Forgiveness
Psalm 28

To you, O Lord, I call;
    my rock, be not deaf to me,
lest, if you be silent to me,
    I become like those who go down to the pit.
Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy,
    when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands
    toward your most holy sanctuary.

Do not drag me off with the wicked,
    with the workers of evil,
who speak peace with their neighbors
    while evil is in their hearts.
Give to them according to their work
    and according to the evil of their deeds;
give to them according to the work of their hands;
    render them their due reward.
Because they do not regard the works of the Lord
    or the work of his hands,
he will tear them down and build them up no more.

Blessed be the Lord!
    For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.
The Lord is my strength and my shield;
    in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;
my heart exults,
    and with my song I give thanks to him.

The Lord is the strength of his people;
    he is the saving refuge of his anointed.
Oh, save your people and bless your heritage!
    Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

David goes to the Temple. He prays. What does he pray for? Forgiveness. That is what the Temple is there for: forgiveness.

He knows he does not deserve for the Lord to hear his prayer. He deserves to go down to the pit because he is a sinner.

Do not drag me off with the wicked, he pleads! He is wicked. He has wicked and evil desires and thoughts. He has spoken and done wicked and evil things. He knows that apart from the Lord's mercy, this is what he deserves: to be condemned with the wicked.

But, he prays: **Give to them according to the <u>work</u> of their <u>hands</u> . . . because they do not regard the works of the Lord or the <u>work</u> of his <u>hands</u>.**

Here's what makes all the difference in the world! The Lord and the work of His hands. His hands that were the tiny hands of a newborn, wrapping around the little finger of His mother and father. His hands that grew up and then touched sinners, the diseased, the blind and the deaf, and healed them. His hands which then curled around the nails punched through them on the cross. And His hands which then rose from the dead and were lifted in blessing as He ascended into heaven.

Yes, David is wicked and sinful and deserves nothing from the Lord. But in repentance and faith he clings to the word and promises of God, that he has a Saviour whose hands would do this for him for the forgiveness of his sins. And by grace through faith, he receives the promised forgiveness. For that's what the Temple is there for: forgiveness.

And that's what your church is there for: *forgiveness*! That you who have sinned have hope. That you not be dragged off with the wicked, but saved. That you can, with David, both recognize your sin and then rejoice in the grace and goodness of the Lord. **Blessed be the Lord!** David then cries out. **For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy**. He has not only heard, but

has done it. Forgiveness. New life. Hope. David's **heart** now **exults**, and, he says, **with my song I give thanks to him.** He is different man in the second part of this psalm!

So now you, too. You go to church. You pray. What do you pray for? Forgiveness. And the Lord hears your prayer. He forgives. Go, you are free! Free to live confidently in His love. Free to live securely, knowing that come what may, you are safe in Him. Free to live no longer controlled by your sin, but now as a child of God, serving others as Christ has served you. That's what the church is for: forgiveness. Freedom. Life. And so you are a new man, a new woman. New in Christ, your Good Shepherd, who cares for you now, and will care for you forever.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your hands which did so much for us. Forgive me for all the times my hands and feet, my mind and tongue and heart, have done wicked and evil. Help me to pray and know that You hear my prayer and that Your forgiveness is greater than all my sin. Help me to believe and to rejoice in the forgiveness You give, that with my song and my life and deeds, I give thanks to You, My Good Shepherd. Amen.