



EVERYDAY
PRAYER

with

JOHN CALVIN



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ANXIETY LEADS US TO PRAY

Psalm 130

THE author of Psalm 130 expresses a deep desire to be redeemed by God. This profound longing deals with the deepest realities that we know in life: our need for God to hear our prayer, for our sin to be forgiven, and for hope to be established.

In the face of these yearnings, the psalmist does the only thing he can do—he prays. “Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!” (vv. 1–2). God’s saints, said Calvin, experience “huge torments,” and so they call on God. As he went on to say, “Great anxiety should kindle in us the desire to pray.”

Prayer invokes God; it seeks God’s help regarding the deep things of life. When faced with the need for salvation, for sin to be pardoned, and for a confident expectation of experiencing God’s steadfast love and redemption (see vv. 7–8), the psalmist prays—and so do we.

We pray in the midst of life’s grimmest circumstances. When there is nowhere else to turn, when we need help in order to do what we cannot do for ourselves, we pray. When we wait and watch for the Lord (see vv. 5–6), we pray. Anxiety leads us to pray.

As was the case for the psalmist, when we pray, we find that our hope is kindled. This hope rests in who God is—the God of steadfast love—and in his “great power to redeem” (v. 7). Our anxieties are met by the God who redeems us and gives us hope in Jesus Christ!

REFLECTION QUESTION: Recall the times when you were most anxious. For what did you pray?

IN ADVERSITY, PRAY!

Psalm 143

ADVERSITIES come to us. We experience them in many ways, often without knowing why they come upon us. But they do. And, no matter the nature of the adversities, we need to face them.

The best way for us to face adversity is to pray. When the psalmist was in a desperate situation before his enemies, he was confronting severe adversity. So he prayed, “Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness; answer me in your righteousness. Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you” (Ps. 143:1–2). He knew that his only help lay in praying to God. He asked God to hear and help him, not to judge him. He prayed for forgiveness and pardon.

Calvin commented, “When overtaken by adversity, we are ever to conclude that it is a rod of correction sent by God to stir us up to pray. Although he is far from taking pleasure in our trials, it is certain that our sins are the cause of his dealing towards us with this severity. . . . We must pray for the pardon of our sins.”

Whether we think that our adversities arise from our specific actions or not, we are sinful people who need God’s forgiveness and pardon—especially when we face great challenges. We have to move through our adversities. But first we must make sure that our relationship with God is not marred by sin. And so we pray for pardon.

We are not exempt from adversities. But we need to face them in a state of being forgiven by God!

PRAYER POINT: Spend time in prayer, confessing your sins and asking God’s pardon.



GRANT, Almighty God, since thou settest before us so clear a mirror of thy wonderful providence and of thy judgments on thine ancient people, that we may also be surely persuaded of our being under thy hand and protection:— Grant, that relying on thee, we may hope for thy guardianship, whatever may happen, since thou never lovest sight of our safety, so that we may invoke thee with a secure and tranquil mind. May we so fearlessly wait for all dangers amidst all the changes of this world, that we may stand upon the foundation of thy word which never can fail; and leaning on thy promises may we repose on Christ, to whom thou hast committed us, and whom thou hast made the shepherd of all thy flock. Grant that he may be so careful of us as to lead us through this course of warfare, however troublesome and turbulent it may prove, until we arrive at that heavenly rest which he has purchased for us by his own blood.—Amen.

