

A Plea for Relief Part 2

by Chuck Smith

David's prayer in the cave teaches us that prayer is about sharing our heart and troubles with God, and trusting in His provision and care.

Duration: 25:04

Scripture: Psalm 55:22, Psalm 142:1, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:16, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Relief"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of prayer and pouring out one's heart to God. He encourages believers to be honest and open with the Lord, sharing their troubles, fears, and anxieties. He highlights the significance of seeking relief and comfort from the Spirit of God through prayer. Pastor Chuck also mentions the availability of his Old and New Testament Study Guides, which provide helpful insights and understanding of Scripture.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole
And now, with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck. This was, again, one of those times in David's life when he was facing great distress. Saul was pursuing him, bent upon killing him, and David was fleeing for his life.

And there were those who were against David, Doeg, who informed Saul of how the priest had helped David when he was in need. The Ziphites came to Saul and said, well, David is down here in the wilderness. And thus, David was faced with those enemies who were informing Saul of his moves and David really was despairing of his life.

He said, I know one day Saul's going to kill me. He had really just figured he had run as far as he could, but ultimately you can't escape forever, was David's feeling. And I know one day he's going to get me, he's going to kill me.

But as he was fleeing from Saul, he would hide in the caves that were down in that wilderness area. When you go down into the area of the Dead Sea, all along the Dead Sea there are high cliffs and there are multitudes of caves in these cliffs. If you're driving along the shoreline of the Dead Sea, looking up, you can see so many caves up there in the cliffs.

And thus, they were a place of shelter and they were also a place in which one could hide. And so David hid in the cave and it is thought that this was the cave of Abdullam that you'll read about as David was fleeing from Saul and hiding in the cave. So the psalm is entitled, A Mosquel of David, a prayer of David when he was in the cave.

It's instructions of David, a prayer offered when he was in the cave. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. In the Hebrew it is, I cried aloud unto the Lord with my voice.

With my voice did I make my supplication. Now, there are some people who when they pray, pray rather loudly. As though God was hard of hearing.

There are others when they pray, they pray very soft. So that it is hard to agree with them in prayer because you don't know what they're saying. They might be praying that God will wipe you out.

You might be saying amen and you can't hear them, you know. So it's hard to say yes and amen. There are other times when it is just a prayer that arises from our hearts to the Lord.

Now, the volume has nothing to do as far as God hearing and answering my prayer. Many times it has a lot to do with me. When I am really desperate, I'm excited, things are really in a desperate condition.

Sometimes in my emotion and desperation I get a little louder. But not for God's benefit, it's always for my benefit. There are many times when my prayer is not even uttered as far as verbalized or it's just in my mind, in my heart.

I just offer up a prayer unto the Lord. David is in the cave and he's crying out to the Lord, making his supplication, his request. I poured out my complaint before him and I showed before him my trouble.

Now again, we oftentimes look at prayer as sharing time, information time. I spell out my problem to the Lord. I articulate my difficulties as though God didn't know.

And again, it's really not for God's benefit that I articulate the situation. It's my benefit. You know, it's amazing how when you articulate something, it becomes so much clearer to you.

You begin to see things more clearly when you articulate them. And so the purpose of articulating to God your trouble isn't that God might know the trouble you're in, because God knows all about you. He knows every problem you're facing.

He knows all about the difficulty, and thus it really isn't for God's benefit that I articulate my problem. It's for my benefit so that I can really come to a better understanding of just what I am facing, and sometimes it gets rather terrifying when you begin to articulate. I didn't realize it was that bad.

This is desperate. What are we going to do, Lord? So I poured out my complaint. I just opened up my heart.

I just shared, and this is what prayer is all about. It's just sharing your heart with God. It's being brutally honest with the Lord.

It's just opening up your heart and just sharing those things that are troubling you, the problems that you're facing, the doubts that you have, the difficulties that are facing you, and it's just opening your heart and

just bearing your heart to the Lord, your fears, your anxieties, your concerns, just pouring out your complaint and telling Him your troubles. When my spirit was overwhelmed, now David speaks about this in Psalm 143, his spirit being overwhelmed. These are those times in life when it's more than you can handle.

You've done your best, and it's not good enough. You're still short. It's still not happening, and so my spirit becomes overwhelmed.

