

# Psalm 17

by Henry Law

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of true prayer, God's righteousness, and His loving-kindness, and encourages believers to pray for God's help and protection.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 91:3, Psalm 121:5, Romans 6:11, Romans 8:13, Galatians 5:16, Colossians 3:10, 1 Peter 5:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Sanctification"

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## Description

F. B. Meyer, Andrew Murray, and A. J. Gordon delve into the profound truths of Romans 6:11, emphasizing the believer's death to sin and life in Christ. They discuss the sensitivity to sin that comes with living closer to God, the distinction between temptation and sin, and the importance of resisting the Tempter through faith in Christ. They highlight the need for believers to continually surrender to God, rely on the Holy Spirit's power, and seek refuge in Jesus when faced with temptation. They also address the ongoing battle against the sinful nature within, stressing the importance of recollecting God's protection and trusting in His keeping power.

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## Transcript

Abundant prayers are made. The end is confirmation of confidence. May we thus pray, and thus be comforted!

1, 2. "Hear the right, O Lord, attend to my cry, give ear to my prayer, that goes not out from deceitful lips. Let my sentence come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes behold the things that are equal."

Let us scan narrowly the character of true prayer. It wears no mask of truthless insincerity. It speaks not falsely with hypocritical pretense. It utters deep-felt truth from honest heart. Thus it wrestles like agonizing Jacob, and prevails. This boldness gains much strength from inward consciousness of uprightness.

He who secretly loves evil may pretend to pray, but he fails to pray. In strict exactness, no lips but those of Jesus could adopt these words. On earth He was as pure from sin as God in heaven. Truth was constrained to say, I find in Him no evil. But a great day is coming, when all believers shall thus plead before the judgment-seat. We shall crave justice, because in Jesus we have fulfilled each tittle of the law, because in Him we have endured each penalty. "Hear the right" will be a conquering cry. God will be just, and justify Christ-pleading sinners.

3, 4. "You have proved my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me, and shall find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the Word of Your lips I have kept myself from the paths of the destroyer."

No man but the God-man could court omniscient scrutiny. We know this, and we adore Him; for His pure righteousness was wrought for us, and is imputed to us. But though sin is mixed with all we do, our every nerve should strive for righteousness without one flaw. Here the heart, the mainspring of the man, is uncovered before God. In times of darkness, when no mortal eye can see, and interruption cannot distract, close communion is held with God. He is invited to visit and to search. There is resolve that erring words shall not offend. A godly bridle shall restrain the lips. Grace from the tongue shall answer grace in the heart. The walk, also, shall be far from Satan's devious paths. His broad road is a downward path. He is the fell destroyer. All who are led by him go headlong into destruction's pit. The Spirit has supplied a perfect chart. His Book gives guidance for every word, for every work, at every moment, in all circumstances. Feet planted on this rock can never fall. The students of Scripture will ever shine as lights. They will reach heaven's haven.

5, 6. "Hold up my goings in Your paths, that my footsteps slip not. I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God; incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech."

Purposes may be sincere and strong; but our own strength is utter weakness. The firmest staff of human growth is but a feeble reed. Grace must support us or we fall. The Spirit must enable or we fail. Hence prayer increases in intensity. The more we grow in grace, the more we feel our need. The more we climb the heavenward hill, the more we dread backsliding. Each advance makes us more fearful of decline. Hence the ripest saint is most intent in prayer.

7. "Show Your marvelous loving-kindness, O You who save by Your right hand those who put their trust in You, from those who rise up against them." Many rose up against our blessed Lord. From all He was delivered. He trusted and was not confounded. The same foes are ours. But let no fears depress us. We shall laugh all to scorn. But in the conflict, nothing so cheers as the sense of God's love. Moses prayed, "Show me Your glory." The reply was, "I will make all My goodness pass before you." His goodness is His glory. The sun at midday is a wondrous sight. How glittering are the countless rays! But the sun is darkness beside the effulgence of God's love. When it encircles and inspirits us, we are waived to victory's high ground. Let us often pray, "Show Your marvelous lovingkindness."

