

How to Begin Each Day in A Good Way

Psalm 5

Intro. 1) Often we run into people who have what I call “a partly cloudy disposition with thunderstorms on the horizon.” They are angry, mad, discouraged. They are not having a good day and feel the need to share their misery with as many people as possible.

Concerning these kinds of people we have created a popular saying: “He must have got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning.” In other words he began the day in a bad way rather than a good way, and it has stayed with him all day long.

2) David knew it was important to both begin and end each day in a good way. He knew the best way to do this is with prayer. In Psalms 3-6 we have prayers for the morning and evening. Psalm 3 is a morning prayer. Psalm 4 is an evening prayer. Psalm 5 is a morning prayer (v. 3). Psalm 6 is an evening prayer. The Bible teaches us from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same; our entire day should be bathed in prayer.

3) In this morning prayer David seeks the Lord with great intensity. He is opposed by those who would do him harm. Perhaps the background of this Psalm is also the rebellion of Absalom (Ps. 3-4). Combining the elements of Psalms of lament and confidence, we see David asking for guidance in the midst of his enemies and their slander (vs. 8-9). In all of this David provides, in 5 stanzas, godly wisdom for how to begin each day in a good way.

I. Talk to the Lord in Prayer

5:1-3

As the day begins David turns his face to the Lord (*Yahweh*) in prayer. Notice how we should address Him both personally and respectfully: my King and my God. The

one we approach “is the one who causes to be,” “I AM Who I AM” (Ex. 3:14), the King, the one true and living God.

Trans: How do we talk to such a great God?

1) Seek the Lord in Meditation 5:1

- The Psalm begins with a trio of parallel imperatives: 1) give ear (listen); 2) consider; 3) give heed (*ESV*, “attention”). He describes his prayer as 1) my words, 2) my meditation (groanings), 3) the voice of my cry. My meditation can mean sighing, quiet murmuring, whispering to oneself or others. James Boice notes,

“Most often we pray by words. That is, we express ourselves in proper, well-reasoned terminology. Sometimes we are in such distress that our prayers are only desperate cries for God to help us. At still other times we cannot find words adequate to express our feelings or voice what we need, though we are nevertheless still praying. But here is the encouraging thing: God hears all kinds of prayers.” (Boice, 46)

2) Seek the Lord in the Morning 5:2-3

- The one who is our King and our God should be sought in prayer at the beginning of each day. The phrase “in the morning” is repeated for emphasis. We should start the day in the presence of our Sovereign, of the one true God.
- Verse 3 ends in the *NKJV* with the phrase, “I will look up.” The *NIV* has “wait in expectation”; the *NASV* has “watch.” Some believe the context of the prayer was the morning sacrifice. “I will direct [“my sacrifice” implied] to you.” Whatever the particulars, we are to come at the inception of each day,

presenting ourselves in prayer as a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1), eagerly expecting this will be well received by the one who is our King and our God, the LORD (*Yahweh*) Himself. Because He is my King and my God, and I His faithful servant who seeks an audience with Him as each day begins, I can with great eagerness and expectation anticipate that He will hear, consider, and give heed to my prayers. What a wise way to begin the day.

II. See the Lord Evaluate the Wicked

5:4-6

Stanza 2 stands in stark contrast to stanza 1. Again the righteous man and the wicked man of Psalm 1 are seen in startling opposition. One God will hear. The other God hates. In 6 striking statements God's perspective on the wicked is exposed. If you ever doubted that God hates sin, these verses will wipe that doubt out of your mind once and for all.

1) God is Displeased with Them

5:4

Not...takes pleasure (ESV "delights")...wickedness. God is praised for the type of people He rejects, that displease Him. A holy God who is just and righteous in who He is and in all that He does has no pleasure at all, none, in the wicked person. Such a person is seen as wicked both in character and conduct. Psalm 34:21 says such persons "hate the righteous." God is displeased with them.

2) God will not Dwell with Them

5:4

"Evil (ones) will not dwell (sojourn, visit) with you." Even a temporary visitation is impossible and out of the question. As Hab. 1:13 says, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil." Live with Him? They are not even welcome for a visit.

3) God will Dishonor Them

5:5

The boastful, the proud and “arrogant” (*NIV*), are singled out by David. The haughty, the prideful, will not stand, have an audience, in God’s sight (lit. “before your eyes”). The prideful and arrogant will never enjoy a face-to-face encounter with the Lord.

4) God Distains Them

5:5

You hate all workers if iniquity. These words catch us by surprise.

- When I read them it took my breath away. The God who so loved the world... (John 3:16) hates. Yes, but watch the verse and read it carefully. Don’t miss the functional emphasis. In their essence and essential being as imagers of God, the Lord loves His human creatures. But when they function as workers, instruments of iniquity (*ESV* “evil doers”), God has nothing but wrath, righteous anger, yes, a just hatred.
- Remember Proverbs 6:16-19,
 - 16 These six *things* the LORD hates, yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him:
 - 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,
 - 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,
 - 19 A false witness *who* speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.
- Steve Lawson’s comment is helpful at this point: “God rejects all who reject him. This is a Hebraism that contrasts love and hate which communicates acceptance and rejection” (p. 38).

