

“A Prayer for Deliverance”
Psalm 140
(Preached at Trinity, November 17, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As I've pointed out **Psalms 138-145** are a series of eight psalms of David. Beginning with **Psalm 140** we find the first of four psalms that are the prayers of David:
Psalm 140:1 KJV - "Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man"
Psalm 141:1 KJV - "LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee"
Psalm 142:1 KJV - "I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication."
Psalm 143:1 KJV - "Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications"
2. We can learn much on the subject of prayer as we read these psalms. In **Psalm 140** we hear the cry of a Godly man crying out for God's deliverance from his enemies. But he is very wise and honest as he evaluates their hearts.
Matthew 10:16 KJV - "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."
Spurgeon titles it, "The Cry of the Hunted Soul."
Derek Kidner simply titles it, "Poison." He says the Psalter is a major witness to human depravity. "It exposes this element in us of sheer malice, a poison which can be secreted and employed not only without provocation but even in the face of generosity and love" (*Tyndale OT Commentary*, pg. 504.)
3. Our enemies in this fallen world know no bounds.
 - A. Sometimes it is personal. We become the objects of direct malice by someone seeking our harm. Perhaps it is due to jealousy or envy or simply a competitive spirit that seeks our defeat. Perhaps it is persecution due to our faith.
 - B. Sometimes it is impersonal. The victims of the Boston bombing or those of 9/11 were completely unknown to their enemies. Such attacks are continually in the planning stages. Our enemies are great in number.
 - C. We must never dismiss our spiritual warfare. Unseen forces are seeking to crush us.
Ephesians 6:12-13 KJV - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."
4. But the focus of this psalm is not upon spiritual enemies but upon evil men.
Verse 1 uses two very common and very familiar Hebrew words:
Evil רָע - 663 times. Man אָדָם - 552 times
5. We'll see that David divides his prayer into three segments
 - I. David lays his situation before God – **Verses 1-5**
 - II. David bold prayer for deliverance – **Verses 6-11**

- III. David's expectation of God's blessings – **Verses 12-13**
6. This can serve as a model for our own prayers. David briefly describes his situation, prays for God's intervention, and expresses his confidence in God's blessings.
- A. Too often Christians pray as if by our wordiness God will be persuaded to hear us. **Matthew 6:7 NAU** - "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words."
 - B. We should note that the Lord's Prayer contains just 52 words.
 - C. God knows our need before we pray. We are not praying to inform Him. God is willing and quick to hear the prayers of His people.
- I. David lays his situation before God – **Verses 1-5**
- A. **Verse 1** sets the tone – "Deliver me, O LORD"
 1. The word "man" appears twice in **Verse 1**
 - a. אָדָם which refers to man in general, even mankind – he is simply describing the universal sinfulness of the human heart.
 - b. אֲנָשִׁים which refers to man as opposed to women or boys – he has in mind specific men.
 2. By praying for God's deliverance from man using אָדָם David is expressing the condition of humanity.
As David and his small band were hiding it would seem that the whole world was against them and all had evil intents.
 3. All of humanity is infected by sin
Paul described our universal condition:
Romans 3:10-18 KJV - "There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³ Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: ¹⁴ Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵ Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: ¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: ⁷ And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes."
 4. But David has specific men in mind, violent men
 - B. David's words are consistent with the words of Paul
 1. **Verse 2** – They have evil hearts - "Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart" – The word for "mischiefs" is the same word translated "evil" in **Verse 1**.
The problem with lost humanity is a heart problem
Matthew 12:34-35 KJV - "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. ³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
 2. **Verse 2** – They use their tongues like weapons.
Psalms 140:3 KJV - "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent"

- a. Our words flow forth from our heart. Our words are evil because our hearts are evil.
- b. Jesus described it
Matthew 15:18-19 KJV - "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. ¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"
- 3. He uses other words to describe them
Verse 4 – He calls them wicked and violent
Verse 5 – He refers to them as “the proud” – one of the chief characteristics of our wicked heart.
- C. In **Verses 4-5** David describes their evil design
 - 1. **Verse 4** - "who have purposed to overthrow my goings."
They were laboring to make him stumble
 - 2. **Verse 5** – "hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside"
Their plans are purposed and premeditated.
 - 3. The wicked of this world devour one another. They trample upon each other, each trying to ascend to the top. It carries many different titles: murder, robbery, cheating, lying, adultery, and on and on.
This is the world in which we live.

