

Psalm 140
(141 in the Holy Bible)

1- Objectives

- ❖ Bible Study- Psalm from the “Compline Prayer”

2- References

- ❖ Interpretation of the Bible by Father Tadros Malaty: http://st-takla.org/pub_Bible-Interpretations/Holy-Bible-Tafsir-01-Old-Testament/Father-Tadros-Yacoub-Malaty/21-Sefer-El-Mazameer/Tafseer-Sefer-El-Mazamir__01-Chapter-141.html

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth” (2 Timothy 2:25)

4- Lesson Guidelines

- ❖ Parts of this Psalm (verse 2) were sung in Israel during the offering of incense to God. Parts of the text are obscure, unclear and were difficult to interpret from the Hebrew text.
- ❖ Seems to have been written during David’s distress because of Saul’s pursuit probably around the time David was hiding from Saul in the cave and had the chance to kill him but didn’t. (1 Samuel 24:1-22).
- ❖ It goes in line with the theme of the Compline Psalms, ones that should encourage self-examination and repentance as we approach our death.
- ❖ A lesson also to us that when we are in distress we should pray. However, David’s prayer was not just a supplication for a relief from his problems but it encompassed so much more and is a lesson to us on how we should pray.

Verses 1 and 2

- ❖ Bring it to God first. Crying out to God and asking Him to come quickly and listen to him. Here is the urgency of when you need to talk to someone. Sometimes we get on the phone and tell a friend to call us because we really need to talk and we may be on edge until we have had a chance to talk to that person. But David is teaching us a different example, instead of taking our problems and worries to another human first, let us take it to God in prayer first. Let God be the first one you talk to about your problem then take it to a human being. This is how we have a relationship with God.
- ❖ Prayer is a spiritual sacrifice. What makes it beautiful and sweet smelling is when it comes from a heart that truly desires to know, love and be with God. “I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).
- ❖ It is also a prophecy regarding our Lord Jesus Christ, as He offered himself as an evening sacrifice first at the Last Supper and then the following day on the cross at Golgotha.

Verses 3 and 4

- ❖ God should be our powerful assistance when struggling against sin that is a barrier between us and Him. So David here remembers his sin and asks for God's grace.
- ❖ The grace of God protects us from falling into certain sin. For we are no better than those who are doing things we dare not commit. He reveals to us our sins because we are blinded to them, gives us the strength to overcome and have victory over them.
- ❖ David asks God for protection from:
 - The sins of the tongue and lips like the words that offend God or hurt others. "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit" (1 Peter 3:10).
 - Evil actions like the inclinations of the heart that make us do evil things to others. David reminds us that our evil actions many times are a product of who we hang out with and whose company we enjoy? Because whether we like it or not we are always affected by those whom we live and associate with; according to some research, what others do and say is contagious and it affects us in subtle ways.
- ❖ It makes sense that David would be praying this, at this point in time, because his followers had just told him to kill Saul; a nice easy solution that would have spared him so much trouble and David was struggling to be the different one, not conformed to their worldly beliefs.

Verses 5 and 6

- ❖ Others may be a source of edification for us. David is praying that may his heart always be open to the rebuke of the righteous. The church is asking us to remember all those who have rebuked us throughout the day as we pray this psalm. Many times we get so defensive when others point out things in our actions and behavior. Yet David is an example of one who was willing and wanting to be rebuked by others for the sins that he cannot see so that he may change.
- ❖ The oil is reserved, in those days, for the privileged guests at parties. So David is saying let me not accept the flattery of evil-doers. St. Francis of Assisi said: "Reproof leads to amendment while praise excites us to sin. In loss of dignity, absence of praise and humble subjection there is great profit to the soul."
- ❖ David also prays that his enemies would come to know the follies of their ways. We are called to pray that those who persecute us will see what they are doing wrong. This is an important thing to do at the end of a day. Many times before we sleep we brood over the injustice of others that has happened to us during the day to the point that sleep may even evade us. The church teaches us that this is a time to pray for those people and ask for their repentance.
- ❖ St. Augustine sees the rock as a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ who will bring truth and justice and convert the perverted and crooked ways of sinners. The words that the sinners will hear are the words of the Lord calling all to repentance. They are words full of love and acceptance of all sinners.

Verses 7 to 10

- ❖ David is confident that God would rescue him and be merciful to him. He and his followers had reached the point of despair from Saul's persecution but he entrusts himself to God's protection and was sure that God in due time will overcome the enemy.
- ❖ Sometimes, the worry of the hardships of life, a bad boss, a financial situation, etc. may keep us awake all night. The psalm ends with a reminder that we must put our trust in God Who will bring an end to all bad situations and that His justice will sure prevail.
- ❖ The snare of evil is the heresies and the heretics who want to drive us away from God or it is the sin that looks beautiful to us while it covers internal poison "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

5- Discussion Points

- ❖ Discuss this verse: "Then the king said to me: What do you request? So I prayed to the God of heaven and I said to the king: If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it" (Nehemiah 2: 4-5).

6- Conclusion

- ❖ Bring all problems to God first before asking any person and be confident that God will take care of it even through other people.
- ❖ Let us ask God to give us grace so that we do not make excuses for our sin and try to justify our behavior. This is a true barrier to repentance. Many times we blame others for our wrong behavior, but the truth of the matter is that we sin due to the impurity of our own hearts not because of what someone else said or did.
- ❖ Be willing to accept reproof without being defensive; consider it a kindness and a sign of an honest friend who cares for our good. We must consider it a form of healing for our souls.

7- Activities / Workshop

- ❖ Workshop for the different parts of the psalm