When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then, Lord, you knew my path. I told you my troubles, but, Lord, you knew all about it. In the way wherein I walked, have they privately laid a snare for me.

He's talking now about probably the Ziphites who had just reported to Saul, David is down here in the wilderness of Ziph, and they were laying a trap for David, trying to catch him. I looked on my right hand, and, beheld, there was no man that would help me. Refuge failed me, and no man really cared for my soul.

David felt very much alone in this. He did have 400 men who were outlaws, guys that were running from the law, and they gathered around David, just a ragtag band of fellows. Saul had thousands of those with him from Israel.

People will go with the winner as a rule, and it looked like there was no way David could win, and so in order to gain Saul's favor, they were turning against David, and he felt that. He felt very alone. He felt that there was no one that was really taking his part.

These guys that were with him were just there because they were in trouble, and they were escaping from the law themselves, and David didn't really have that much confidence in them. Refuge failed me. No man cared for my soul.

And so I cried unto thee, O Lord. I said, You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. No help from man.

So I looked to the Lord. No refuge in man. They're trying to lay a trap for me.

They say, Oh, come on in. We'll protect you, David. And then they say, Send to Saul.

Saul had a reward out on David's head, so they were all trying to get it. So they're trying to lay the traps, and no place to hide, no refuge. But Lord, You are my refuge.

Attendant to my cry, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I. And so David's prayer, his cry to the Lord, he was down at the bottom. But he's praying that God will deliver him because he realized that the forces that he faced were stronger than he was.

David in another psalm said, When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. How wonderful it is when faced with situations that we're not able to handle. How wonderful it is to be able to just cry out to the Lord and know that He is able to bring me victory over forces and powers that are greater than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name. The righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me.

Now, notice how that David had prayed and he was still in the cave and Saul was still after him. But yet, having prayed, he now has that confidence that God is going to answer. And so often, we are encouraged

and strengthened through prayer.

There are so many times when I am faced with desperate situations and my heart is in turmoil, my spirit is overwhelmed. And I take it to the Lord in prayer and I articulate to the Lord the problems that I'm facing, the things that I'm disturbed about. And as I lay them out before the Lord, even as I am praying, the Spirit of God ministers to me, so that by the time I'm through with my prayer, I have victory.

God's going to take care of it. I just have that assurance that the Lord's going to work it out. And the fears are gone, the anxiety is gone.

I end up my prayers just rejoicing, because even in prayer, I experience that assurance of God's help and God's victory. Several years ago, when we had built the little church on the next corner, and it proved to be entirely inadequate for what God was wanting to do. We were setting up the chairs in the patio and the place was just packed and people were parked clear back to the freeway and God was just working in such a marvelous way.

And we knew that winter was coming and we were going to have to get larger facilities. It was at that time that it was suggested that this 10 acres here was for sale. And it's hard to buy expensive property with the offerings that hippies can give.

And a fellow in our church, Ed Riddle, who was on the church board and a realtor here, he and a group of fellows had purchased this 10 acres, and they had planned to turn it, they purchased it for \$356,000, and they had planned to just turn the thing. And Ed said to me, you know, I think the church ought to have that property. Well, you know, almost a half a million dollars, and by the time you put in the street improvements, it would be over a half a million.

And, you know, I just thought, there's no way, you know, you can do that. It would be nice, of course, but, you know, it's such a big piece of property, too. Who would need 10 acres? And so I just would smile and say, yeah, that would be nice, wouldn't it? But I didn't do anything.

And so Ed said, you know, I really believe the Lord wants us to have that. And I said, well, Ed, you know, you realtors with all your money can't buy it. How in the world can the church buy it, you know? Well, he said, I just feel somehow that the Lord had us tie that up just so he could have it for the church.

And if the church had it, then I don't mind losing the money I've got in it. You know, I just say, well, praise the Lord. You know, the Lord got it, and we just held it for the Lord's purposes.

So our need was getting desperate. More and more people were coming. And so one of the fellows said, Chuck, I think that the lady would take \$300,000 for that property because she is desperate.

They've been paying the taxes. She doesn't have any money. And I really think that she would accept a \$300,000 cash offer on that property.

And I said, there's no way she would accept \$300,000. No way. You know, that's valuable property.