II. David bold prayer for deliverance – **Verses 6-11**

- A. David begins his prayer by expressing his covenant relationship with God
Psalms 140:6 KJV - "Thou *art* my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD."
 - 1. "Thou *art* my God"
 - a. David expresses relationship – “my God”
 - b. We are God’s people and He is our God. The God who owns all things and govern all things allows us to take possession of Him. He says, “I will be their God.”
 - c. In addition, we can call God Father through the redemption purchased by Christ. We are adopted sons, heirs and joint-heirs with Christ.
 - 2. “hear the voice of my supplications”
 - a. David calls upon his covenant God to hear
 - b. This is one of the blessings of the New Covenant
Isaiah described it:
Isaiah 65:24 NAS - "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."
 - 3. **Verse 6** - “O LORD”
 - a. This describes the transcendence of God, the great I AM. David was not praying in an over familiar way.
 - b. We have a relationship with Jehovah God.

4. In **Verse 7** raises the height of his confidence. Literally he cries out, "Jehovah Lord" – KJV & NASB – "God the Lord." Septuagint – "κύριε κύριε" – vocative – "Lord, Lord," the strength of my salvation.
- B. David's petition against the wicked
1. That God would frustrate their evil designs – **Verse 8**
"Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked"
 - a. There is a recognition of God's infinite sovereignty over all things
Even the success of the wicked is under the sovereign hand of God
 - b. David is praying that God would be against them
1 Peter 5:5-6 KJV - "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. ⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time"
 2. The sin of the wicked is pride – their downfall is that they be humiliated
"lest they exalt themselves."
- C. David's prayer turns imprecatory
1. **Verse 9** – David prays that the evil designs of the wicked turn back upon their own heads. That their own words be used against them.
"let the mischief of their own lips cover them."
 2. **Verse 10** – David prayed God's vengeance upon their heads
"Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again."
 - a. We see this in **Romans 12**
Romans 12:19-20 KJV - "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."
 - b. This is a perfect follow-up to the previous psalm:
Psalms 139:21-22 KJV - "Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? ²² I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies."
 - c. David's enemies were the enemies of God.
As children of the Kingdom we must love our enemies and leave vengeance to God.
But this doesn't mean we don't hate evil and those who rise up against God.
 3. David as King always sought justice
 - a. Most of David's enemies died before his eyes. Saul died, even his own son Absalom died.
 - b. Before David's death he gave instructions to Solomon regarding those remaining whose lives had been treacherous towards David.
Joab
1 Kings 2:5 KJV - "thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether"

1 Kings 2:6 NAU - "So act according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to Sheol in peace."

Shimei

1 Kings 2:8 KJV - "And, behold, *thou hast* with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim"

1 Kings 2:9 NAU - "Now therefore, do not let him go unpunished, for you are a wise man; and you will know what you ought to do to him, and you will bring his gray hair down to Sheol with blood."

III. David's expectation of God's blessings – **Verses 12-13**

A. In this final section of David's prayer we find the warm confidence of a child of God.

Verse 12 - "I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted"

1. The word for "cause" is a legal term pointing to justice.
The word for "right" is **צָדִיק** also pointing to justice (over 400 times)
2. God is always a just God and His justice will surely prevail in the end. All injustice will be made right. All of the afflicted will be vindicated.
Romans 12:19 KJV - "Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."
3. The Book of Revelation portrays the martyrs crying out for justice
Revelation 6:9-11 KJV - "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? ¹¹ And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."
4. **Psalm 2** portrays all of the kings of the earth seeking to overturn the reign of God—but God will have the last word.
Psalm 2:1-5 KJV - "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, ³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. ⁴ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. ⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

B. Our duty is to rest content with confidence that God will prevail

Psalm 140:13 KJV - "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence."

1. Our lips shall eternally be filled with praise and thanksgiving.
2. We shall dwell eternally with Him
Psalm 23:6 - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

Conclusion:

1. This world is filled with strife and hatred. We face enemies of many different types. But God reigns over all. He will prevail over all who are opposed to his perfect holiness.
2. We find perfect peace in prayer.
 - a. William Plumer – “Good men live by prayer. He who gets to the throne of grace is covered by the cloud of glory.”
 - b. And they will cover their prayer with thanksgiving.
3. For those who know Him and follow Him His sweet comforts are always found sufficient. He will always come to our defense.

Hebrews 13:5-6 KJV - "for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

⁶ So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."