

# PRAYING IN THE MIDST OF TURMOIL

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## Text: Psalms 55

Which is easier, to pray while one's life is in turmoil or to pray for a miracle? In all probability neither will be easy. Either way it takes great faith and perseverance. There is nothing like a life that seems out of control to make one want to seek for God's help.

**Abraham Lincoln once said**, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day."

When life drives us to our knees we usually know where to go, but do we know what to do when we get there and our lives are as out of control as ever. It is then that we must completely rely on God.

Note several *ways* in which the psalmist shows that we must rely upon God.

### **I. WE MUST RELY ON GOD TO HEAR US (vv.1-3).**

#### **A. We can depend on His undivided attention (vv.1-2a).**

#### **B. We must look to God to make sense of it all (vv.2b-3).**

Someone said, "Don't pray to escape trouble. Don't pray to be comfortable in your emotions. Pray to do the will of God in every situation. Nothing else is worth praying for."

-Samuel M. Shoemaker

## **II. WE MUST RELY ON GOD TO COMFORT US (vv.4-8).**

### **A. Turmoil often brings fear to our heart.**

We rarely have to be told to pray when we are afraid something bad could happen but we too often ignore God before and after the trouble is over.

**We are like the little boy the preacher questioned about prayer.**

Preacher: "Do you say your prayers at night, little boy?"

Jimmy: "Yes, sir."

Preacher: "Do you say your prayers in the morning, too?"

Jimmy: "No, sir. I ain't scared in the daytime."

### **B. God will provide a way of escape in our turmoil if not from it.**

## **III. WE MUST RELY ON GOD TO SAVE US (vv.9-15).**

### **A. We must rely on God when our world is caving in on us.**

**This is what Nick Thomas did when he found himself at the age of forty-seven unemployed and under tremendous financial pressure.** Though he had had a successful career in the Air Force and the insurance business, some reversals had set him back and left him with no place to go. His wife, Liz, made their situation a matter of prayer. She was in church one morning, praying about their dilemma

when she thought she could almost hear the words, "Make the mustard." Her family had a mustard recipe from Russia, and every Christmas she made gift jars of mustard for her friends. Nick and Liz decided to listen to voice. She prepared a substantial amount of mustard, packaged it, and called on a local cheese shop. The manager tasted it and immediately bought out their inventory. Within three months they had cracked the highly competitive, New York major deli market. Because the Thomases committed their troubles to prayer, and looked expectantly to God for guidance, he gave them direction.

## **B. We must rely on God when we feel helpless.**

Peter W. Law in *A Portrait of My Father*, "Imagine you are on holiday and you have an apartment overlooking the sand and surf. Sitting on the table in your room is a fishbowl, and inside the bowl is a small goldfish. Each day you swim and sun-bake and enjoy soaking up the delights of vacationing. Before long, however, you begin to feel sorry for little Goldie who is all alone in his bowl while you go out having fun in the sun. To make up for this injustice, you promise Goldie a little of the action. "Tomorrow," you tell the goldfish, "you will begin to enjoy life, too."

The next day you take a washcloth, lift the fish from the bowl, place it in the cloth, wrap it up, and put the living bundle into your pocket before leaving for the beach. As you reach the spot where you are accustomed to spending your day, you can feel the sun's heat beating down upon your back. Excitedly you take your gilled companion from your pocket, lay out the washcloth on the sand, place the fish on the cloth, stand back, and say, "Now this is the life, Goldie; live it up!"

Can anything be more ridiculous or more foolish? Being in the sun on the hot beach is no environment for a goldfish—or any fish! It will die there, not live. It was never intended to be in that environment. For people, a relationship with God as Father is the only correct environment for life.

-- Peter W. Law in A Portrait of My Father. Leadership, Vol. 7, no. 3.

#### **IV. WE MUST RELY ON GOD TO REMIND US (vv.16-23).**

##### **A. As we pray we will be reminded of the greatness of God (vv.16-17).**

Phillip Brooks wrote, “Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger people. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God.”

-- Phillips Brooks. Leadership, Vol. 12, no. 2.

##### **B. As we pray we will be reminded of the provision of God (v.22).**

#### **CONCLUSION**

A father was watching his young son try to dislodge a heavy stone. The boy couldn't budge it. "Are you sure you are using all your strength?" the father asked. "Yes, I am," said the exasperated boy. "No, you are not," the father replied. "You haven't asked me to help you."