

God Is Our Refuge: Powerful Practical Prayers for Times like These The Psalms: The Prayers of Christ Psalm 22 (selected verses)

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Intro.

Without actually saying it in so many words, the federal government has declared war on Bible-believing Christians in Canada. Last week I mentioned that back in June of this year the Federal government passed Bill C-16. Since then I understand it has received royal assent, which makes it law, and which also means that Canadians who deny gender theory, that is those of us who insist on teaching that God made mankind male and female, could eventually be charged with hate crimes. If found guilty we could be fined, jailed, and compelled to undergo anti-bias training.¹

As you know, almost no government goes to war alone. It always seeks allies. In the same way our Federal government's war against the faithful is supported by several provincial governments (Ontario and Alberta are particular standouts). In addition the war is supported by an untold number of academic institutions, the provincial and federal court systems, and various professional societies, including several law societies and medical colleges. If you look in your bulletin you will see that we are re-running the prayer request from Trinity Western University as it fights for religious freedom before the Supreme Court of Canada at the end of this month. I hope you will read that page carefully and pray fervently for TWU's success.

Here's why this matters. Just yesterday TWU put out a statement on Facebook that reads as follows: "The Law Society of Upper Canada (Ontario) now says that it must reject Trinity Western not just because of Trinity's position on marriage, but also because of our 'distinctly Christian' environment. In its written argument filed with the Supreme Court of Canada, the Law Society highlighted every part of the Community Covenant it found discriminatory. The first two highlighted words were 'Jesus Christ.' It has become apparent that along with the Christian virtues that we commit to practice, *the law societies wish to prohibit the very faith that distinguishes this University.*"

I say again, we are at war. Our enemies' weapons are a combination of manufactured public opinion and unlawful laws applied unlawfully.² Our weapons, on the other hand, are prayer and confession. That is, we must do what we can in the world (use the courts, etc.), but mostly we are

¹For more on Bill C-16 go to Lifesite News and search the site, or else type the following into your search bar: <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/breaking-canada-passes-radical-law-forcing-gender-theory-acceptance>.

²Unlawful law: any law not demonstrably based upon the Ten Commandments, but especially any law that directly contradicts one of God's commands. By passing laws that attack the Christian faith, Canada's governments are guilty of breaking the first commandment.

asked to look to God for our protection, and then, having prayed, to take our stand, confessing His truth and declaring our commitment to live by God's truth, at any cost.³ But this raises the question of . . .

How to pray

We need to recognize that in the Bible God has given us examples of the prayers we should pray when faced with implacable spiritual enemies. These prayers are called the Imprecatory Psalms, because they do, in fact, call upon God to act, to invoke judgment, to bring down calamity and to curse His enemies. But these Psalms are not primarily used by Christians to ask God to defend our rights and privileges. Rather, we are asking God to destroy the world's confidence in false gods, to demonstrate His righteousness before the world, to defend His glory, and to call erring sinners to repentance, to faith, and finally to the freedom and joy that are only available to those who know the Lord!

Examples of Imprecatory Psalms

Here is a selection from Psalm 5:8ff. In this Psalm David speaks of God as the refuge of the righteous. This Psalm is not usually listed as one of the imprecatory Psalms, but I include it because I want you to see that it contains imprecatory passages. There are literally dozens of examples of Psalms, not primarily imprecatory, yet containing very strong, no-holds-barred imprecations.

Psalm 5:8 Lord, lead me in Your righteousness because of my adversaries; make Your way straight before me. 9 For there is nothing reliable in what they say; destruction is within them; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongues. 10 Punish them, God; let them fall by their own schemes. Drive them out because of their many crimes, for they rebel against You.

Let's look at another Davidic psalm. I include this one because it is one of the psalms most often cited as imprecatory. David is supposedly the speaker, but as I read, you should decide for yourself who the speaker really is.

Psalm 69:19 You know the insults I endure—my shame and disgrace. You are aware of all my adversaries. 20 Insults have broken my heart, and I am in despair. I waited for sympathy, but there was none; for comforters, but found no one. 21 Instead, they gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink (Who is the "me"? See Matt. 27:34).

With Jesus in mind, listen to the very next verses. Psalm 69:22 Let their table set before them be a snare, and let it be a trap for their allies. 23 Let their eyes grow too dim to see, and let their loins continually shake. 24 Pour out Your rage on them, and let Your burning anger overtake them. 25 Make their fortification desolate; may no one live in their tents. 26 For they persecute the one You struck and talk about the pain of those You wounded. 27 Add guilt to their guilt; do not let them share in Your righteousness. 28 Let them be erased from the book of life and not be recorded with the righteous.

³Think of the actions of Daniel and his three friends in the O.T. and all the saints in the book of Acts.

Who speaks in the Psalms?

Let's take Psalm 22 as our guide. It is listed as a Davidic psalm, and there is no doubt he wrote it down. But equally, there is no doubt that the words belong to Christ. This is exactly what we already found in Psalm 69, and it should be a huge hint toward understanding who is the primary prayer/composer throughout the Psalms.

Psalm 22

1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? (Matt. 27:46, Mark 15:34) Why are You so far from my deliverance and from my words of groaning?

