

Psalms 140-145 – Chapter Study

All the Psalms we look at tonight were composed by David.

David was a genuinely amazing person.

The sheer number of his talents & skills was **astounding**.

David has to be considered as one of history's **greatest** men.

We think of someone like **Leonardo da Vinci**; an inventor, scientist, philosopher, & artist - as amazing, & he was.

Michelangelo was an artist of monumental stature; he was a painter, sculptor & architect.

Julius Caesar was a great warrior, visionary leader, & eloquent orator.

But David made dwarves of them all!

David was ancient Israel's version of a Navy SEAL; a commando warrior of incredible skill.

He was a charismatic leader whose followers were nearly fanatical in their loyalty.

He was a skilled military tactician.

He was easy on the eyes.

He was a talented musician, singer, & composer.

He was a poet.

He was a dancer.

An architect who designed what is arguably the world's & history's most beautiful building – the temple of God in Jerusalem.

He was a gifted administrator & organizer.

And most importantly, he was a great lover of God with a faith that stands out head & shoulders above the rest of humanity.

The psalms he composed are eloquent testimony to his love for & dependence on God.

By David's day, the number of priests had grown to a large number & their service at the tabernacle wasn't as organized as it ought to be.

Being the gifted administrator he was, he set them in groups & made a schedule.

Along with the priest making sacrifices & offering the regular prayers, he organized the worship teams and made their schedule.

Over each team was a leader, and over them all was the **chief musician** who set the songs that were to be offered.

Psalms 140–145 form a linked-group.

The first 4 are prayers prompted by trouble.

They reflect David's mode of operation that when facing difficulty the best thing is to '*take it to the Lord*'.

Psalm 140

David realistically verbalizes what the God to whom vengeance belongs has said he will do. **12 Poor ... needy**, those crushed down and pushed around by strong and unscrupulous people.

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men,

2 Who plan evil things in *their* hearts; They continually gather together *for* war.

3 They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; The poison of asps *is* under their lips. Selah

4 Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; Preserve me from violent men, Who have purposed to make my steps stumble.

5 The proud have hidden a snare for me, and cords; They have spread a net by the wayside; They have set traps for me. Selah

David most likely originally wrote this when on the run from Saul.

Saul's jealousy of David was being fueled by evil advisors who'd risen to power under Saul.

They feared David's rise because it meant the end of their careers.

So they fed Saul lies, saying David was conspiring to steal the throne.

David prays God will defend him & reveal the lies of these wicked men.

6 I said to the Lord: "You *are* my God; Hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord.

7 O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, You have covered my head in the day of battle.

God had already shown his protection & defense of David in outright battle.

He reminds himself of this so that his faith in God's protection now will be bolstered.

This is an important principle of spiritual warfare – to **verbalize** our faith.

When faced with trouble, when the enemy comes in with **discouragement**, the tendency is to take his lies & mentally repeat them.

Then, after doing this for a while, we begin to speak out what the mind's been rolling over & over.

In vs. 1-5, David prays as the measure of first recourse to trouble.

Then in vs. 6 & 7 he verbalizes his faith rather than fear.

He reminds himself of God's past protection.

If God knocked aside stones, spears, arrows & swords in the past, He could certainly batter down some lies & gossip.

Do that next time the enemy tempts you to discouragement.

Don't verbalize negative complaints – speak out the positive things God has done for you.

That is the very essence of faith!

8 Do not grant, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; Do not further his *wicked* scheme, *Lest* they be exalted.

Selah

9 “*As for* the head of those who surround me, Let the evil of their lips cover them;

10 Let burning coals fall upon them; Let them be cast into the fire, Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.

11 Let not a slanderer be established in the earth; Let evil hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.”

Instead of taking revenge on his enemies, David turns them over to the Lord & asks that they be dealt with according to the measure of divine justice.

Of course, the sweetest revenge of all is that they would repent & be forgiven.

But if they stayed fixed in their rebellion, then David wanted them to become the display of God's righteous vengeance.

Following this 2nd prayer for divine retribution, David **again** affirms his confidence in God's deliverance.

12 I know that the Lord will maintain The cause of the afflicted, *And* justice for the poor.

13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; The upright shall dwell in Your presence.

Again David verbalizes his faith.

The mind thinks, the mouth speaks, & the hands do. It's the process most of us follow.

The thing is, as spirit-filled people, the mind usually has 2 competing thoughts.

One is prompted by the Holy Spirit.

The **other** comes at the bidding of the world, the flesh or the devil.

We make the choice at **which** moves our tongue.

What we utter then moves the hand, which reinforces which of those 2 competing thoughts started the whole thing.

That's why when facing trouble, discouragement, fear, we need to verbalize our faith in God.

