

## ***A Prayer I Cannot Pray***

Psalm 7

**O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge;**  
**save me from all my pursuers and deliver me,**  
lest like a lion they tear my soul apart,  
rending it in pieces, with none to deliver.

O Lord my God, if I have done this,  
if there is wrong in my hands,  
if I have repaid my friend with evil  
or plundered my enemy without cause,  
let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it,  
**and let him trample my life to the ground**  
**and lay my glory in the dust.**      *Selah*

Arise, O Lord, in your anger;  
lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies;  
awake for me; you have appointed a judgment.  
Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you;  
over it return on high.

**The Lord judges the peoples;**  
**judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness**  
and according to the integrity that is in me.  
Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end,  
and may you establish the righteous-  
you who test the minds and hearts,  
O righteous God!  
My shield is with God,  
who saves the upright in heart.  
God is a righteous judge,  
and a God who feels indignation every day.

If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword;  
he has bent and readied his bow;  
he has prepared for him his deadly weapons,  
making his arrows fiery shafts.  
Behold, the wicked man conceives evil  
and is pregnant with mischief  
and gives birth to lies.  
He makes a pit, digging it out,  
and falls into the hole that he has made.  
His mischief returns upon his own head,  
and on his own skull his violence descends.

**I will give to the Lord the thanks  
due to his righteousness,  
and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord,  
the Most High.**

Is there a prayer you cannot pray?

For me, this psalm is a prayer I cannot pray. The psalms are the prayerbook of the Bible, yet how can I say these words: *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness?* For I know my righteousness. Or better to say, I know my unrighteousness. I know I am not righteous. I know I am a sinner. And not a small one.

But there is one person who could pray this psalm: Jesus. He is the one who did no wrong and was completely righteous. And yet Jesus is the one who had *his life trampled to the ground* and *his glory laid in the dust* on the cross. But that wasn't what He deserved - that was my trampling He took, and the dust that I deserved to return to (Genesis 3:19).

That's why this psalm begins with these words:

*O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge;  
save me from all my pursuers and deliver me.*

That's exactly what Jesus, the righteous one, did! He saved me, and so He is my refuge.

Picture it like this: If I was holed up in a fortress, then all the bombs, bullets, arrows, and whatever else was hurled against me would be taken by the fortress. And I would be safe inside. Jesus took everything my sins deserve on the cross - wrath, punishment, shame, death - and I am safe in Him.

So when I repent, what I am really doing is taking refuge in Jesus! I am admitting that I am guilty and sinful, but letting Him take all the wrath for me. And He loves to! He loves to say: Come, hide here! Hide in me! I will take the punishment. You are safe in me. You are forgiven in me.

I could try to make it on my own, outside of Jesus, but how foolish would that be? I think instead I'll repent and let Jesus be my refuge, my forgiveness, and my Saviour.

And then I'll pray with the psalmist the words with which he concludes:

*I will give to the Lord the thanks  
due to his righteousness,  
and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord,  
the Most High.*

Yes, thanks be to Jesus, my refuge and Saviour.

*Dear Jesus, my sins are great but Your love for me is even greater. The punishment and wrath I deserve is great, but Your forgiveness is even greater. Thank you for taking all that I deserve on the cross, and letting me hide safe and sound in You, that I may live and not die, and live with You forever. Amen.*