

## Make Your Prayers as Incense

Psalm 141

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 30, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2018

Scripture Reader and Reading: Jacob Noveske – Revelation 5.8

Boy Song Leaders: ?

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on Prayer

### Persuasion:

#### I. Psalm 141.0 | A Man Who Knew How to Pray

##### 0 A Psalm of David.

- A. One of the many impressive things about David
- B. was his ability to pray.
  - 1. How many people in the past 3,000 years
  - 2. have read his prayers, and
    - a) knowing that the Holy Spirit included David's prayers in the Bible,
    - b) people concluded that the Lord knows just how they think and feel?
- C. In the rest of the Bible,
  - 1. a prophet spoke for God to the people, but
  - 2. the psalmists spoke for us to God.
    - a) David was one of those men.
    - b) The things we think and the things we feel, he also experienced.

#### II. Psalm 141.1–2 | Prayer as Incense

- 1 LORD, I cry out to You;  
Make haste to me!  
Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.
- 2 Let my prayer be set before You as incense,  
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

- A. David addressed the Lord specifically, and
  - 1. told the Lord that he did so.

2. David did not trust in
  - a) himself,
  - b) false gods,
  - c) his wisdom, or
  - d) his military might.
3. Therefore, he wanted his prayer
  - a) to be like incense before God and
  - b) the lifting up of his hands to be like the evening sacrifice.

B. Prayer is incense to the Lord.

1. God loves incense.
2. He gave us the ability to make it.
  - a) He requested it in the Law.
  - b) He says something about it in the New Testament.

C. Lifting up hands,

1. a position of prayer,
2. is like the evening sacrifice to the Lord.

D. David requested:

1. That the Lord make haste to him.
2. That the Lord give ear to David's voice.

**III. Psalm 141.3–4 | Keep Me from Doing Evil**

- 3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;  
Keep watch over the door of my lips.**
- 4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,  
To practice wicked works  
With men who work iniquity;  
And do not let me eat of their delicacies.**

A. David requested of the Lord:

1. Self-control for his mouth,
2. Self-control for his heart,
3. Self-control for his eating (or what that represented).

B. Of all the sins that you have committed,

1. how many dealt with words that you have spoken?
2. Proverbs 13.3

**3 He who guards his mouth preserves his life,  
But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.  
(Proverbs 13.3)**

3. Proverbs 21.23

**23 Whoever guards his mouth and tongue  
Keeps his soul from troubles.  
(Proverbs 21.23)**

C. Of all the sins that you have committed,

1. how many dealt with the temptation to act as the wicked do?
2. They surround us and we sometimes do not realize the temptation.

#### **IV. Psalm 141.5a–e | The Righteous Can Help Me**

**5**

- a Let the righteous strike me;**
- b It shall be a kindness.**
- c And let him rebuke me;**
- d It shall be as excellent oil;**
- e Let my head not refuse it.**

A. First, notice that David recognized his need for correction.

B. He also requested of the Lord

1. that whoever did the correcting
2. that it would be the righteous,

- a) undoubtedly because the righteous mean for rebukes
  - b) to make a person better.
    - (1) They do not rebuke out of treachery, but
    - (2) out of kindness, knowing that someone like David would accept it.
- C. Since David did not want to sin, and
- 1. since he did not want to displease the Lord,
  - 2. David considered a rebuke
    - a) an act of kindness and
    - b) the same as excellent oil.
- D. He would not refuse a strike from the righteous.
- 1. See how David reacted to Nathan,
  - 2. well, truthfully, David had no reaction to Nathan.
    - a) He knew that Nathan had done the right thing.
    - b) He knew that the Lord had sent Nathan.
      - (1) Therefore, David immediately confessed his sin.
      - (2) He said nothing against Nathan, nor took any action against him.

**V. Psalm 141.5f-7 | Praying Against the Wicked**

**5f For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.**  
**6 Their judges are overthrown by the sides of the cliff,**  
**And they hear my words, for they are sweet.**  
**7 Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave,**  
**As when one plows and breaks up the earth.**

- A. While David had done things that he should not have done,
  - 1. they were in moments of weakness and
  - 2. not typical of the way that he lived.
- B. His typical way was to pray against the deeds of the wicked.
  - 1. It is hard to know what he meant in verses 6 and 7.

