

# Do Not Be Silent

## Psalm 28

We serve a God who spoke the world into existence. We speak because He has spoken, and we must call on Him as our Father to get specific answers for real problems. This is the practice of prayer.

### Summary of the Text

David will cry to God, his rock, and knows that if He is silent, David will be like those who go down to the pit (v. 1). He lifts up his hands toward the sanctuary as he offers supplications (v. 2). He doesn't want to be taken like the workers of iniquity who speak peace outwardly but plot evil in their hearts (v. 3). He asks God to render justice to them, to let the work of their hands come upon them (v. 4). They don't care about the Lord or His deeds, so He will cut them down (v. 5). David blesses Yahweh for answering his prayers (v. 6). His heart trusted the Lord, his strength and shield, and it mattered (v. 7). This brought him great joy and made him sing. Yahweh is your strength too, the refuge of those He has anointed (v. 8). He closes with a fourfold prayer: save your people, bless your inheritance, shepherd and lift them up forever (v. 9).

### Crying to God

To whom do you cry? David isn't talking about losing emotional self-control or yelling at the wind. He presses for specific answers from God Himself. In other words, His quiet time isn't very quiet and he takes his issues right into the sanctuary (v. 2). There is a real temptation for people who believe, as we do, in the exhaustive sovereignty of God, to become sinfully stoic and detached from circumstances and outcomes—to not pray like it matters. Hyper-Calvinism says that if God ordains whatsoever comes to pass, then we need not do anything since it will happen anyway. This is not trusting in God but ignoring Him and His direct call to ask, seek, and knock. If you do these things, Jesus says, it will be given, found, and opened to you. If you don't, then it won't. David needs God to sustain, intervene, and prevent him from being taken by the wicked (v. 3). If you only pray for world peace, long life, and general "blessing," your prayers are too safe and disobedient. Ask God to fix that thing that worries you—and then don't worry about it. Ask Him to restore that relationship, to bring that child back, to give peace in a specific situation, to do what it takes to free you from your sin. Name it and tell Him not to be silent. Spurgeon: *"Mere formalist's may be content without answers to their prayers, but genuine suppliants cannot; they are not satisfied with the results of prayer itself in calming the mind and subduing the will—they must go further and obtain actual replies from heaven, or they cannot rest."* This won't guarantee the answer you are looking for, but it will guarantee an answer (cf. 2 Cor. 12:8-10).

### Justice

We have in this psalm another example of an imprecatory prayer where David asks God to *"give them according to the work of their hands; render to them what they deserve"* (v. 4). The word of God that is to dwell in us richly in all wisdom, teaching us in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs includes this one (Col. 3:16). These psalms are about Jesus who both sang and explained them (Lk. 24:44-45). The message of the cross is to receive the mercy of God offered through the death of Jesus for your sins. You will either receive mercy or justice, calling on God for forgiveness, or you will reject the gospel and receive the just wages for sin which is death (Rom. 6:23). Is David being unlike the Son of David in calling for justice? After His triumphal entry, Jesus tells the Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers where they rent a vineyard but then beat and kill the servants of the owner rather deliver its fruit. Eventually the heir comes and they murder him too, thinking they'll possess the vineyard for themselves. Jesus asks what the owner will do with those vinedressers: *"He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons... Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."* (Matt. 21:41, 43-44).

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Jesus is not contradicting the gospel (!) when He says that those who murder the heir and try to dislodge the cornerstone will be destroyed. They will not prevail against the fruitfulness of His vineyard. The chief priests and Pharisees hear this and understand He is talking about them. We know there were some among them who repented, as Joseph of Arimathea and Paul later did, and God's people rejoice at this. This is one way God overcomes His enemies, by making them friends. But when they will not receive His terms of peace, we should pray like this, for God to stop those who war against His kingdom, mercy, wisdom, and justice. Jesus and the apostles sang and talked this way, and so we will either imitate them or be embarrassed.

## Strength & Shield

Those who pray like David join him in blessing God for hearing and answering (v. 6). We ask for good things, as we should, but remember that hard providences—including negative answers to our prayers—setup even greater victories. Sometimes these things are not hidden: *“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you”* (Phil. 1:21-24). Paul prays for the Philippians and they are praying for him. He has no sinful death wish but the bigger picture has come into focus. Praying to God has this effect but it can take time. Imagine how Joseph felt after running away from Potiphar's wife and landing in jail. “Lord, really?” This was the beginning of how he would save Israel and feed the world. Know how God has answered your prayers—keep a record of rights—so you can say *“I am helped; therefore my hearts greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him”* (v. 7). God gives you another week employed, another year of life, an enduring friendship, a new opportunity, recovery from sickness, no sickness to recover from, ad infinitum. Everything He gives is a token of His grace, and everything He withholds is part of His perfect providence. He is your strength and shield, as He is for all of His people.