

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on September 19, 2021:**

**"Praying Through the Psalms (An Interactive Discipline)
(Psalm 1, 2, 3)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman, at church in the Y, shows us the intent of these verses through prayer to strengthen us and to enhance our relationship with God, the Father, Son and Spirit.]

Introduction:

- This week for Pastor Craig was like “The Tale of Two Cities” – it was the best of times and it was the worst of times.
- It was the best of times, because he had the opportunity to witness the supernatural completely unfold.
- It was a direct answer to prayer.

- The Y board, which includes Pastor Craig, has been working this past year to raise enough funds to be able to open the Y again in 1-1-22.
- LA Metro challenged the Monrovia Y to meet a \$90,000 fund raising goal by the end of September.
- Now, at the beginning of September, Pastor Craig was out in his patio praying to God, asking how could the Y close this gap, because they were quite a bit short.

- And then he instantly got a direct thought that said, “You need to contact Terry, who’s a friend of the Y, invite him to breakfast or lunch and make a heartfelt appeal to him.
- He was contacted, and during the course of the luncheon, Pastor Craig made an appeal to him, and then he immediately wrote out a check for \$25,000, which put the Y were it financially needed to be.
- So, the Y will open on 1-1-22.

- Now, the worst of times for a pastor is when he comes down to the deadline on giving a sermon and has no clue on what he’s going to speak about.
- Each Monday morning, Pastor Craig will print off from the RCL all the scriptures tied to that particular week and will read them and then usually some topic just jumps into his thoughts.
- But, by this Friday, he still didn’t have a subject in mind.
- Now, Friday night, while asleep, he had a dream and it was to preach and pray through the Psalms.

- This is something new that we’re going to do today.
- So, Pastor Craig is going to read through portions of the first 3 Psalms, make some comments and then pray about them.
- So, we’re going to engage in three disciplines in this process: the discipline of reading scripture, the discipline of praying through scripture, and the discipline of meditating on scripture.
- Now, when we’re building our relationship with God, we’re doing that through conversation, curiosity, and contemplation.

- Now in September, there are always a lot of programs from the past and even some new programs tied to the events surrounding 9-11.
- Pastor Craig watched a new program this week, which was all about the phone calls made from inside the towers during that time after they were hit.
- This program was all the messages and voice mails that were left by those in the towers.

- They always, always said, "Please know that I love you, tell so-and-do I love them, and take care of so-and-so.
- These last word conversations were always about confirming their love for the ones they were talking to or leaving a message for.
- That's because they literally knew that death was at the door.
- So, at this point in time, they centered on what was most important to them which was their relationship with their loved ones.

- Now, Jesus had a very similar response when He was on the cross.
- He looked down and saw His mother, Mary, and told His beloved disciple John, "Take care of her."
- And many of those calling from the towers were asking those whom they were talking to and leaving messages with to take care of their various family members.

- And, so today, as we pray through the Psalms, this gives us the opportunity, as we relate with our Father, Son and Spirit, to show our love to them, not at death's doorstep, but here as we are actively involved in life.
- Does anyone know what the word Psalm or Psalms mean?
- Member answer: it means song or songs.
- So, all 150 Psalms represent songs that the nation Israel and the leaders put together.
- There were a lot written by David, also by Asaph and others, who were musical leaders among the Levites.

- Now, these Psalms were written from an Old Covenant standpoint and written without the benefit of the New Covenant.
- So, we're going to see some terms and some phrases, perhaps we wouldn't feel comfortable saying today with our New Covenant understanding.
- And we need to remember that we need to interpret the Old Covenant through the New Covenant.

- Now, in this case, we have to remember that people like David, even though he had a heart for God, was still a warrior and a man of blood, as scripture describes him.
- And so, there are a lot of terms in Psalms that deal with military phrases, because David was a military leader and involved in combat in various ways.
- You'll also find a number of agricultural themes because the nation of Israel was an agricultural nation at that time.
- Now, the Psalms speak of high reverence for the law, which is about the covenant relationship that God the Father established with the nation Israel.
- Now, for some of you who would like to try a different approach to prayer, you can by opening up the Psalms and praying about what it says to get started.
- Pastor Craig calls, what he's about to do, an interactive discipline.

