



Sermon Notes from 29 March

The Cry for Mercy (*Psalms 143*)

by Pastor Johanan Justin

God is behind every time and season (Eccles. 3:1-8). It is at such a time as this that God is calling us to pray. Prayer is fundamentally a cry for mercy. Mercy is seeking God's favour by appealing to His pity. Psalm 143 is first and foremost, a prayer (v1).

How is God teaching Us to Pray
[5 Dimensions]

1. Honesty: Prayer is founded on Good News (vv1-4)

In honesty, David remained aware of his sinfulness and God's holiness. David called upon God using his covenantal name – *Yahweh* (v1) to come down to his level (v2). David could make such a request because he understood that relationship comes before obedience. As Christians, we are in relationship with God. This relationship is not just personal, but communal. It is in community where we find stories that fuel faith and leads us to prayer. We are a covenant people in covenant with *Yahweh*, the covenantal God. In covenant, everything is built on relationship.

vv2-4 – David, though a sinner, was able to pour his heart out to God because he knew that he was accepted by a covenantal God. Confidence and humility can only come together at the cross (Heb. 4:16) through which we were reconciled to God. That is how we can approach God as *Abba Father*.

2. Remembrance: Prayer requires Divine Assistance (vv5-6)

v5 – David rejuvenates his soul by remembering what God had done for him personally and throughout history. He was preaching the Gospel to himself. David found the strength to do so because He was not alone, he had divine assistance from God. God is forever with us; Christ is always praying for us (Heb. 7:25). Prayer is not only our way of asking

for help, prayer is God's way of telling us we are being helped. David, with the strength that God provides, responds by preaching to himself (v6). His theology propelled him to seek God to quench his thirst. Even in our sinfulness, Jesus prays for us to be faithful and united with each other and perfectly with God (John 17:11b,15,22b-23). Jesus lives to intercede for us!

3. Desperation: Prayer is Warfare (v7)

Despite the situation not improving and getting worst, David still prayed because prayer is warfare (v7). Prayer is wrestling with our sinful fleshly self and against the forces of evil. Prayer is how we declare our dependence on God alone. Prayer is simply our truest expression of faith in God. All prayer – even pathetic prayer – is warfare.

4. Assertion: Prayer is wrestling with God's Goodness (vv8-11)

David was awakened to His covenantal relationship with God. Every statement he made was an assertion of God's goodness - he acknowledged God's covenantal love towards His people (v8), God as *Yahweh* his refuge (v9), God as his righteous judge (v10), and God as the righteous One that only does what is right (v11). Being in covenant with God means being in a privileged position before God. David was not struggling with God's sovereignty, but His goodness. We are God's covenant people; the bride of Christ! Ask boldly – He is our beloved!

5. Submission: Prayer is resting in God (v12)

There is only one way that sickness, suffering, sorrow and death can come to an end: when Jesus returns. Pray with the end close to heart. Let the full cry for mercy come forth through our prayers!