

Prayer

O Lord my God, I worship You. I honour you with my mind, I sing to You from my heart, I speak with You from within my soul, I praise You with all my strength, and I raise You up with my spirit. I therefore ask You to bless me with Your glorious presence and to fill me with Your wondrous peace, so that I may continue to do Your will throughout my life: AMEN

Prayer Suggestions

Prayer ideas

Throughout the day, seek prayerfully to bless all the people you meet and all the circumstances in which you find yourself

On-going prayers

- **Pray for the air transport industry** *Pray for those who have lost relatives in air tragedies such as the Lockerbie outrage*
Give thanks to God for your life and your future
- *Pray about corruption and scandal in the life of your own country*

Meditation

Simplicity is;

The love of God which made the world;
The passion of Jesus for all people;
The work of the Spirit in the believer's heart;
The Gospel commission to save the world;
The example of Jesus to heed the poor;
The Word of God which corrects all error;
The life of the Church which bears the Faith;
The beauty of worship which lifts the soul;
The joy of a life lived for God and for others;
The defeat of Satan before Christ on the Cross;
And the promise of eternal life with our Lord in Glory!

God's truth is simplicity itself.

Bible passage - Psalm 7

David calls out to the Lord to save him from his enemies. In so doing, the Lord reveals more about His saving power and the futility of violence.

A shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush, a Benjaminite.

¹ O LORD my God, I take refuge in You;
save and deliver me from all who pursue
me,

² or he will tear me like a lion
and rip me to pieces with no-one to rescue
me.

³ O LORD my God, if I have done this
and there is guilt on my hands,

⁴ if I have done evil to him who is at peace
with me

or have robbed my foe without cause,
⁵ then let my enemy pursue and overtake me;
let him trample my life to the ground
and make me sleep in the dust.

Selah

⁶ Arise, O LORD, in your anger;
rise up against the rage of my enemies.
Awake, my God; decree justice.

⁷ Let the assembled peoples gather round
You.

Rule over them from on high;
⁸ let the LORD judge the peoples.

Judge me, O LORD, according to my
righteousness,
according to my integrity, O Most High.

⁹ O righteous God, who searches minds and
hearts,
bring to an end the violence of the wicked
and make the righteous secure.

¹⁰ My shield is God Most High,
who saves the upright in heart.

¹¹ God is a righteous judge,
a God who expresses His wrath every day.

¹² If He does not relent, he will sharpen his
sword;
he will bend and string his bow.

¹³ He has prepared his deadly weapons;
he makes ready his flaming arrows.

¹⁴ He who is pregnant with evil and conceives
trouble
gives birth to disillusionment.

¹⁵ He who digs a hole and scoops it out
falls into the pit he has made.

¹⁶ The trouble he causes recoils on himself;
his violence comes down on his own head.

¹⁷ I will give thanks to the LORD
because of his righteousness
and I will sing praise
to the name of the LORD most high

Bible Study

Review

Psalm 7 is a famous psalm of David, and it describes God's work of deliverance from enemies. Throughout his life, David had many enemies, and he had to struggle physically and spiritually against them in order to fulfil his calling to rule over all Israel and unite God's people in the Promised Land.

The first eight verses of psalm 7 are a quest for vindication, for David is being pursued and is in fear of his life. At first, he prays for deliverance from all his enemies (7:1), but after verse 2, he refers to one enemy only, and according to the psalm's superscription, this is Cush, the Benjaminite. It would be good if we could connect this psalm with an event in David's life, but unfortunately, there is no mention of anyone named Cush in the stories of David, but that does not have to stop us guessing at who he might be. As a Benjaminite, Cush was almost certainly a supporter of King Saul, either one of the soldiers who pursued David during Saul's reign (1 Samuel 16f.), or one of Saul's family who sought vengeance against the old King David when he had been thrown out of Jerusalem by his own son Absalom (2 Samuel 15f.).

Whatever the scenario, David fight with Cush was fierce, because lives were at stake. David describes it as like being hunted by a lion (7:2) a picture that has demonic undertones in the Bible (see 1 Peter 5:8). With typical honesty, David agrees that he deserves to be set upon by his enemies if he has done anything wrong, but believes that God will judge him right (7:8). For a Christian, it may sound strange for David to claim before God that he is 'in the right', but we must be careful because David was not claiming 'righteousness' in the sense of claiming his salvation and eternal life. He was coming to the Lord for help in the struggles of life, and quite properly, he made his request believing that he was right to do so. In the same way, we should not be afraid to come to the Lord when we need His help. The Lord saves those who are '*upright in heart*' (7:10), and the enemy cannot hound those who are in His hands (7:9,10).

In order to present this theme, David paints a picture like that of a courtroom (7:8), a technique often used in Scripture to present the idea of justice (see also Job 1 and 2). Here, the public is gathered, the Lord takes his raised seat as the Judge, and we can imagine David calling upon the court for justice (7:8). The psalm then speaks of God's authority as judge, and describes Him as One who is righteous and whose judgements are to be feared (7:11f.). David then describes the fate of those who oppose God (7:14-16), and there is a certain amount of ridicule in his words, '*he who digs a hole falls into the pit he has made*' (7:15). Those who are evil are ultimately foolish, because evil and wrongdoing can never produce anything other than further trouble and distress; as David says, '*he who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment*' (7:13). Such wisdom should be more widely known!

These verses have been passed on to us as proverbs of the futility of violence, and they reflect what happens throughout the world. Those who will not repent receive the same violence they have meted out to others, with the same vigour, force and weaponry that they themselves have used (7:12,13). We may be concerned about the sheer violence of what we read in this psalm, but we should not close our ears or cut out such sections of the psalms. Today, many are cushioned from violence and strife, but we should still be able to empathise with those who are not, and who need to find out what God is doing in the midst of the trouble and war they experience.

The hope of all who place their trust in God is that he is strong enough to deliver and save His people (7:17), and He is. Of course, this hope is not a vague expectation because we, like David, have every reason to be confident that God will fulfil the promises in His Word. So David concludes his psalm with praise for God's 'righteousness' (7:17), and in the same way, Christians today should praise God for His deliverance from evil through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour of all.

Discipleship

Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. Today, who pursues God's people, the Church, with false accusations? How should Christians deal with this?
2. Is the picture of God as a judge helpful, and what does it mean to you?
3. Psalm 7 talks about the 'enemy'. Discuss what this means in the psalm and what it might mean for people today.

Personal comments by author

The origins of this psalm lie in conflict between two individuals, one of whom calls on God for vindication. I have experienced personality clashes or conflicts at various times in my life and work, and they have always affected me deeply. It is always the stiffest of challenges to respond to such problems in a godly way, and the temptation is to fight against those who have cause upset. Yet each of us must find a way to deal with our enemies and fight them in God's name. He reveals our enemies and gives us the strength and the ability we need to deal with them.

Ideas for exploring discipleship

- *Have you experienced clashes of personality or other conflicts at work or at church? Consider how you deal with such things and whether you are able to be victorious over your own feelings. Prayerfully hand over such things to the Lord.*
- *Pray for any people you know who are embroiled in conflict, and ask the Lord to act with justice to help people find resolution.*

Final Prayer

Bring us, Lord Jesus, to that happy place where we can look back and be content that we have learned from the past, and to where we can look forward and anticipate with joy the future you have in store for us. May we be content that our lives reflect the faith that has been handed down to us, and bring us to that place of peace, we pray. AMEN