He says, well, he said, would you give me the permission to offer her \$300,000 cash in the name of the church? I said, why, sure, why not, you know? And so he called me up, and he said, she's accepted the offer. I said, great. Now what have you done? You know, where are we going to get \$300,000? So he said, well, it's such a valuable piece of property.

He said, he was on the church board at the time. He said, we have \$60,000 in the bank. I'll loan you \$90,000 interest-free for a year.

That's half of it, and I'm sure the savings and loan will give you half of it on just a land loan for two years. So we went to the savings and loan, and they said, sure. They'd go in interest only for two years.

Then the balloon at the end of the two years, and he loaned us the \$90,000. We put in our \$60,000, and we bought it. But then you've got all of the money to put in the parking lot, put in the street improvements, sidewalks, and the whole thing.

So I would be going home, and I would drive up to the signal over there waiting for the left arrow turn, and I'd look over and see this huge field. And I would think, what's wrong with you, Smith? You've got a growing church, but you don't know how long it's going to last. And you've got money in the bank, and you're obligating those people.

That's going to cost well over a million dollars to get developed and all over there. What are you doing to those people? What if you bankrupt the church? What if you get over your head and you can't pay the bills? What are you going to do then? Great thing. You sell the church out from under the people, and then you go bankrupt, and they have no place to go, and then you're going to look great.

I'd already sold one church out from under this congregation. And we thought we had a deal on some property. The city fathers in Costa Mesa said, yeah, it looks good, or the planning department did, at our plan.

And so we were all excited, and we put the church up for sale, and it sold the first week. And then the city fathers turned us down on the place we wanted to build. And so here we were facing having to turn the thing over at the close of escrow, and we had no place to go.

And I thought, oh, man, they're going to wonder who they got here as a pastor. Sell the church right out from underneath them, and now no place to meet and all. But God took care of that.

But now we've got a thousand people or so, and selling the church out from under the people, and all you've got is a big old vacant lot over here. What are you going to do? What if you can't make the payments? What if, you know, what if, what if, what if? And I would be so worked up. I'd be so worried just sitting there at the corner waiting for the green arrow.

I did a lot of sweating over there on that corner. Your hands get sweaty and all and clammy, and you're like, what if things go bankrupt? What will you do? How are you going to face the people? And the Lord would speak to me and say, whose church is it? And I said, well, it's your church, Lord. He said, why are you worried about it? If it's my church, it's my worry.

Why should you worry about it? I don't know. Why should I worry? No reason for me to worry. Lord, if you go bankrupt, you've got a problem.

Not me, you know. Lord, you've got a lot back there. I don't know how you're going to pay for it, but, you know.

And so often in prayer, during prayer, the Spirit of God ministers to your heart, brings assurance, brings comfort. Let's read what prayer is about. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse venture through the

Bible in our next broadcast as Pastor Chuck continues his study of the Psalms.

And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. Now, for those of you that would like to secure a copy of today's message, simply order Psalm 142, verse 1 when visiting thewordfortoday.org. And while there, be sure to browse the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck. You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription.

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And if you prefer to write, our mailing address is The Word for Today, PO Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628. And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible.

That's right here, on the next edition of The Word for Today. And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck on today's Closing Comments. I pray that God will make this a very special week for you, that you might follow after the things of the Spirit, that He'll protect and shield you from those influences of the world that are so prevalent.

We're surrounded by them on all sides, but may the Lord just put a shield around you. And may you walk in holiness and in purity and in righteousness before Him. May your life be committed fully unto Him.

And may the love of Christ just dwell in your hearts richly as you experience His love and power working in and through your life. In Jesus' name. And I think if I only had a quick scripture reference that could help me right then and right there, that would be perfect.

Well, guess what I found? Pastor Chuck's Old and New Testament study guides are available to download as e-books instantly to your phone or mobile device. Now, whenever you need to find the meaning to a scripture reference quickly, you can. Pastor Chuck has written great little Bible commentaries to help anyone come to a better understanding of God's Word.

To find out more and to read a book preview, visit thewordfortoday.org and click on the link to download the Old and New Testament study guides by Chuck Smith. Or, if you would like to order these books in print, call The Word for Today at 800-272-WORD. That's 800-272-9673.

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