And it's why the Psalms have proven to be such a benefit to the people of God over the centuries – because sometimes we find it hard to think of anything to praise God for.

David provides the lyrics for our praise.

Psalm 141

A Psalm of David.

1 Lord, I cry out to You; Make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.

2 Let my prayer be set before You *as* incense, The lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

See? David recognizes the danger presented by trouble, especially when it comes by the hostility of wicked people.

There are times when he was tempted to **go off** on them.

Being the eloquent wordsmith he was David **could** have uttered some devastating salvos.

So he asked God to help him refrain.

Instead of a noxious poison coming from his mouth, he wanted his words to be like the fragrant incense

the priests offered in the temple.

4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice wicked works With men who work iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

This is another important insight about facing opposition from evil; **Don't give in!**

David knew the temptation to "make nice" with his enemies.

But to do so, he'd have to **compromise with evil** & he couldn't do that.

When he says, "Do not let me eat of their delicacies" he means, "Don't let me grow fond of the wicked things they enjoy."

That would be the danger of striking a truce with wicked men.

He'd find his devotion to what's good & right diluted over time by a desire to enjoy what the wicked did.

David wrote only 1 or 2 psalms about the challenge Goliath presented.

But he wrote **dozens** about his **long battle** with Saul's wicked counselors.

Being a warrior, David knew there was far more danger in the subtle, long-term foe than in the quick, obvious big danger.

As a man, he was stirred to the **heroic urge** by Goliath.

But a long-running battle with evil is tiring & over time brings all kinds of foolish suggestions to strike a truce, to give in.

Vince Lombardi once said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all."

David had experienced the temptation to go to these guys who were whispering their lies into Saul's ears & suggest a truce.

But he knew he'd only be able to do so if he joined their side – and they were the enemies of God.

Really, their opposition to David came from their hostility toward the Lord.

So David prayed that God will strengthen him to endure & not give in to the temptation to capitulate.

5 Let the righteous strike me; *It shall be* a kindness. And let him rebuke me; *It shall be* as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it. For still my prayer *is* against the deeds of the wicked.

David isn't just whining because he's distressed.

He's not adverse to trouble if it's purpose is for his correction or betterment.

So when a friend comes at the bidding of the Spirit to rebuke him because he's erred, David relished that kind of thing.

It's what the prophet Nathan did when he confronted David about Bathsheba and the murder of her husband.

No – what David is praying about is the evil opposition of wicked men who deserve God's judgment.

6 Their judges are overthrown by the sides of the cliff, And they hear my words, for they are sweet.

This translation is awkward.

David says he's confident ultimately these wicked men will be exposed & their lies uncovered.

They run things now, including the courts, but the day will come when the corruption they've installed in government will be rooted out and cast down.

When a judge was found to be perverting justice, the penalty was stoning; cliff.

So while David remains silent in answering his enemies right now while they're in power, when they're finally turned out & thrown down, **then** his words will ring out & all will rejoice in the installation of truth.

7 Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave, As when one plows and breaks up the earth.

8 But my eyes *are* upon You, O God the Lord; In You I take refuge; Do not leave my soul destitute.

Even though David & his followers feel broken & as good as dead, he once again affirms his confidence that God is going to turn things around & the reign of evil will end.

9 Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, And from the traps of the workers of iniquity.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I escape safely.

Psalm 142

A Contemplation Of David. A Prayer When He Was in the Cave.

The cave was a place called **Adullam**.

It's where David fled when it became clear Saul would never be reconciled to David.

At first David was alone there. Then his family joined him, as well as an ever increasing number of followers that ended up becoming a small but extremely loyal & effective armed force.

This is a song David composed when he first arrived in Adullam.

1 I cry out to the Lord with my voice; With my voice to the Lord I make my supplication.

2 I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble.

David has no problem being honest with God & telling him how it is.

He was bummed out & feeling deserted by both man & God.

After all the faith David demonstrated in slaying Goliath & serving the raving Saul so patiently.

And now he was on the run for his life with no apparent support by anyone – because they all feared what Saul would do to them if they came out in support of David.

So David just spills it!

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, Then You knew my path. In the way in which I walk They have secretly set a snare for me.

David felt **overwhelmed** because his enemies were no idiots.

They were clever political operatives who'd covered their bases.

4 Look on *my* right hand and see, For *there is* no one who acknowledges me; Refuge has failed me; No one cares for my soul.

He feels betrayed & alone.

5 I cried out to You, O Lord: I said, “You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend to my cry, For I am brought very low; Deliver me from my persecutors, For they are stronger than I.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, That I may praise Your name; The righteous shall surround me, For You shall deal bountifully with me.”

