

River Community Church

Daily Devotionals Sept 19 - Sept 23 2016

Knowing and Loving God and Making God's
Love Known to Others

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Day 1 Psalm 35 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 35:1-3

1 Contend, LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me. 2 Take up shield and armor; arise and come to my aid. 3 Brandish spear and javelin against those who pursue me. Say to me, "I am your salvation."

Understand:

This Psalm is known as an individual lament. We don't know for sure what the trouble is or who the perpetrators are. But we do know they were once friends and now they've turned on David. They have become an enemy to David.

David is crying out to God with great emotion and urgency! We see an outpouring of his heart in a time of great trouble. David is facing accusations from those who have the means to hurt him.

David finds himself under attack by those who professed to be his friends, but instead they've turned out to be his cruel adversaries. Imagine David's shock, he's completely taken off guard all he knows to do is to appeal to God to intervene and seeks a word of assurance.

David casts his burden on the Lord and asks him to represent him. He likens the Lord to a warrior who contends on behalf of his own. The shield, the javelin, and spear symbolize David's belief in God's readiness to defend his own.

David needs to hear those reassuring words from God, "I am your salvation."

Apply:

At different times of our lives we will all run into an enemy. An enemy could be a coworker who is undermining your efforts; it could be a team mate who's jealous of you. Maybe it's a family member who all of a sudden turns on you.

So What do you do when you're blindsided by a supposed friend?

What kind of emotions did you experience?

In the middle of David's troubles, he needed to hear God's promises; he needed God to say to him "I am your salvation."

When you find yourself in times of trouble, what does the truth of the Gospel mean to you?

How does it help you to make it through the difficulty?

Take a moment to remember God's promises to you... Thank him for rescuing you!

Listen to Jesus say to you,

"I am your salvation!" Would you find your rest in him today; know that whatever troubles you're going through, his grace is sufficient for you.

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

Day 2 Psalm 35 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

35:4-10

4 May those who seek my life be disgraced and put to shame; may those who plot my ruin be turned back in dismay. 5 May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away; 6 may their path be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them. 7 Since they hid their net for me without cause and without cause dug a pit for me, 8 may ruin overtake them by surprise— may the net they hid entangle them, may they fall into the pit, to their ruin. 9 Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation. 10 My whole being will exclaim, “Who is like you, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them.”

Understand:

Verse 4 is known as an imprecatory prayer. Imprecate means “to invoke evil upon or curse” one’s enemies. We find these prayers when David was going through gut-wrenching times. These kinds of prayers come out of a longing for justice to be done. David lived in a time when they were looking forward to the coming of Christ. But we now live in the time after Christ appearance.

Christ death on the cross brings the ultimate justice—we know that in him all things will be made right at his second coming. We place our hope in him. So as we live in the “already not yet” reality of the Gospel of Jesus, we turn to him for Justice. We do what he tells us to do: we pray for our enemies; we pray for their salvation first and foremost, and then for God’s will to be done.

It means we have given up the idea that we know best and instead are now relying on and trusting in God to work His will. If a personal wrong has truly been done to us, we seek God in prayer about it, and then leave room for God’s judgment and trust Him to do what is best.

“Hid their nets” and “dug a pit” our metaphors for the insidious character of their plots.

In verses 9-10 David says he will rejoice in the LORD, and delight in his salvation...you’ve rescued the poor and needy.

David’s longing to see God’s justice led him to breakout in praise for God.

The longing for Justice had been answered in the Gospel of Jesus.

Apply:

We all have a sense of what justice is in side us; we want to see things made right. We can spot injustice easily. So when David is attacked by his enemies, he knows he is being treated unjustly. We see him pouring his heart out to the Lord—he's being completely honest with God. He's not calling out for God to let him bring justice on his foes, but instead he is calling for God to bring his justice to David's plight. He is placing his trust in Gods righteousness and justice—he's calling for God to save him.

It's what we need to do when our enemies come against us. We need to bring are prayers and lay them at the feet of Jesus. We set our hope fully on Christ. Remember the victory you have in Christ! (1 Cor. 15:15). Set your hope fully on him! (1 Pet. 1:13)

What do you have to do to set your hope fully on Jesus?