- Jesus said it this way in Luke 14:26, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

5) God will Destroy Them 5:6

Again sins of the tongue are addressed. In v. 5 it was the arrogant. Here it is liars. The Lord will destroy those who tell lies. Those who slander and speak falsely reveal the nature of their heart thru their tongue. God will not entertain them. He will not allow their wicked words to go unpunished. Simply put: He will destroy them in righteous, holy and just judgment.

6) God Despises Them 5:6

Yahweh abhors, strongly opposes and dislikes (hates?) both the bloodthirsty (lit. “the man of blood) and the deceitful. The bloodthirsty murder with their hands. The deceitful murder with their tongue. The Lord hates, abhors and will destroy all who live lives of such evil and wickedness.

III. Follow the Lord in His Righteous Ways 5:7-8

The word “but” places these verses in strong opposition to vs. 4-6. David returns to discuss and examine the one who seeks the Lord in prayer (vs. 1-3). He is also the one who seeks the Lord’s house, His mercy, His guidance and direction. This kind of person the Lord will take pleasure in.

1) Pursue the Worship of God 5:7

- We should come to God in prayer. We should come to the place where God’s people come together. There is something about the people of God gathered for corporate worship that ministers to the heart and soul of a person. Here

David says we find a “multitude of mercy”, “abundant loving-kindness” (*NASV*), “abundance of your steadfast love” (*ESV*). It is that wonderful Hebrew work *hesed*. Finding himself to be the recipient of such undeserved mercy, David says “In fear (*NIV*, “reverence”) I will worship,” bow down in humility and respect, toward the place where you manifest yourself, “Your holy temple.”

- Only by mercy may we approach God. Only in worship should we draw near to God.

2) Pursue the Ways of the Lord

5:8

- We can, we should, ask the Lord (*Yahweh*) to lead us. Because He is a God who, 1) takes no pleasure, 2) will not give an audience, 3) will not allow to stand, 4) hates, 5) will destroy, and 6) abhors wickedness and all evil, we can be confident he will lead us in righteousness, in the right way and along the right path.
- In fact when faced with opposition, confronted by enemies, those who would do us harm, we can ask Him to make His way straight before us. “Lord, level the playing field.” Give me a game plan that will overcome the opposition, my enemies. I ask this pleading your mercy and righteousness, certainly not my own. Guide me around spiritual booby-traps, theological quicksand, personal landmines. Keep me on a path that is straight, a path of integrity, honesty and humility. Direct me away from wickedness and evil (v.4), pride and rebellion (v.5), lies, murder and deception (v.6).

IV. Watch the Lord Deal with the Rebellious

5:9-10

As in stanza 2, David again addresses the wicked in stanza 4. He particularly notes the sins of the mouth, the evil words that flow from an evil heart. They may be David's enemies (v.8), but ultimately their sin and rebellion is against God.

1) They are Unfaithful with Their Speech

5:9

The *NIV* translates the first line: "not a word from their mouth can be trusted." Petersen in *The Message* writes, "Every word they speak is a land mine; their lungs breathe out poison gas. Their throats are gaping graves, their tongues slick as mudslides." They are dishonest and destructive in their words. Coming up out of their heart through their throat is death. The words are smooth and flattering, but their end is death and the graveyard. Paul cites this verse in Romans 3:13 in his catalogue of sins that makes the case for the depravity of man and the wickedness of the human heart apart from grace.

2) They Are Uncontrollable in Their Sin

5:10

- David calls on the Lord for a judicial verdict of guilty. The evidence is overwhelming. Not only should God condemn them, their own counsel (*NASV*, "devices") brings them down. Their judgment is divinely enacted and self inflicted. Sin does its job on them. Sin begets sin, sin breeds more sin. Because of the "multitude of their transgressions" they are to be cast out (*NIV*, "banished"). Bottom-line: their rebellion is against God! The Lord will deal with them in the final analysis.

V. Shout to the Lord with Joy

5:11-12

Now the perspective of those who seek God in prayer, cling to His mercy, and seek His guidance is in view once again. This 5th and final stanza, like stanzas 1 and 3, looks to the Lord and considers the blessings that come to those who approach Yahweh as their King and their God. They can “rejoice”, indeed, they can “ever shout for joy.”

1) Trust the Lord and He will Protect You

5:11

- Those who put their trust, faith, confidence, in the Lord are called to rejoice (3x in v.11). Why? Because the Lord will defend, protect, cover, “spread His protection” (*NIV*) over them.
- Those who trust the Lord can trust Him to be the refuge, their divine protector. Like a great eagle spreading her wings over young, so our great God and King spreads His covering of protection over those who seek Him in prayer, depend on His mercy, ask for His guidance, and trust in His protection.

Trans. However, there is one other characteristic of those who have this wonderful relationship with the Lord.

2) Love the Lord and He will Bless You

5:12

- Those who trust the Lord and rejoice in His protection also love His Name and see Him as their shield (cf 3:3). Because we love His name we love Him for who He is.
- They are joyful, they “exult” (*NASV*) in the Lord. Because we love Him who is righteous (v.8), we will pursue righteousness knowing this is the place of divine blessing. Such blessing is to be surrounded with God’s favor like a

shield, a shield that provides 360 degree protection! No human shield can do this; only one that is divine.

Con. Knowing my God, my King, cares for me with such loving-kindness, with such promises of guidance and protection, I will seek Him as I begin each day. I will talk to Him in prayer. I will follow His righteous ways. I will shout to the Lord with joy because I love His Name, that Name which is above every name, even the name of Jesus my Lord.