What's glorious is that following David's affirmation of faith in the Lord, this is exactly what happened.

Word got back to his family that he'd holed up in the cave and they came to him.

Then word began to circulate that the slayer of Goliath was a fugitive from the king.

Everyone knew it was a bum deal and that Saul's hostility toward David was because of jealousy.

So all of the disaffected, in debt, & disenfranchised began lining up under David's leadership.

They were the Original Israeli Tea Party.

It was from these misfits David forged what came to be known as his **mighty men** who took him as their inspiration, and following his example became such men of faith they duplicated his example and did great things.

The lesson from this psalm is this: Be honest with God & tell Him & Him alone when you're discouraged & feeling overwhelmed.

But **don't end** there. Go on to confess by faith that you know, based on God's power & faithfulness, that things are going to turn around and He's going to come through to rescue you.

Psalm 143

A Psalm of David.

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, *And* in Your righteousness.

2 Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

As David pondered the wrongness of his enemies, he realized he wasn't without sin himself.

He'd been so fervent in asking God to get the bad guys, he realized he might be praying down judgment on his own head.

So he makes a crucial distinction between the **servants** & the **enemies** of God.

A servant may not always serve perfectly, but his heart is **submitted** to his master.

An enemy defies, hates & opposes at every turn.

David longs to serve God more completely. So he asks God not to turn in judgment upon him.

3 For the enemy has persecuted my soul; He has crushed my life to the ground; He has made me dwell in darkness, Like those who have long been dead.

4 Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; My heart within me is distressed.

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.

6 I spread out my hands to You; My soul *longs* for You like a thirsty land. Selah

Once again we see the genuineness of David's faith in that the first & really only recourse he seeks in his trouble is the Lord. He prays & he praises.

7 Answer me speedily, O Lord; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, Lest I be like those who go down into the pit.

In another expression of honesty, David says that he feels like he can't hang on much longer.

He needs God to do something **quick**.

8 Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You.

A practical request for daily guidance.

As he lives among those who want to destroy him, how should he conduct himself?

9 Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies; In You I take shelter.

Not in a bottle, jug, skin of wine.

Not in a pill bottle.

Not in some therapeutic mechanism like shopping, or eating, or going to the movie.

10 Teach me to do Your will, For You *are* my God; Your Spirit *is* good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.

11 Revive me, O Lord, for Your name's sake! For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

12 In Your mercy cut off my enemies, And destroy all those who afflict my soul; For I *am* Your servant.

Again – David doesn't ask for an end to these guys because dealing with them is a hassle he doesn't want to deal with.

They oppose David because they hate God and David is God's agent.

David asks for deliverance because they are **inveterate** enemies of the Lord.

V. 11 holds an important insight as we consider **revival**. [Preach it – For God's glory – begins with **me**.

We know the sins we hate & want to be free of.

What about the sins the HS has been convicting us about but we don't want to give up?]

Psalm 144

Having cried out for help, David finds it & turns to praise & thanks.

A Psalm of David.

1 Blessed *be* the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle—

2 My lovingkindness and my fortress, My high tower and my deliverer, My shield and *the One* in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people [the one's he's been contending with] under me.

Using the same kind of imagery Paul uses in Ephesians 6, David looks back over his long battle with Saul's wicked advisors as spiritual warfare.

It's been no less fierce & heated than the most intense **physical** battle with the Philistines he'd ever fought.

As he looks back, he sees how in the midst of it, God had taught him how to fight & prevail.

I'll admit that I've watched a little bit of the UFC & MMA on TV. I'm just not into it.

My attitude is, why would I want to watch something that's just another version of my day to day life?

I'm engaged in & observe the **real Ultimate Fighting Challenge** every day!

What gets me so excited about what David says here is that just as he was an incredible physical warrior, God had taught him how to be an excellent spiritual warrior.

That's true for us too!

3 Lord, what *is* man, that You take knowledge of him? *Or* the son of man, that You are mindful of him?

That's the same thing David said in Psalm 8 when he was considering the sky with all it's stars.

4 Man is like a breath; His days *are* like a passing shadow.

In light of eternity, man's life of 70 to 90 years is pretty insignificant

5 Bow down Your heavens, O Lord, and come down; Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

6 Flash forth lightning and scatter them; Shoot out Your arrows and destroy them.
 7 Stretch out Your hand from above; Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters, From the hand of foreigners,
 8 Whose mouth speaks lying words, And whose right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.
 David wants God to show up in glory & show His enemies His stuff.
 9 I will sing a new song to You, O God; On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You,
 10 *The One* who gives salvation to kings, Who delivers David His servant From the deadly sword.
 11 Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners, Whose mouth speaks lying words, And whose right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood—
 12 That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth; *That* our daughters *may be* as pillars, Sculptured in palace style;
 13 *That* our barns *may be* full, Supplying all kinds of produce; *That* our sheep may bring forth thousands And ten thousands in our fields;
 14 *That* our oxen *may be* well laden; *That there be* no breaking in or going out; *That there be* no outcry in our streets.
 15 Happy *are* the people who are in such a state; Happy *are* the people whose God *is* [Yahweh]!