Psalm 1:1 (NASB), Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

- In Psalms, there is always a big contrast between the wicked and the righteous.
- And the wicked, in Psalms, are known as those who have not been in a covenant relationship with God.
- Today we might call them not-yet-believers, who have not yet realized their relationship in the Father, Son and Spirit and that they have been called and are loved by God.
- They also live in a lack of faith, which is essentially encompassing sin, because sin is a mindset of not knowing who we are and not being in relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.
- So here, the Psalmist is saying blessed is the person who doesn't walk in that counsel, nor stand in that pathway, nor sit in that seat.
- We are blessed when we don't do those things.
- So, now, let's pray about this passage:

Eternal loving Father, Son and Spirit, you've indicated that we're blessed when we take a posture of relationship with you and not in a posture of a not-yet-believer. Father, please help us to bless others. Help us to engage in those whom you are working with and help us to see that and recognize that. And help us to participate in a way that can be received.

Have your Spirit inspire us to affect positively those whom the Psalmist identifies as wicked, scoffers, or scornful. Father, help us to reach them with your love. Help us to be able to bring them into that same relationship that we have with you.

2) But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and on His Law he meditates day and night.

- So, the law was typically referred to as the Torah, the first 5 books of the Old Testament.
- We need to realize that it's not just about the law but also the Old Covenant relationship.
- And today, it encompasses the New Covenant relationship that we have and how we see scripture today.
- Prayer:

Dear, Father, Son and Spirit, Father, we truly delight in the relationship that we have in you and your Son and your Spirit. Father, we just pray that you help us to experience this and live it out and realize what a delight it is and to realize what a benefit, what a blessing it is.

We're told in Ephesians that we're blessed with every blessing in heaven and on earth. And Father, it's because of that, that we delight in the relationship we have with you, which you've invited us into. You loved us first, you call us friends, and it's through your incarnation that we're included in that relationship. So, Father, help us to truly take the light in our relationship with you. And help us not to take that for granted especially when we feeling down or depressed or despondent. Help us to realize when we're being bound and depressed and

despondent, that we recognize the light of the relationship we have with you and not take it for granted.

3) He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

- Now, a living tree in the Old Testament stood for something solid, stood for something that was growing and stood for something positive.
- So, a tree, in this case, is a blessing.
- So, when one prospers, it's not about what the health-and-wealth-gospel people teach.
- Prosperity and abundance is more about our spiritual relationship with God rather than about our physical wealth and blessings.
- The love we have for the Father, Son and Spirit is the source of our peace and joy.
- It's God's love that He gives us, which is the abundance and prosperity that we are promised to have.
- Prayer:

Eternal Father, Son and Spirit, help us to be like that growing tree. Help us to seek nourishment from the relationship we have with you. Dear Holy Spirit, fill our minds and our heart with that peace and that joy that just floods all of the negatives out of our minds and fills us with that peace and that tranquility.

And father, just help us to feel the nourishment of abiding in the vine and bearing fruit and truly prospering in that relationship we have with you.

4) The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

- And so, when we don't have the basis of faith to drive our lives, it's like we're being tossed to and fro.
- And that's the kind of existence not-yet-believers have.
- So, it's our role to reach out and to talk to them about the relationship they can have with God.
- Prayer:

Father, we pray for those who don't believe in you. We pray for those who don't have their life anchored in a relationship with you. And Father we pray that, as you are working with them, that you invite us into that participation and that you help us to talk to them in a way that they can receive.

So father we pray for those who are not in that familial covenant relationship with you. And father, we ask that we can be instruments of blessings to them and invite them into that relationship with you through that conversation, that curiosity, and that contemplation.

5) Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

- The first part of this verse is in reference to the Day of Judgment when our deeds are either burned up and consumed like chaff in a fire or those deeds that are solid and born out of our relationship with God and can to continue to exist.
- This is not about perishing as in annihilation, but rather it's about testing of the works and the deeds we've done in this life time.
- This doesn't qualify us for the Kingdom, but reflects the Kingdom life we lived.
- Prayer:

So, Father, we pray once again, for those who have not committed their lives to you, those who have not let your light and love shine in their lives. Father, we ask that you help us to be an influence to them and be that light and that example to those around us.

6) For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

- Now, the wicked will perish, in that their deeds and actions will not last, when they go through that consuming fire of God's love, their evil deeds will be burned up.
- Now, the deeds born out of the Spirit last and are a part of heavens treasury.
- Prayer:

So, Father, we pray that you recognize our works and recognize our deeds. And out of those deeds, we might inspire those that don't have the benefit of knowing your incarnation and what you did for us through the life and times of your Son, Jesus to the point where he died and then ascended back to heaven.

Psalm 2:1, Why are the nations restless and the peoples plotting in vain? 2) The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers conspire together Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3) "Let's tear their shackles apart and throw their ropes away from us!" 4) He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

- So, what Psalm 2 is referring to is the contrast between the physical kings with the true King, Jesus and the covenant relationship David had, as king of Israel.
- So, let's pray for the nations and the nation's leaders.