8, 9. "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Your wings, from the wicked who oppress me, from my deadly enemies who surround me."

The pupil of the eye is the body's tenderest part. The slightest touch--a particle of dust--inflicts keen pain. Therefore skill and care elaborately screen it. Safeguards are multiplied around. Similar is the care which saints implore. A promise is dispensed which tells that this care is ever near. The Lord in tender mercy cries, "He who touches you touches the apple of My eye."

Nature's most tender proof of protecting love is shown in the parent bird. When the storm threatens, or danger from some enemy appears, the little brood is quickly gathered, and extending wings are spread around them. They are so covered that no eye can see them; they nestle in warm shelter and are safe. This is fit emblem of God's guardian care. Hear the sweet voice of Jesus, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not." This prayer involves a promise of all help. Let faith often shoot these darts to heaven.

Full answers will come down.

10. "They close up their callous hearts, and their mouths speak with arrogance."

The faithful often plead the character of their foes. They are sensuous and carnal; they trench themselves in pleasures, indulgences, and vain-glory. Pride dwells within, and arrogance makes boast.

11, 12. "They track me down, surround me, and throw me to the ground. They are like hungry lions, eager to tear me apart--like young lions in hiding, waiting for their chance."

Intent to catch, they spread their nets around. Their stratagems and snares beset. With look demure, they seem to be harmless; but they are cruel as the ravenous lion, and crafty as the lion's whelp which springs from secret ambush. Such are the features of the persecutor.

13, 14. "Arise, O Lord! Stand against them and bring them to their knees! Rescue me from the wicked with your sword! Save me by your mighty hand, O Lord, from those whose only concern is earthly gain. May they have their punishment in full. May their children inherit more of the same, and may the judgment continue to their children's children."

"Arise, O Lord; disappoint him, cast him down; deliver my soul from the wicked, which is Your sword; from the men which are Your hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes."

Adopting this version, our minds receive a weighty lesson. We are taught that the wicked are God's sword; that the men of the world are His hand. The Spirit in other Scriptures has revealed the same. Of the Assyrian it is said that he is the rod of God's anger and the staff of His indignation. It is the Lord's voice, "You are my battle-ax and weapons of war; for with you will I break in pieces the nations, and with you will I destroy kingdoms." Thus evil passions are employed to chasten, to reprove, to keep us low, to do us good.

Thus Satan raging in man's heart is only instrumental to subserve God's ends. Man's violence and spite are overruled. They will accomplish the predetermined work; they little know their true design; they are real blessings, though disguised to God's own people.

But while they are employed to harass, the saints must pray; they must be suppliants for speedy help. "Arise, O Lord, disappoint him and cast him down." And we may plead the vile condition of our foes. They are of the earth and earthly; they seek no portion beyond this sin-soiled world; they glean abundance of its worthless husks; they feast on its unsubstantial pleasures; they amass its gilded baubles, and transmit their hoarded treasures to their babies.

15. "As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness."

Contrast the true believer's lot. He loves to gaze on God's unclouded face. Clothed in pure righteousness, enrobed in beauty, compared with which the sun is pale, decked in perfection fit for the palace of the King, he will be welcomed to the heaven of heavens. Though for a little time his flesh may slumber in the grave, yet he will surely wake. The hour is coming when all who are in the grave shall hear His voice and shall come forth. Then He will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body. We shall be

like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Then indeed we shall be satisfied. What more could be desired? What more could be conceived? What more could Heaven bestow? The glorified spirit re-inhabits a glorious frame; the resurrection robes are now put on, and they must shine forever. No lapse of age can change their hue. This wedding garment is ever new. Gazing on this glorious prospect, we may care little for those short-lived troubles. They need not fear the face of man who soon will see the face of God.

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