How difficult is it for you to let go of past and ongoing hurts that you've experienced from people you thought were your friends? Ask God to help you to forgive them?

Pray for the lost, for those who are far from God, pray that their eyes would be opened to the Gospel.

Pray for those who make life difficult for you, pray they would come to know Jesus.

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

Day 3 Psalm 35 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 35:11-18

11 Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about. 12 They repay me evil for good and leave me like one bereaved. 13 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, 14 I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother. 15 But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee; assailants gathered against me without my knowledge. They slandered me without ceasing. 16 Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked; they gnashed their teeth at me. 17 How long, Lord, will you look on? Rescue me from their ravages, my precious life from these lions. 18 I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among the throngs I will praise you.

Understand:

Even though false witnesses have come against David, we see him standing firm in confidence in the LORD.

David feels betrayed by those he had earlier cared and ministered to—even to the point of walking alongside them when they were in the midst of great troubles, he has wept for them, he's fasted for them, and he has prayed for them. Now they want nothing to do with him. They've turned completely against him.

At this point he feels as though the LORD is far from him, he's wondering if God is even hearing him, he wonders if God even sees what is happening. So he wonders how long it will be before God will act.

But David is determined to be steadfast in his belief that God would act, it's an expression of Hope. On that day David says he will give thanks among the people! He is confident that the Lord will move.

Apply:

Our Hope is in Christ! So like David we stand firm.

Reflect for a moment on the lines from this old Hymn, "My Hope is Built on Nothing less"

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

Now reflect on Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."

Let the truth of this verse and Hymn speak to you.

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

Day 4 Psalm 35 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 35:19-25

19 Do not let those gloat over me who are my enemies without cause; do not let those who hate me without reason maliciously wink the eye. 20 They do not speak peaceably, but devise false accusations against those who live quietly in the land. 21 They sneer at me and say, "Aha! Aha! With our own eyes we have seen it." 22 LORD, you have seen this; do not be silent. Do not be far from me, Lord. 23 Awake, and rise to my defense! Contend for me, my God and Lord. 24 Vindicate me in your righteousness, LORD my God; do not let them gloat over me. 25 Do not let them think, "Aha, just what we wanted!" or say, "We have swallowed him up."

Understand:

David again cries out to the Lord about the injustice he sees. They again are bringing harsh words against David.

But despite all this injustice, he trusts his case to the Lord. He calls out for the Lord to vindicate him.

Apply:

When we're wrongly accused it's natural to want to lash out in revenge or to give a detailed defense for yourself. But instead we should do as David did and ask God to defend us. Jesus taught us the same thing in his teaching on the beatitudes.

Matt 5:11-12 ¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

When we take a stand for Jesus—for righteousness and truth—just like David, we can expect people to come against us.

But we are not without hope, no our hope is in Christ. Our Hope is as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. No matter what happens to us on this side of heaven, nothing can take away the victory we have in Christ. It's why we can say Like Paul, "Thanks Be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57)

Reflect on what that victory means and let the peace of God wash over you.

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today, make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

Day 5 Psalm 35 Devotional

Pray:

Ask God to orient or reorient you to himself. Confess any known sin. Thank him for his forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and his sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's word. Pray for others in your life that they too would know and love God today.

Read:

Psalm 35:26-28

26 May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion; may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace. 27 May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, "The LORD be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant." 28 My tongue will proclaim your righteousness, your praises all day long.

Understand:

As David closes, he now prays for the Lord's people, who suffered disgrace when their anointed king was disgraced. The David's ultimate hope is in the redemption of God's people.

David now prays for the Lords exaltation!

Apply:

We're to do the same thing: to pray for one another; and exalt the Lord Jesus!

1 Cor. 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Col .3:17 "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

1 Pet. 4:11 "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Reflect on this Psalm and the verses listed above. In what ways would God call you to serve exalt him today?

How could you include others in exalting Christ this week?

Live:

(Personalize this prayer for today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.) Ask God to lead

you through his Spirit as you go through your day. Ask him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell him "Yes" to his will today and ask him for his power and protection to live this "yes." Ask him to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY TODAY.**

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