

FEBRUARY 2020



Hemyock *Baptist Church*

Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud,
and He shall hear my voice. *Psalms 55:17*

It gets a bit monotonous, doesn't it... "Your call is very important to us... please hold". Yes! The longer we hold, the more important our call becomes... (not) Just not important enough to merit a human response! Praise God that prayer isn't like that! God knows what we need before we call, but he wants us to call upon him nonetheless; *for our sake*, not for his. He longs to give us what we need, but first, we must ask. There are three great privileges in the phrase 'He shall hear my voice' - let's take a closer look...

Speech is a gift, a *privilege* given to humans, made in the image of God. So, we mustn't abuse it, but use it for God's glory. God has enabled us to learn to speak and to mature in speech as we grow older. We learn to speak not only amongst ourselves, but also with God. We can pray and praise in silence, but far better to speak aloud, even if we're alone. Speech is a God-given miracle, and more than anything else, the facet that distinguishes us from the other creatures God has made.

As Christians we have the *privilege* of prayer. We see people praying throughout the Bible, particularly in the Psalms. In Ps.65:2, God is addressed as "You who hear prayer", a very significant title. "Hear me" is a prayer repeated more than 25 times in the Psalms - and hear he does! When David wrote Psalm 55, he was in deep trouble and wanted to fly away (v.4-8). He was in a storm (V.8), at war (v.18-21), and even with all his military experience, seemed unable to defeat the enemy. But God heard his cry and gave him victory, such that rather than flying away, he soared like an eagle (Isaiah 40:31) and was more than a conqueror (Rom.8:37).

Thirdly, those who know Christ have the *privilege* of claiming God's promises. The Bible includes many promises about prayer and many examples of those who have prayed; and our Father delights in our trust as we act upon his Word. Daniel, like David, prayed thrice daily (Dan.6:10). Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess.5:17). The Lord heard David in the cave (Ps.57) and Hezekiah as he prayed from his sickbed (Isaiah 38). Peter, sinking in the Sea of Galilee, cried "Lord, save me!" (Matt. 14:30) and the Lord heard him over the raging storm and saved him. The Lord heard the prayers of believers in the house of Mary (mother of John Mark) whilst Peter was imprisoned in Jerusalem, and the Lord set him free (Acts 12). Paul and Silas were praising and praying even whilst in prison themselves in Philippi, and the Lord freed them (Acts 16:25-34). No matter where we are, whatever our situation, the Lord hears us as we pray by faith and claim his promises. God even heard Jonah pray from the stomach of the fish (Jonah 2) - and he heard the young ravens cry for food (Ps.147:9).

There's a graphic on the wall of our prayer room: "Prayer changes things". It also changes people; including those in trouble who cry out to God. Nothing is impossible for the Lord.

"I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live." Ps116:1-2

Pastor Steve