Psalm 145

A Praise of David.

Though dozens of the psalms contain praise to God, this is the only one called a Praise.
 Beginning with Psalm 145 and ending with the last 150 – these last 6 songs are joyous expressions of celebrating God.

1 I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever.
 To extol is sanctified bragging – it's to boast about God.
 2 Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
 God is already perfect & infinitely blessed, so what does David add to God by blessing Him? Nothing !
 When David says he will bless God, he means that he will wish only the best regarding everything that has to do with God.
 All his thoughts regarding God is that His glory & fame will grow in this world which has fallen out with Him.
 3 Great *is* the Lord, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness *is* unsearchable.
 No end to it – that's why we will be able to go on rending praise to God for all eternity, because we'll always be discovering new things to praise Him for.
 4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts.
 This is David's confident testimony God will **continue** to show Himself to each generation so that they can declare to the next generation how good & powerful He is.
 5 I will meditate [ponder, muse] on the glorious splendor of Your majesty [splendor], And on Your wondrous works.
 6 *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, And I will declare Your greatness.
 7 They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, And shall sing of Your righteousness.
 8 The Lord *is* gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.
 That's a very different description of God than is offered by the new atheists like Richard Dawkins who calls the God of the OT a paranoid, cruel bully.
 He says that because of stories like the plagues of Egypt & what happened to Sodom & Gomorrah.
 But here's the thing, if Dawkins had a family; a wife say, & a couple daughters & had to live for a year in Sodom, he'd understand why after a couple hundred years of God waiting & urging them to repent – the judgment was totally just & right.
 Why, if anything Dawkins would criticize that God had waited so LONG before wiping them out!
 9 The Lord *is* good to all, And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.

While God's special favor is given to Israel as His covenant people through Whom He brings redemption to all, He still loves & blesses all nations through the sun & rain.

"Well, wait a minute Lance – what about natural disasters like floods, fires, hurricanes & earthquakes?"

Answering that involves a couple different things.

Sometimes, disasters like fires & floods come because of man's actions.

The fire in San Bruno last week as the result of an old gas line that ought to have been replaced long time ago.

Often, floods are the result of man's fiddling with the course of rivers & building dams or dykes.

A good portion of the recent flooding in Pakistan was the result of man's reshaping the land.

While famine is often caused by a drought, some of the most devastating famines in terms of the loss of human life came because of corrupt government policies.

Sudan's & Ethiopia's famines were all about that.

Stalin starved millions of Ukrainians to death.

Ireland's Potato Famine was made far worse by England's brutal policies toward Ireland.

Another thing to consider is that God does indeed use large scale natural disasters in judging a nation.

But their aim is to awaken people to the much more dangerous condition of their soul.

History is filled with the evidence of how people turn to God when disaster strikes.

This explosion that occurred in the Bay Area ought to be a major wake-up call to every man, woman & child in the US!

A large gas main ruptured & exploded killing at least 4 people & burning down 3 dozen homes & buildings.

Several reports say the line was old & ought to have been replaced long time ago.

A similar report is being given by many all over the country; that our country's *infrastructure* is aging but not being replaced.

Highways & bridges are crumbling. // Water lines are deteriorating.

And the current crop of politicians have no vision for a future any further out than their re-election.

So they don't talk about our long-term needs because they think people don't want to think about it; it won't get them elected or re-elected.

So we're spending ourselves into a deep hole from which there looks no way out except a complete collapse – which is what the more radical elements want because it will allow them to recreated our civilization along their secular humanistic lines.

It's frustrating listening to people blame God for things like the San Bruno fire.

That's not His fault!

He didn't put that gas line in the ground, and He didn't ignore its aging condition.

That was all man!

If anything, His mercy kept it from blowing when it could have done much worse damage.

- 10 All Your works shall praise You, O Lord, And Your saints shall bless You.
- 11 They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, And talk of Your power,
- 12 To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion *endures* throughout all generations.
- 14 The Lord upholds all who fall, And raises up all *who are* bowed down.
- 15 The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season.
- 16 You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.
- 17 The Lord *is* righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works.
- 18 The Lord *is* near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.
- 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.
- 20 The Lord preserves all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.
- 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, And all flesh shall bless His holy name Forever and ever.

