



Praying Like the Psalmists, Part 9

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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Making the Same Commitments as the Psalmists

Introduction:

The most fundamental way to judge the level and depth of any relationship is communication. If two people never communicate, they clearly don't have a relationship at all. If they communicate, but only about surface issues, they have a relationship but not a very deep one. The same can be said regarding our relationship with God. If we never communicate with Him, we don't have a relationship at all. If we communicate but only on the surface, it's not a very deep one. Over the last year, we have occasionally studied some Old Testament saints who, based on their communication with God, had a very deep relationship with Him. The Psalmists obviously communicated deeply with God. We often turn to their prayers as examples of depth and connection to God. Many of us long for our prayer lives to mirror what we read in the pages of the Psalms. As such, we've been looking at these great saints to learn how we can connect to God more deeply, building up our relationship with Him. We've talked about what we need to do before we pray to be like the psalmists, recognizing we need to believe in the same God they did, view ourselves as they did, relate to prayer as they did, and prepare to pray like they did. We've discussed what we need to do while we are praying to be like the psalmists, having the same goal they did, being candid as they were, and striving for creativity as they did. Now we need to recognize that, having prayed, we are not done. If we are going to pray like the Psalmists, there are things we must do after we pray.

In fact, we see one amazing aspect of praying among the psalmists. They often sealed their prayers with a commitment to God based on those prayers. Because they believed God cared, heard, and would respond to their prayers they made commitments to Him as faithful servants. Do not misunderstand. These weren't bargains. These commitments were not attempts to manipulate God into responding how they wanted. Rather, these were recognitions that they were not entitled to God's responses. They owed God for the grace He offered in response to their prayers. These were not commitments based on getting what they wanted. These were commitments anchored in the faith that God would do what was best for them. They understood that prayer was a two-way relationship. Prayer isn't simply about taking from God what we want. It is about giving to God because He deserves it. Thus, repeatedly we see the commitments made by the psalmists in conjunction with their praying. While we can, no doubt, find numerous specific commitments made to God in the prayers of the psalmists, whether laments or praises, there were four over-arching vows made. If we are going to pray like the psalmists, we need to make these same commitments and vows.

Discussion:

I. The psalmists vowed to give thanks.

A. The psalmists understood they weren't entitled to receive the blessings they asked. Therefore they committed to give the Lord thanks for the many blessings He bestowed on them. And we will even see that they called others to give thanks along with them.

1. **Psalm 7:17**: "I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness..."¹

2. **Psalm 30:12**: "O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!"

3. **Psalm 57:9**: "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples..."

4. **Psalm 108:3**: "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples..."

5. **Psalm 118:28-29**: "You are my God, and I will give thanks to you... Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good..."

B. No doubt, under the Old Covenant, this giving of thanks was connected with thanksgiving offerings taught in **Leviticus 7:11-15**. While we no longer offer up thanksgiving in the form of sacrifice, we need to remember **I Thessalonians 5:18**, which instructs us to give thanks in all circumstances. We do not want to be like the nine lepers of **Luke 17:11-19** who were blessed by Jesus but did not return to give Him thanks.

C. If we will pray like the psalmists, we must vow to give thanks.

II. The psalmists vowed to praise God.

A. Very much akin to thanksgiving, the psalmists also vowed to praise God. They often coupled this vow with the vow to give thanks. However, praise and thanksgiving are not completely equal. Thanksgiving is adoring God for what He has done or what we are absolutely certain He will do. Praise is adoring God for who and what He is and

¹ All scripture references come from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

what He can do. Not only would the psalmists honor God for what He had done, they would honor Him simply for who He is.

1. **Psalm 9:2**: “I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.”
2. **Psalm 51:15**: “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.”
3. **Psalm 69:30**: “I will praise the name of God with a song...”
4. **Psalm 145:1-2**: “I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.”

- B. No doubt, the psalms themselves are filled with praises of God. The point of these vows seems to be that the psalmists knew they had never praised God enough. There is always need for more praise. We cannot praise God enough. We must commit to continued praise. As **Hebrews 13:15** says, we must continually offer up a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of the lips to God.
- C. If we will pray like the psalmists, we must vow to praise God.

III. The psalmists vowed obedience.

- A. The psalmists did not believe that they could lay their petitions out before God and go their merry way. They recognized the obvious obligations turning to God laid upon them. Why on earth would God remotely listen to their pleas if they refused to listen to God’s will? Thus, they committed themselves to obey the Lord.
1. **Psalm 23:6**: “...and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”
 2. **Psalm 26:11**: “But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity...”
 3. **Psalm 101:2**: “I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house...”
 4. **Psalm 116:9**: “...I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”
- B. **Isaiah 66:3-4** drives this point home for us. Our religion does us absolutely no good if we refuse to listen to God’s will. God will refuse to listen to us if we refuse to listen to Him.
- C. If we will pray like the psalmists, we must vow to obey God.

IV. The psalmists vowed to proclaim God to everyone around them.

- A. Over and over again the psalmists vowed to praise and thank God. But one of the interesting aspects of these promises was how often they claimed they were going to keep these promises in the midst of others. Because of their faith in God and His goodness, they were going to proclaim Him to everyone around them.
1. **Psalm 18:49**: “For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to your name.”
 2. **Psalm 22:22**: “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you...”
 3. **Psalm 40:5**: “You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.”
 4. **Psalm 109:30**: “With my mouth I will give great thanks to the Lord; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.”
- B. We should not simply go into our prayer closets to praise and thank God. Rather, we should proclaim to others what God has done for us. I find this perspective to be most amazing. The psalmists didn’t simply say they would tell the whole world what God required of them. Rather, they were going to share the good news of what God had done for them. Like the leper in **Mark 1:40-45**, how can we help but tell people what God has done for us?
- C. If we will pray like the psalmists, we must vow to tell others about God and His blessings.

Conclusion:

Just as we learned that prayer is not simply about what we do while praying but also what we do before we pray, so we must learn that praying like the psalmists is just as much about what we do after we pray. We need to be committed to God. If we will pray like the psalmists, we will vow ourselves to give thanks, praise God, obey His will, and tell others about Him. Prayer is a two-way street. It isn’t simply about getting from God. It is about giving to Him. He deserves it. Let’s commit ourselves to Him and to faithful submission to Him.