

PSALM 108

This psalm begins with praise and concludes with prayer, and faith is at work in both.

I. David here gives thanks to God for mercies to himself (v. 1-5).

II. He prays to God for mercies for the land, pleading the promises of God and putting them in suit (v. 6-13). The former part it taken out of ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 57:7, etc., the latter out of ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 60:5, etc., and both with very little variation, to teach us that we may in prayer use the same words that we have formerly used, provided it be with new affections. It intimates likewise that it is not only allowable, but sometimes convenient, to gather some verses out of one psalm and some out of another, and to put them together, to be sung to the glory of God. In singing this psalm we must give glory to God and take comfort to ourselves.

~~Psalm~~ PSALM 108:1-5

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAISING GOD

A song or psalm of David.

We may here learn how to praise God from the example of one who was master of the art.

1. We must praise God with fixedness of heart. Our heart must be employed in the duty (else we make nothing of it) and engaged to the duty (v. 1): *O God! my heart is fixed, and then I will sing and give praise.*

Wandering straggling thoughts must be gathered in, and kept close to the business; for they must be told that here is work enough for them all.

2. We must praise God with freeness of expression: I will praise him *with my glory*, that is, with my tongue. Our tongue is our glory, and never more so than when it is employed in praising God. When the *heart is inditing* this *good matter* our *tongue* must be as *the pen of a ready writer*, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 45:1. David's skill in music was his glory, it made him famous, and this should be consecrated to the praise of God; and therefore it follows,

Awake my psaltery and harp. Whatever gift we excel in we must praise God with.

3. We must praise God with fervency of affection, and must stir up ourselves to do it, that it may be done in a lively manner and not carelessly (v. 2): *Awake, psaltery and harp;* let it not be done with a dull and sleepy tune, but let the airs be all lively. *I myself will awake early* to do it, with all that is within me, and all little enough. Warm devotions honour God.

4. We must praise God publicly, as those that are not ashamed to own our obligations to him and our thankful sense of his favours, but desire that others also may be in like manner affected with the divine goodness (v. 3): *I will praise thee among the people of the Jews; nay, I will sing to thee among the nations of the earth.* Whatever company we are in we must take all occasions to speak well of God; and we must not be shy of singing psalms, though our neighbours hear us, for it looks like being ashamed of our Master.

5. We must, in our praises, magnify the mercy and truth of God in a special manner (v. 4), mercy in promising, truth in performing. The heavens are vast, but the mercy of God is more capacious; the skies are high and bright, but the truth of God is more eminent, more illustrious. We cannot see further than the heavens and clouds; whatever we see of God's mercy and truth there is still more to be seen, more reserved to be seen, in the other world.

6. Since we find ourselves so, defective in glorifying God, we must beg of him to glorify himself, to do all, to dispose all, to his own glory, to get himself honour and make himself a name (v. 5): *Be thou exalted, O God! above the heavens,* higher than the angels themselves can exalt thee with their praises, *and let thy glory be spread over all the earth. Father, glorify thy own name. Thou hast glorified it; glorify it again.* It is to be our first petition, *Hallowed be thy name.*

PSALM 108:6-13

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

We may here learn how to pray as well as praise.

1. We must be public-spirited in prayer, and bear upon our hearts, at the throne of grace, the concerns of the church of God, v. 6. It is God's *beloved*, and therefore must be ours; and therefore we must pray for its deliverance, and reckon that we are answered if God grant what we ask for his church, though he delay to give us what we ask for ourselves. "Save thy church, *and thou answerest me*; I have what I would have." *Let the earth be filled with God's glory, and the prayers of David are ended* (~~372~~Psalm 72:19, 20); he desires no more.

2. We must, in prayer, act faith upon the power and promise of God — upon his power (*Save with thy right hand*, which is mighty to save), and upon his promise: *God has spoken in his holiness*, in his holy word, to which he has sworn by his holiness, and therefore *I will rejoice*, v. 7. What he has promised he will perform, for it is the word both of his truth and of his power. An active faith can rejoice in what God has said, though it be not yet done; for with him saying and doing are not two things, whatever they are with us.

3. We must, in prayer, take the comfort of what God has secured to us and settled upon us, though we are not yet put in possession of it. God had promised David to give him,

(1.) The hearts of his subjects; and therefore he surveys the several parts of the country as his own already: "*Shechem and Succoth, Gilead and Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah, are all my own*," v. 8. With such assurance as this we may speak of the performance of what God has promised to the Son of David; he will, without fail, give him the heathen for his *inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession*, for so has he *spoken in his holiness*; nay, of all the particular persons that were given him he will *lose none*; he also, as David, shall have the hearts of his subjects, ~~415~~John 6:37. And,

(2.) The *necks of his enemies*. These are promised, and therefore David looks upon *Moab, and Edom, and Philistia*, as his own already (v. 9): *Over Philistia will I triumph*, which explains ~~340~~Psalm 60:8, *Philistia, triumph thou because of me*, which some think should be read, *O my soul! triumph thou over Philistia*. Thus the exalted Redeemer is set down at God's right hand, in a full assurance that all his enemies shall in due time *be made his footstool, though all things are not yet put under him*, ~~308~~Hebrews 2:8.

4. We must take encouragement from the beginnings of mercy to pray and hope for the perfecting of it (v. 10, 11): “*Who will bring me into the strong cities that are yet unconquered? Who will make me master of the country of Edom, which is yet unsubdued?*” The question was probably to be debated in his privy council, or a council of war, what methods they should take to subdue the Edomites and to reduce that country; but he brings it into his prayers, and leaves it in God's hands: *Wilt not thou, O God?* Certainly thou wilt. It is probable that he spoke with the more assurance concerning the conquest of Edom because of the ancient oracle concerning Jacob and Esau, that *the elder should serve the younger*, and the blessing of Jacob, by which he was made Esau's lord, ^{<127>}Genesis 27:37.

5. We must not be discouraged in prayer, nor beaten off from our hold of God, though Providence has in some instances frowned upon us: “*Though thou hast cast us off, yet thou wilt now go forth with our hosts*, v. 11. *Thou wilt comfort us again after the time that thou hast afflicted us.*” Adverse events are sometimes intended for the trial of the constancy of our faith and prayer, which we ought to persevere in whatever difficulties we meet with, and not to *faint*.

6. We must seek help from God, renouncing all confidence in the creature (v. 12): “*Lord, give us help from trouble*, prosper our designs, and defeat the designs of our enemies against us.” It is not unseasonable to talk of trouble at the same time that we talk of triumphs, especially when it is to quicken prayer for help from heaven; and it is a good plea, *Vain is the help of man*. “It is really so, and therefore we are undone if thou do not help us; we apprehend it to be so, and therefore depend upon thee for help and have the more reason to expect it.”

7. We must depend entirely upon the favour and grace of God, both for strength and success in our work and warfare, v. 13.

(1.) We must do our part, but we can do nothing of ourselves; it is only *through God that we shall do valiantly*. Blessed Paul will own that even he can *do nothing*, nothing to purpose, *but through Christ strengthening him*, ^{<128>}Philippians 4:13.

(2.) When we have acquitted ourselves ever so well, yet we cannot speed by any merit or might of our own; it is God himself that *treads down our*

enemies, else we with all our valour cannot do it. Whatever we do, whatever we gain, God must have all the glory.