

Psalm 5: A Refuge for Raw Emotions

How do you respond when someone has badly hurt you or pain of any kind is present in your life? David wrestles with that question through the Psalms. In Psalm 3, he cries aloud because his foes are many and he's sleepless. In Psalm 4, others have put him in a strait of distress, but he safely sleeps. Now, in Psalm 5, he faces a new day with the recognition there have been no overnight solutions for his problems.

Sighing and Crying

In Psalm 5 David begins the morning with a sigh (v. 1) and a cry (v. 2) to God. The two are not the same. One, the sigh or groan, slips from you as you look in the morning mirror, sit at the breakfast table, or put the dishes in the sink. Memory or imagination evokes in you moments of the past and fears of the present or future. You may be filled with wistfulness and a soft sigh slips from your heart as you long for an end to sorrow and a reentry of joy.

But there are times far more shrill. Once as a child I almost drowned. I did not let out a sigh; I let out a cry. A cry reflects a heart in great danger and emergency.

Sighing and crying may bring catharsis but David derives great comfort from knowing that One hears him (v. 3). We may even be more assured than David for we know the Holy Spirit understands and interprets the unarticulated words in our sighing as He intercedes for us before the throne of God. (See Romans 8:26,27.)

A Benevolent Listener

As a king himself, David knew what it was like for a

petitioner to have him as the court of last resort. Such a person had hope in bringing petitions to him because of the good character of the king.

Like David we may confidently bring our request to the eternal King because of His moral goodness (vv. 4–6). He stands opposed to evil and wickedness, to arrogance and wrong, to untruthfulness and deceit.

David flings himself on the great mercy of God (vv. 7,8). He will continue worshipping despite his reverses, confident the Lord has a straight path out of the bewildering maze.

Are you relying completely upon the Lord in your time of need? The enemy tells you to turn away from God's house, that Jesus has abandoned you, and His people do not care. But the Holy Spirit through this psalm tells you that your deliverance from this dark hour will come as you draw near to Him. Surrender ("bow down") and trust ("lead me"). (See vv. 7,8.)

The prayer commits David's keeping to the Lord, while the raw emotions (vv. 9,10) intensify.

Path to Calm

David has been badly burned by someone he trusted, by one who deceived him with words (v. 9). Paul quotes David in Romans 3:13 to illustrate that everyone has also sinned in the same manner.

Like David we find it easier to pray for the reformation of another person's character rather than our own. Our emotions quite naturally seek the vindication that the Lord will declare the person who injured us as guilty and will banish them for their sins. (See v. 10.) But David's Son, our Lord Jesus, showed us the higher way—beyond the stage of anger—forgiveness. (See Luke 23:34.)

The wounds of life force dependence upon God. The mighty blows

of alienation, betrayal, insensitivity toss you into raging waters. You are carried in a surge far more powerful than yourself. The harder you try to survive, the more you sink beneath the surface. Only God can rescue you.

With that thought David concludes Psalm 5. In prayer he has progressed from the clouded dawn to reach the morning calm. "But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield" (vv. 11,12).

Like David and a host of others you have no other safe refuge than the Lord. It is He who gives the song, who protects your life from the power of despair and self-destruction. He shields you today from what harms you and cups your life in His hands.