

February 21

Prayer with Patience

Psalm 69:13, 16-17 *“But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of Your steadfast love answer me in Your saving faithfulness....Answer me, O Lord, for Your steadfast love is good; according to Your abundant mercy, turn to me. Hide not Your face from Your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me.”*

Much of this Psalm of David is about the danger and hardships he is facing, often a result of his zeal for and faithfulness to God. It additionally contains verses quoted in the New Testament about Christ, such as the *“zeal for Your house consumed me”* (v. 9) and *“more in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause”* (v. 4).

Even with this torment that David had experienced before he wrote this Psalm, the torment Jesus experienced in the pain from the persecution and rebellion of His own people, and the calls for God’s judgment upon them toward the end of the Psalm, there is a noteworthy trend. The verses I selected for the center of this devotion place everything in God’s hands and in His mercy and love. Even though David wanted the suffering and persecution to end, he trusted in God’s steadfast love while he awaited the answer. And while he asks for a speedy answer, he asks for it in accordance with God’s love, even if that means the answer is “not yet” or “no.”

We see the same request from Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus has the weight of the world’s sin on His shoulders and prays that God would get Him out of that situation (*Luke 22:42*). Yet, as He prays this, He trusts in His Father, praying that *“not my will, but yours, be done.”* The difficult reality of that prayer and so many of our prayers is God saying, “not yet” or “no.” Jesus still went to the cross and drank the cup of God’s wrath. David might not have gotten out of that situation entirely or quickly. Our loved ones still get sick or injured and die. But even as these trials surround us, we are always surrounded by the abundant steadfast love of God as He provides all things we need in every situation. So, we should keep praying and trusting in His mercy, even when it looks like He is not answering the prayers the way we want them answered.

I’ll end with one last note. The last seven verses of the Psalm end by praising God. Even as your world feels like it’s falling in, God still is in control. He is still Lord of all and cares for you. So we rejoice in the confidence we have in Him and in His gifts to us no matter the circumstances. As Luther writes in the meaning for the Second Commandment, we are to call upon God’s name *“in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.”*

Prayer: *Lord, You are abundant in mercy and steadfast love, even as You answer our prayers with “no” or “not yet.” You have come to us and brought us up out of the deep pit of sin and death and into a new life with You. Thank You. Keep this ever in our minds as we live our lives in this world of troubles. Amen.*