

# The Psalm 38:9 Reason to Pour Out Your Prayers

Circumstances can be such that we quit breathing. Fear or anxiety or pain serve us a blow and we hold our breath unwittingly—our prayers caught somewhere in our throats. We forget the oxygen of lifting our voice to the Lord. We don't always realize when we've cut off our life-source—when we've sealed off the songs and the sighing that are to the heart as breathing. And we keep moving, breathless, through the motions. I know the pattern well, and yet still get tripped by it.

It was just recently, in the normal grind of the everyday, that I was caught unaware by this subtle snare—and the prayer stopped, like breath leaving. For the past few days I had been assuring Matt that I was good, that nothing was wrong, while inwardly, I struggled with a heaviness I couldn't shake. For all my self-commanding and re-upping, I couldn't seem to get above it. So I faked it, telling myself to *just get over* whatever it was I was sulking over. And because I knew my emotions weren't as they should be, I lingered there—stuck and prayerless and unaware—until a prayer of David brought unexpected light, throwing open the air passage once again.

*“Lord, all of my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You” (Ps. 38:9).*

I read the words on the page unsuspectingly, yet the moment I came upon that phrase: “my sighing is not hidden from you,” I broke. And I gulped in air like I'd been stuck underwater. And I wept.

*All my sighing.* Of course. I had forgotten to pour it out as prayer—all my heaviness, my groaning. *He waits for this, and even this He wants.*

Why do we stay at a distance until we can get the words tempered and more spiritual sounding? As though He'd prefer the pristine over the authentic. We fall prey to the lie that we will *fix this* first and then go to the Father. Yet we cannot ever wait to run to Him. Ever.

We can't wait to pray filtered words with right emotions. The key is not in the polishing, but in the *pouring*.

We somehow think it's right to swallow our prayers because of the "shoulds" we imagine. *I should feel joyful, and not heavy. I should be confident, and not scared. I should pray with faith, and not this anxiety.* We self-counsel. When we know we're degrees off from truth or that our emotions are a far stretch from hope and joy, we wait. And we hold words and stifle emotions because we recognize they're not quite as they should be.

Yet this waiting, it's *oxygen-less* and *life suffocating*.

If the Word of God gives a prescription for which state to pray in, it's *whichever state we are in*. We are to pray always. At all times, we are to pour out our hearts to Him. This isn't because we have pure water to pour out, but because He is our refuge. It's not because our emotions are sanctified and right, but because He is our salvation and strength.

The Lord does not say, "pray right words" but, "pray at all times" (see Eph. 6:18, 1 Thess. 5:17).

David knew this and spared nothing in vulnerable prayers. And David had it right. He lifted his soul to the Lord in every circumstance, in every emotion (see Ps. 55:4, 69:2-5, 130:1, 142:1-2).

Transformation of emotion and words *do* happen but not by waiting to pray. Change comes as we see Him. As we hear Him. As we talk to Him.

Here in the pouring, the drawing near to the one who is truth and who gives joy for mourning, we are changed. He is the only one who brings us out of heaviness, fear, shame, and condemnation and into confidence, trust, and hope. Yet these conversions cannot happen in isolation from Him, but only in fellowship with Him.

Thus, whatever I wake up with in the morning, my first order of business is not to wait for words more truthful or emotions more godly, but to rush in before the throne of grace, words and emotions *as they are*.

The Lord is actually after the rawest parts of us, not the filtered. He's after the bleeding prayers, not the bandaged. When we pour out our fears unqualified and our anxiety undiluted, we actually offer a truer prayer than what we'd imagine we'd give when we've pulled ourselves together.

It is right to pray our tears, our groans, our sighings and our confusion. This brings the deepest parts of our hearts face to face with the truth of the Lord. We forget that He's not after prayers without sighing, but sighing that is set upon the One who will one day bring all sorrows and sighing to an end (Rev. 21:4). We think we must get over the heaviness, but what is truer is that we must lift our heaviness to the only One who will ultimately give everlasting joy in exchange for it (Isa. 35:10).

We pray the raw that He already sees and pour out the *sighing* that is never hidden from Him.

Only here do we begin to breathe. {eoa}

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