

## PSALM 5

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Psalms 5. <sup>1-3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>O give ear, YHWH, to my words.

Give heed to my groanings.

<sup>2</sup>Give close attention to my call for help, my King and God,  
for it is to You that I present my plea!

<sup>3</sup>YHWH, You'll hear my voice in the morning.

At first light, I'll present myself to You and await Your response... (author's translation).

Today's is our 5th reading for Lent 2025.

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

<sup>1</sup>Give ear to my words, O LORD,  
consider my meditation.

<sup>2</sup>Hearken unto the voice of my cry,  
my King, and my God:  
for unto thee will I pray.

<sup>3</sup>My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD;  
in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

1. Another purpose of Lent is to deepen the quality of one's prayer life. As part of his prayer, the Psalmist says,

“YHWH, You'll hear my voice in the morning.

At first light, I'll present myself to You and await Your response...”

The Psalmist's “You'll hear my voice in the morning,” could indicate his confidence that God will hear him. On the other hand, it could indicate the Psalmist's commitment to prayer.

- ? Do you hear one or the other? Both? Why do you answer as you do?
- ? How important is prayer to you as a way of beginning the day?
- ? How would you judge your regular prayer life?
- ? What do you do to avoid rote kinds of prayers?
- ? What do you do to strive for more communicative prayers?
- ? How much of your “prayer time” is dedicated to being the speaker as opposed to being the listener?
- ? How could you become a better listener in prayer?
- ? How much of your prayer time is devoted to making requests as opposed to sharing thoughts, impressions, activities with God?
- ? How, do you imagine, God feels about your balance of the two?
- ? How much of your prayer time is dedicated to worshipping God—talking to Him about Him, about his character, sharing your feelings for Him, and maybe even asking Him questions about Himself?

2. The Psalmist commits himself to morning prayer.
  - ? How important is prayer to you as a way of beginning the day?
3. The Psalmist asks three times that God hear his plea for help.

- ? What does this suggest about the nature of the Psalmist's challenges to which he will later refer (verses 9-10) and the intense need for help that he feels?
  - ? In what circumstances have you felt the most intense need for help and thus engaged in your most intense prayers? How did it turn out?
  - ? For those who have been through an LDS endowment session... any additional thoughts about the thrice repeated appeal to God?
4. The Psalmist says that he will "present" himself to God. The Hebrew word means to "lay out, or order."
- ? What do you think and feel when consider presenting or laying yourself out to God?
  - ? How are your prayers a "presentation" of yourself to God?
  - ? How comfortable are you laying yourself out for God's observation?
5. The Psalmist says that he will "await" God's response.
- ? How confident are you as you approach God in prayer that you will get a response?
  - ? What causes you to be more or less confident of God's response?

Psalm 5.<sup>4-7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>knowing that You are not a God who takes pleasure in willful wrongdoing;  
that cruelty cannot find safety in You;  
<sup>5</sup>that those who intend harm cannot stand in Your presence;  
that You reject all who act abusively.  
<sup>6</sup>that You bring an end to those who utter falsehood;  
that YHWH abhors the violent and deceptive individual.  
<sup>7</sup>But, as for me, because of the immensity of Your unwavering devotion to me,  
I can enter Your house.  
I can bow down in Your sacred temple precincts;  
bow in reverence to You (author's translation).

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

<sup>4</sup>For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness:  
neither shall evil dwell with thee.  
<sup>5</sup>The foolish shall not stand in thy sight:  
thou hatest all workers of iniquity.  
<sup>6</sup>Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing:  
the LORD will abhor  
the bloody and deceitful man.  
<sup>7</sup>But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy:  
and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

In verses 1-3, the Psalmist pleads to God for help. He confesses his commitment to prayer, promising that the morning would find him on his knees in prayer and confident that God would respond.

1. In this reading, the Psalmist reveals the reasons for his confidence that God will hear and respond to his pleas.  
? What reasons for the Psalmist's confidence do you find in verses 4-7?
2. The Psalmist lists individuals and behaviors in which God does not take pleasure, will not protect, and will not grant access to Him. More actively, the Psalmist lists individuals and behaviors that God rejects, abhors, and will bring to an end.  
? What is the character and behavior of such individuals?  
? What do those who do harm (vs. 5) and abuse (vs. 5) others, lie (vs. 6), act violently toward others all have in common?  
? How do you feel about God's rejection of such individuals?
3. The Psalmist's confidence in God flows, in part, from his knowledge that he is innocent of the wicked character traits and behaviors found in verses 4-6. In addition, his confidence in God is based on God's own "unwavering devotion" to him.  
? What does "unwavering devotion" mean to you?  
? What do you think and feel when you consider that God possesses "unwavering devotion"?

Psalms 5.<sup>8-10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>YHWH, bring me acquittal  
in response to my accusers.  
Grant me access to You.  
<sup>9</sup>Because nothing coming out of their mouth has been proven;  
because ruinous intent resides deep inside them;  
because their throat is an open grave;  
because their tongue is a slippery slope  
<sup>10</sup>O 'ēlōhīm, pronounce them guilty.  
Let them fall prey to their own malicious intentions.  
Banish them because of the enormity of their legal overstep,  
since their defiance is really directed against You (author's translation).

For those who wish to compare translations, here is the KJV.

<sup>8</sup>Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness  
because of mine enemies;  
make thy way straight before my face.  
<sup>9</sup>For there is no faithfulness in their mouth;  
their inward part is very wickedness;  
their throat is an open sepulchre;  
they flatter with their tongue.  
<sup>10</sup>Destroy thou them, O God;  
let them fall by their own counsels;  
cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions;  
for they have rebelled against thee.

In verses 1-3, the Psalmist pled to God for help. He confessed his commitment to prayer, promising that the morning would find him on his knees in prayer and confident that God would respond. In verses 4-7, the Psalmist reveals the reasons for his confidence that God will hear and respond to his pleas. His confidence stems from two facts. First, he is innocent of the charges brought against him. Second, he knows that it is in God's character to be devoted to those who trust in Him.

1. In today's reading, the Psalmist adds a third reason for his confidence that God will come to his aid against his accusers.  
? What is that third reason?

The Psalmist knows that his accusers are factually wrong about him. But he also knows their intentions and, indeed, their very dispositions.

- ? What are the Psalmist's accusers' intentions and dispositions? What do you find in the text to justify your answer?
- ? How do you feel about the accusers?
- ? To what extent do we find people in our society who are willing to bend the truth in order to rain down harm on others? Why do you answer as you do?

2. Because of his enemies' lies and harmful intentions, the Psalmist asks,

“Let them fall prey to their own malicious intentions.  
Banish them because of the enormity of their legal overstep...”

- ? How do you feel about the Psalmist desire that his enemies fail in their intentions and, indeed, suffer the very evil that they tried to bring upon others?

- ? When is it appropriate to hope and pray that those with evil intentions fail in their intentions? Why do you answer as you do?
3. The Psalmist maintains that in attacking the him, his enemies' "defiance is really directed against" God.
- ? How do you explain the Psalmist's assertion other than by thinking of him as a self-righteous, self-possessed, and arrogant narcissist?
  - ? How does the following passage relate to the Psalmist's assertion?

"Then shall he answer them, saying, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me'" (Matt. 25.45; see 31-46 for entire parable).