

Crying Unto The Lord

Psalm 34:6

*This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him
out of all his troubles.*

A Teaching Outline

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

They Cried unto the Lord.

Exodus 2:23

Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.

God's rescue doesn't always come the moment we want it. God had promised to bring the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt (Genesis 15:16; 46:3, 4). The people had waited a long time for that promise to be kept, but God rescued them when he knew the right time had come. God knows the best time to act. When you feel that God has forgotten you in your troubles, remember that God has a time schedule we can't see.

In Fear, the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord.

Exodus 14:10

As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD.

Trapped against the sea, the Israelites faced the Egyptian army sweeping in for the kill. The Israelites thought they were doomed. After watching God's powerful hand deliver them from Egypt, their only response was fear, whining, and despair.

Where was their trust in God? Israel had to learn from repeated experience that God was able to provide for them. God has preserved these examples in the Bible so that we can learn to trust him the first time. By focusing on God's faithfulness in the past, we can face crises with confidence rather than with fear and complaining.

Moses cried out unto the Lord.

Exodus 17:4

So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me."

The people complained about their problem instead of praying. Some problems can be solved by careful thought or by rearranging our priorities. Some can be solved by discussion and good counsel. But some problems can be solved only by prayer.

We should make a determined effort to pray when we feel like complaining because complaining only raises our level of stress. Prayer quiets our thoughts and emotions and prepares us to listen.

God raised up a deliverer when they cried to the Lord.

Judges 3:9

When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

Othniel was Israel's first judge. In 1:13 we read that he volunteered to lead an attack against a fortified city. Here he was to lead the nation back to God. Othniel had a rich spiritual heritage—his uncle was Caleb, a man with unwavering faith in God (Numbers 13:30; 14:24).

Othniel's leadership brought the people back to God and freed them from oppression. But after Othniel's death, it didn't take the Israelites long to fall back into their neighbors' comfortable but sinful ways.

Sons of Israel cried to the Lord on account of Midian.

Judges 6:7

Now it came about when the sons of Israel cried to the LORD on account of Midian,

Again the Israelites hit rock bottom before turning back to God. How much suffering they could have avoided if they had trusted him! Turning to God shouldn't be a last resort; we should look to him for help each day. This isn't to say life will always be easy.

There will be struggles, but God will give us the strength to live through them. Don't wait until you're at the end of your rope. Call on God first in every situation.

Samuel took a sacrificial lamb and cried to the Lord.

1 Samuel 7:9

Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him.

Samuel became the last in the long line of Israel's judges (leaders). For a list of these judges, see the chart in Judges 1, p. 355. A judge was both a political and a religious leader. God was Israel's true leader, while the judge was to be God's spokesperson to the people and administrator of justice throughout the land.

While some of Israel's judges relied more on their own judgment than on God's, Samuel's obedience and dedication to God made him one of the greatest judges in Israel's history.

Elijah cried to the Lord for the life of the dead child.

1 Kings 17:20

He called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have you also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?"

Even when God has done a miracle in our lives, our troubles may not be over. The famine was a terrible experience, but the worst was yet to come. God's provision is never given in order to let us rest upon it. We need to depend on him as we face each new trial.

They cried to the Lord in the battle.

1 Chronicles 5:20

They were helped against them, and the Hagrites and all who were with them were given into their hand; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him.

The armies of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh succeeded in battle because they trusted God. Although they had instinct and skill as soldiers, they prayed and sought God's direction.

The natural and developed abilities God gives us are meant to be used for him, but they should never replace our dependence on him.

When we trust in our own cleverness, skill, and strength rather than in God, we open the door for pride. When facing difficult situations, seek God's purpose and ask for his guidance and strength.

Psalms 20:7 says, "Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the LORD our God."

When attacked, Judah cried unto the Lord.

2 Chronicles 13:14

When Judah turned around, behold, they were attacked both front and rear; so they cried to the LORD, and the priests blew the trumpets.

Although outnumbered by Israel, Judah won this conflict by depending on God's help. Some kings in Judah's history focused on God, but not one Israelite king consistently followed God—all followed Jeroboam's idolatry or served Baal. As a result, Israel experienced God's punishment many years before Judah did.

Judah had an advantage: The Temple, with its sacrifices and the loyal priests and prophets, was in the southern kingdom. Many of Judah's kings were good, at least for parts of their reigns.

Whenever an idolatrous king reigned, his rule was later followed by that of a God-honoring king who reformed religious life. Also, the idolatrous kings usually served for a much shorter time than the good ones. The result was that true faith in God ran stronger and deeper in Judah than in Israel, but it was still not up to God's standards.

When despised, Israel cried unto the Lord.

Nehemiah 4:4

Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity.

Nehemiah is not praying for revenge but for God's justice to be carried out. His prayer is similar to many of David's.

The work of rebuilding the wall progressed well because the people had set their hearts and minds on accomplishing the task. They did not lose faith or give up, but they persevered in the work.

If God has called you to a task, determine to complete it, even if you face opposition or discouragement. The rewards of work well done will be worth the effort.

There is no one to help, but God.

2 Chronicles 14:11

Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against you."

If you are facing battles you feel you can't possibly win, don't give up. In the face of a vast horde of enemy soldiers, Asa prayed for God's help, recognizing his powerlessness against such a mighty army.

The secret of victory is first to admit the futility of unaided human effort and then to trust God to save. His power works best through those who recognize their limitations (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It is those who think they can do it all on their own who are in the greatest danger.

God will heal the land of those who cry out to him.

2 Chron. 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Solomon asked God to make provisions for the people when they sinned.

God answered with four conditions for forgiveness:

- (1) Humble yourself by admitting your sins,
- (2) Pray to God, asking for forgiveness,

(3) Seek God continually, and

(4) Turn from sinful behavior. True repentance is more than talk—it is changed behavior.

Whether we sin individually, as a group, or as a nation, following these steps will lead to forgiveness. God will answer our earnest prayers.

The poor man cried unto the Lord.

Psalm 34:6

This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

When we take that first step of obedience in following God, we will discover that he is good and kind. When we begin the Christian life, our knowledge of God is partial and incomplete. As we trust him daily, we experience how good he is.

When your heart is faint, call unto the Lord.

Psalm 61:2

From the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

David must have been far from home when he wrote this psalm. Fortunately, God is not limited to any geographic location. Even when we are among strange people and surroundings, God never abandons us. His all-surpassing strength is always with us.

Jesus cried out to the father on the cross.

Matthew 27:46

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

The two lives Jesus compares at the end of the Sermon on the Mount have several points in common: they both build, they both hear Jesus' teaching, and they both experience the same set of circumstances in life. The difference between them isn't caused by ignorance but by one ignoring what Jesus said.

Externally, their lives may look similar; but the lasting, structural differences will be revealed by the storms of life. The immediate differences in your life when you follow Jesus may not be obvious, but eventually they will turn out to affect even your eternal destiny.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

The New Living Bible

New American Standard Bible

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print