Eternal Father, Son and Spirit, we know that you appoint kings. We know that you appoint leaders and presidents and it's not our role to judge them or question them. But, it's our role to pray for them and to invoke your name into that relationship.

And Father, we pray that when nations and kings are conspiring against you and your church and your people, that you will provide protection and lift them above all that.

5) Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, 6) "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

- Originally, Zion was a nation in Canaan and wasn't holy, but became holy through the process of becoming a place of reverence and worship of God.

7) "I will announce the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have fathered You. 8) Ask it of Me, and I will certainly give the nations as Your inheritance,

the ends of the earth as Your possession.

- Prayer:

Dear Lord, please carry out your blessing on all the lands of the earth today, just as you did in the time when Israel was a nation. Help us to be able to be a support and a strength to others. And Father, help us to look forward to the time when your Son, our true King will reign forever and forever. Help us to rely upon that time forward. And help us to share our lives today with others to help that time come quickly.

9) You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.”

10) Now then, you kings, use insight; Let yourselves be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11) Serve the Lord with reverence And rejoice with trembling.

- Prayer:

So, Father, we pray that the nation’s leaders can see you, can honor you, can reflect your love through their actions. We ask that you influence their hearts and their minds in a way that will be a blessing. Also help us to be a part of that and help us to be a blessing in the whole process in that we offer up our prayers, to offer up our encouragement to the leaders and the kings of the nations around us.

12) Kiss the Son, that He not be angry and you perish on the way, for His wrath may be kindled quickly. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him.

- Prayer:

So, Father, we ask to help us always to take our refuge in Jesus. Help us to not rely upon ourselves to get out of a hot mess we might be in, but help us to rely upon Jesus to take us through that. And as we enter through trials, help us to find refuge and safety and solace in that relationship we have with your Son.

Psalm 3:1 (Morning Prayer of Trust in God. - A Psalm of David, when he fled from his son Absalom),

- Another thing Psalms will do, they will convey a kind of relationship in all of its unvarnished concerns, perhaps in anger in our prayers and God welcomes that.
- God doesn’t block our honesty. He invites our raw humanity when we reach out to Him even in total anger and despair because God wants us to reach out to Him.
- And David did in many ways because he had many enemies.
- David’s approach was for God to slay his enemies, but we see Jesus’ approach was to pray for His enemies.
- Even though David didn’t have the right attitude, at least he knew to whom he should reach out to and place his heart as Psalm 3 shows us.

Psalm 3:1, Lord, how my enemies have increased! Many are rising up against me.

2) Many are saying of my soul, “There is no salvation for him in God.” Selah

- Selah is phrase meaning a kind of pause, where we just pause for emphasis.
- David's enemies were saying that David didn't have a salvational relationship with God, but he knew that he did.
- Likewise, we know that we do – we know that we have eternal life; we know that we are saved yesterday, today and forever.
- And no one can take that from us – our friends or our enemies.
- When David felt he was at death's doorstep, he was reaching out to God and anguished over the enemies he was facing.

3) But You, Lord, are a shield around me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head.

4) I was crying out to the Lord with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah

- God is always there for us – not necessarily from a holy mountain because where ever we reach out to God, He is there in our presence.
- Prayer:

Father, we thank you so much that in the midst of difficulties, in the midst of those things that try us, you are right there in our presence reminding us of the salvation we have in you and helping us to see who we are. You help us see that these physical realities don't have control over our ultimate reality and the relationship we have with you.

5) I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustains me. 6) I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.

- Prayer:

Dear Lord, give us the confidence and the strength and the courage that David had, when he had ten thousands of enemies around him, all wanting to take his life. At that time, you gave him peace because you encouraged him and let him know that you are in control. Father, help us to always realize that despite the negative things we face, you sustain us. You live in us, you love us and maintain us in that relationship.

7) Arise, Lord; save me, my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked. 8) Salvation belongs to the Lord; May Your blessing be upon Your people! Selah

- Closing prayer:

Thank you Father that salvation belongs to you and that you freely have given that salvation to us. And that you control our enemies so that they have no power over us. And that you are in relationship with us to move us forward. We thank you for that, Father. You, truly, are the Lord of our salvation and we acknowledge that and thank you for that. And we pray that you help us to share that with those whom you are wanting to reach, because you are constantly working and inviting us to reach out. And Father, we pray that your Spirit directs us in a way that can be received in welcome ways.

We thank you Father for giving us the Psalms. We thank you for allowing us to communicate with you in whatever way we feel necessary and that you're not offended because you love us and call us friends. We thank you for that relationship. May your Psalms help us to be strengthened and to see you more clearly.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!