we can and should express our hearts, how we pray, worship, and interact with God. Even today, God is giving people new songs of praise with similar truths and insights into the nature of God and His faithful interaction with His followers and children.

- The book of Psalms has been the hymnal for believers for over 3500 years! The songs were written and compiled between the years around 1500 B.C. to 300 B.C.
- They were written from the time of Moses to the return from the Babylonian captivity.
- There is one common trait in the Psalms. One alone. The focus of every Psalm is centered on the one true and living God. They are songs to God and for God alone!

PARALLELISM IN HEBREW POETRY

- **SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM** - a line of thought is immediately followed by another line of similar thought that expresses the same thought in a different way. A good example is Psalm 71:5-6.
- **ANTITHETICAL PARALLELISM** - a line of thought is immediately followed by another line of opposite thought or contrasting insight. A good example is Psalm 71:13-14.

PRAYER AND CRY FOR HELP FROM THE LORD (71:1-4)

- Psalm 71 combines some elements from Psalms 22, 33, 35 and 40. It's just like when a preacher uses part of a previous sermon that speaks to a similar truth or aspect about God in another sermon.
- The author is unknown, but yet it is written by an older person who is expressing their consistent faith throughout their lifetime and continuing to trust God for his or her salvation.
- (vs1-3) Two times in three verses the Psalmist cries out "save me." Usually, this is a cry for someone who is ready to drown, or is moments away from their demise. "Hurry! Save me!"
- (vs1) The Psalmist begins with a statement of faith and dependence. And this Psalm ends in a statement of faith. The focus of powerful and effective prayer and worship is God, not ourselves.
- The Hebrew word *hasiti* is translated "To seek refuge, to seek shelter, to trust." In its most primitive non-theological form, it means "To hide."
- When we are in fear for our lives, we hide. But, what if the person we are hiding with reveals our hiding place? When we hide with or in someone, it's a place of

utmost vulnerability and dependence. You're only safe as long as that person doesn't reveal your hiding place or give you up.

- The Psalmist is so vulnerable in this moment because of his absolute trust and dependence, that if God didn't help them, they would be put to shame by those encircling them.
- (vs2) The Psalmist's trust is based on the goodness and righteousness of God. It's as if they're saying, "Because, God, you are purely good, I can put my trust in you." A good God does good works.
- (vs3) The Psalmist trust is also based on the omnipotent strength and power of God. It's as if he is saying "If I am in the Lord and He is with me, no one can do me harm."
- (vs4) The man that meant the Psalmist harm is wicked, cruel, and therefore, ungodly. The song writer's confidence is that God will be faithful to those in relationship with Him.

PRAYER OF A LIFELONG CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD (71:5-13)

- (vs5-6) The Psalm writer continues to build in his confidence that God will bring deliverance. Why? Because since the writer's conception and youth, God has always been there when needed.
- Go through the narrative of your life. When and where were you desperate? What did you need to see God do? What did He do? God usually does even more than we ask or could imagine!
- (vs5) The Hebrew word for *hope* means "to long for, to wait on." It's not just a hope of belief, but a longing in relationship and posture of heart.
- (vs7) Because of God's consistent faithfulness and support, the Psalmist's life has been an outward testimony to others of God's loving, powerful, and consistent qualities.
- I have a line that I say: "Transparency leads to trust, and trust leads to intimacy." God has been transparent in His love, His eternal qualities, and His expectations in relationship. As we go deeper in Him, it builds trust and dependency. When we can depend on Him it leads to our openness and intimacy.
- (vs8) When we focus on God's constant goodness and consistent interaction in our lives, the only right response is to praise Him. To release that affection and appreciation from our heart to His.

- (vs8) The Hebrew word for *your splendor* means “to glorify, to beautify, to adorn.” When God is faithful and you praise Him, you add to His glory and beauty. When you praise, you adorn God!
- (vs9) The Psalmist tells God. “You were faithful to me in my stronger years. How much more I need you now in my older, more vulnerable years.”
- (vs10-13) The circumstances of the writer are desperate. There are plots and traps made for him. The man who is evil has gathered others to strengthen his hand.
- May God’s justice and righteousness be evident by destroying and shaming these evil men.

PRAYER OF A LIFELONG CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD (71:14-24)

- (vs14-17) The Psalmist switches in his focus to his faith for his future. Because God will be faithful, he will always have hope and be safe. And, he will spend his life praising God and telling others about Him.
- (vs15-17) God’s acts are “mighty, righteous, and marvelous.” The Hebrew word for *marvelous* means “extraordinary, wondrous, miraculous.” In other words, God shows His goodness and might in ways no one else could think of or possibly do. So, why do we try to tell God how to help us? He desires to do things in such a way that we and others will stand in awe!
- (vs18) What’s the Psalmist desire in his old age? To connect the next generation to the awesome, wondrous God he serves! Before I leave this earth, let me connect the next generation to who God is so that they may be blessed and continue to worship Him in my place! AWESOME!

POWER VERSE: (71:19) “YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, GOD, REACHES TO THE HEAVENS, YOU WHO HAVE DONE GREAT THINGS. WHO IS LIKE YOU, GOD?”

- The writer, who is being led by the Spirit writing this song, sees God’s qualities to such heightened levels that he declares you are so great if I had to describe it in heights, “you reach the heavens!”
- The great moment of revelation and pause is stated in “Who is like you God?”

- So often, we assume God has attributes of people on earth. But, God has said and revealed, “My ways are not your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts.”
- Let God reveal to you who He is, and you will be strengthened and elevated beyond anything on this earth.
- (vs20-21) The Psalmist is saying, “Now that I’ve experienced and seen your goodness, even though you have allowed me to experience and see all these troubles and hurts and pains, I still believe in you. You will still save me. You will still increase your goodness in my life as I continue to live.”
- The level to which you see God will be the level to which you are raised in your mind, heart, and spirit!
- (vs22-24) The song is coming to an end. What does the Psalmist want to do? He wants to grab one of the many instruments he plays and begin to worship God. He wants to continue to worship and seek His marvelous, wonderful, loving, faithful God and friend!
- (vs24) Even though God has not delivered the Psalmist yet, in his heart it’s as if God already has. He switches to a past tense statement of breakthrough. This is the ultimate declaration of faith.
- What declarations of salvation and faith do you need to proclaim today? Cry out to God for help. Declare His wonderful deeds and character. Declare His eternal qualities. Watch and see how high God will carry you in your worship and praise!
- Learn from the Psalmist, who allowed His knowledge and testimony of God to be led deeper by the Holy Spirit into breakthrough praise and worship!

PSALM 71 - NIV

- ¹ In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.
- ² In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me; turn your ear to me and save me.
- ³ Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
- ⁴ Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.
- ⁵ For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth.
- ⁶ From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb.
I will ever praise you.
- ⁷ I have become a sign to many; you are my strong refuge.
- ⁸ My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.
- ⁹ Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.
- ¹⁰ For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together.
- ¹¹ They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him."
- ¹² Do not be far from me, my God; come quickly, God, to help me.
- ¹³ May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm me be covered with
scorn and disgrace.
- ¹⁴ As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.
- ¹⁵ My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long -
though I know not how to relate them all.
- ¹⁶ I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD;
I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.
- ¹⁷ Since my youth, God, you have taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.
- ¹⁸ Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God,
till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to
come.
- ¹⁹ Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things.
Who is like you, God?
- ²⁰ Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again;
from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.
- ²¹ You will increase my honor and comfort me once more.
- ²² I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, my God; I will sing praise to you with
the lyre, Holy One of Israel.
- ²³ My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you - I whom you have delivered.
- ²⁴ My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long,
for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.