6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by people. (See the choice of Barabbas over Jesus, Matt. 27:20-23) 7 Everyone who sees me mocks me; they sneer and shake their heads: (Luke 23:35-39) 8 "He relies on the Lord; let Him rescue him; let the Lord deliver him, since He takes pleasure in him." (Luke 23:35)

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are disjointed; my heart is like wax, melting within me. 15 My strength is dried up like baked clay; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You put me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded me; a gang of evildoers has closed in on me; *they pierced my hands and my feet.* 17 I can count all my bones; people look and stare at me. 18 *They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing.* (Reported by all four gospels, and John quotes this passage in John 19:23-24)

22 I will proclaim Your name to my brothers; I will praise You in the congregation. (Applied as a quote from Christ in Heb. 2:12)

The Psalms are Christ's inspired words

"In the Psalms of David the promised Christ himself already speaks (Hebrews 2:12; 10:5) or, as may also be indicated, the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 3:7). These same words which David spoke, therefore, *the future Messiah spoke through him.* The prayers of David were prayed also by Christ. Or better, *Christ himself prayed them through his forerunner David* (Italics added)." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*

Who speaks in the Psalms? (Logical answer)

1. Many of the Psalms are too righteous to be spoken by any man. Who among us would dare to pray like this?

Psalm 18:20 The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; He repaid me according to the cleanness of my hands. 21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not turned from my God to wickedness. 22 Indeed, I have kept all His ordinances in mind and have not disregarded His statutes. 23 I was blameless toward Him and kept myself from sinning.

2. Many of the Psalms are too full of judgment to be appropriate in man's mouth.

Psalm 109:6 Set a wicked person over him; let an accuser stand at his right hand. 7 When he is judged, let him be found guilty, and let his prayer be counted as sin. 8 Let his days be few; let

another take over his position. (Applied to Judas in Acts 1:20) 9 Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. 10 Let his children wander as beggars, searching for food far from their demolished homes. 11 Let a creditor seize all he has; let strangers plunder what he has worked for.

3. Among all the human beings who ever lived, who is the only person qualified to speak of his own personal righteousness as though it had some merit before God? And Who, then, is capable of praying the words of Psalm 109 without being accused of being unduly judgmental or mean-spirited.

There is only one answer, the God-man Christ Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin. The One who was “tempted at all points just as we are, yet without sin”, He Who took our sins upon Himself, Who died in our place on the cross, and Who rose again as our justification before God! He who before His face heaven and earth flee away, Who will someday take His seat on the Great White Throne of judgment and hurl death and Hades into the lake of fire, along with all whose names are not found in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 20:11-15).

Jesus’ use of the Psalms

The Jews used the Psalter as their prayer book in the Synagogues and in the temple festivals. Jesus and His disciples, like all the Jews, sang from the Psalter on the night of the Last Supper (Matt. 26:30, Pss 113-118).

But Jesus used the Psalms as something more than a hymn book or a prayer book. *They were for Him the pre-written script of His life.*

Jesus quoted the Psalms on the cross

We’ve already seen how from the cross Jesus quoted from Psalm 22 and others. But it isn’t so obvious from most translations that even Jesus’ great word of triumph, “It is finished!” is also a quote from Psalm 22.

Psalm 22:31 They will tell people yet to be born about his righteousness—that he has finished it. (God’s Word Translation, Compare to John 19:30, “It is finished.”)

Jesus quoted the Psalms throughout His life

John 15:25 “They hated me without a reason.” (From Psalm 35:19 and 69:4)

Matt. 21:9 Then the crowds who went ahead of Him and those who followed kept shouting: Hosanna to the Son of David! He who comes in the name of the Lord is the blessed One! Hosanna in the highest heaven! (Compare to Psalm 118:26)

John 13:18 I’m not speaking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: The one who eats My bread has raised his heel against Me. (Compare to Ps. 41:9)

Application

1. All the Psalms are the prayers of Jesus, thus the imprecatory Psalms are “words of the anointed of God, the Christ, who is our Prophet, Priest, and King.”⁴ (See all three titles mentioned in Ps. 110) That means the Imprecatory Psalms are examples of prayer for New Testament Christians. They are given to guide us as we pray against modern enemies of the cross.
2. When we pray these kinds of prayers and apply them to Christ’s present enemies, the Holy Spirit of God will use them to strike terror in their hearts. They know that Christ’s prayers will be answered. At some point God’s wrath will be revealed upon all who oppose the reign of His Son.
3. We must always pray that God’s enemies will be converted, that they turn in repentance to Christ. But we must also pray that those who oppose God never be allowed to forget that he has promised wrath to those who insist on opposing the reign of His Son.

So let us pray!

1. Pray that God will cause the defeat of government officials who use the force of law to teach sexual perversion to the children of Alberta.
2. Pray that God will expose the lies of the false philosophies invented in our universities and promoted by our media and entertainment industry.
3. Pray that God will give courage and a voice to those who defend righteousness in the public square: politicians, lawyers, pastors, school principles and teachers, ordinary people.
4. Pray that God will grant Canadian parents the conviction to model Christian holiness and teach their children true righteousness, that each Christian home will be a beacon of light in a dark world.

⁴James E. Adams, *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace*, page 33.