2. Commentators are also confused by what he meant.
  - a) However, I think we can take it as meaning
  - b) that Israel had suffered from the wicked.
    - (1) Therefore, David prayed against what the wicked do.
    - (2) For that reason, he hoped that the Lord would listen to him.

## **VI. Psalm 141.8–10 | Focus on the Lord**

**8 But my eyes are upon You, O GOD the Lord;  
In You I take refuge;  
Do not leave my soul destitute.**

**9 Keep me from the snares they have laid for me,  
And from the traps of the workers of iniquity.**

**10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,  
While I escape safely.**

- A. I tell you often that LORD in all caps or small caps
  1. represents God's name in the Hebrew text, and
  2. should be translated either as Yahweh or sometimes Jehovah.
    - a) However, in verse 8, the Hebrew for Lord appears and
    - b) the word for God's name.
      - (1) Therefore, our translators,
        - (a) except in the NIV,
        - (b) made God's name with GOD in all caps.
      - (2) The NIV has, "O Sovereign LORD."
- B. Anyway, David had just spoken of the wicked and
  1. their judges who side with them.
- C. However, as for David,
  1. he put his eyes upon Yahweh the Lord.
  2. In Yahweh, David took refuge.

- a) Therefore, he asked that the Lord not leave his soul destitute.
- D. What he requested of the Lord was
- 1. that the Lord keep David from falling into the snares
  - 2. that the enemy had set out for him,
    - a) keeping him from the traps of the workers of iniquity,
    - b) people who work at iniquity.
- E. Instead of David falling into their nets,
- 1. he asked that they fall into their own nets and
  - 2. at the same time that he would escape safely.
- F. He told the Lord at the beginning of verse 8,
- 1. that his eyes were upon the Lord.
  - 2. Hebrews 12.1–2 says that is how we should be:

**1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12.1–2)**

- 3. Regardless of what you face,
- 4. regardless of who is against you and
- 5. regardless of what they are doing,
  - a) put your eyes upon the Lord.
  - b) The Hebrew writer said that Jesus is the author and finisher,
    - (1) the Alpha and the Omega,
    - (2) the Beginning and the End,
      - (a) of our faith.
      - (b) Life will throw storms at us.

- i) However, like Peter when he was walking on the water,
- ii) he did well until he took his eyes off Jesus.

6. Is this not what the Book of Psalms teaches us?

**3 My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD;  
In the morning I will direct it to You,  
And I will look up.  
(Psalm 5.3)**

**15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,  
For He shall pluck my feet out of the net.  
(Psalm 25.15)**

**1 Unto You I lift up my eyes,  
O You who dwell in the heavens.  
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters,  
As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,  
So our eyes look to the LORD our God,  
Until He has mercy on us.  
(Psalm 123.1–2)**

**15 The eyes of all look expectantly to You,  
And You give them their food in due season.  
(Psalm 145.15)**

7. Elsewhere in the Bible we have the same example. Jehoshaphat prayed:

**12 “O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against  
this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to  
do, but our eyes are upon You” (2 Chronicles 20.12).**

**Exhortation:**

**I. David gave his whole self to the Lord, referring to his:**

- A. My Voice – v. 1
- B. My Prayer – v. 2
- C. My Hands – v. 2
- D. My Mouth – v. 3

E. My Lips – v. 3

F. My Heart – v. 4

G. My Head – v. 5

H. My Prayer – v. 5

I. My Words – v. 6

J. My Eyes – v. 8

1. When Jesus told us to

2. take up our crosses daily and to follow Him,

a) was He not talking about this kind of thing?

b) Why would we do any less than what David did?

## **II. See your prayers as the smoke of incense rising up to God:**

**12 Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. 13 And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die (Leviticus 16.12–13).**

**10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense (Luke 1.10).**

**8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (Revelation 5.8).**

**4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand (Revelation 8.4).**