

“Praying the Psalms” (4)

“...I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.” (Jonah 2:2)

Prayers of Penitence

Psalm 51:1-2 – ¹ “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!”

Psalm 38:1-8, 17-18 – ¹ “O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath! ² For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has come down on me. ³ There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. ⁴ For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. ⁵ My wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness, ⁶ I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; all the day I go about mourning. ⁷ For my sides are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. ⁸ I am feeble and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart. ¹⁷ For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever before me. ¹⁸ **I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.**”

Prayers of Prevention

Psalm 19:13 – “Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.”

Psalm 141:3-4 – ³ “Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! ⁴ Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies!”

Curtailing Collateral Damage

Psalm 69:5-6 – ⁵ “O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. ⁶ Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel.”

Psalm 73:13-15 – ¹³ “All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴ For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning. ¹⁵ If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ I would have betrayed the generation of your children.”

Cruciality of Confession

Psalm 32:3-5 – ³ “For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.”

Matthew 3:1-3, 5-6 – ¹ “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

1 John 1:8-9 – ⁸ “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”