

## Great Prayers of the Bible

### King Davids Last Public Prayer

King Davids final prayer is recorded in first Chronicles 29: 10-20.

#### David's Prayer

<sup>10</sup> David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.

<sup>11</sup> Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. <sup>12</sup> Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.

<sup>14</sup> "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. <sup>15</sup> We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. <sup>16</sup> LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. <sup>17</sup> I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. <sup>18</sup> LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. <sup>19</sup> And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, statutes and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided."

<sup>20</sup> Then David said to the whole assembly, "Praise the LORD your God." So, they all praised the LORD, the God of their fathers; they bowed down, prostrating themselves before the LORD and the king.

The book of first Chronicles is written to the generations after the Jews repatriated the land after the Babylonian exile. However, the memory of that catastrophe lingers on. As they return, they are reminded of their covenant history with God. This is a theology of hope. Assuring the restoration of Israel as God's chosen people. On their record of past faithfulness to God.

The writer of Chronicles is reminding God's chosen people of their heritage, of their whakapapa. Yes, they have lived in exile after being captured by the Babylonians but now there is hope again. The Babylonian king has directed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of God. Israel's punishment has come to an end.

They have been in exile for over 100 years. The great stories of their faith have been passed down over generations. Many cultures have kept their history alive in this way. Telling the stories of the people. The first nine chapters of first Chronicles lists the genealogy of Israel. It is deliberate by the writer to remind Israeli of God's divine plan for creation, within which humankind, especially Israel, enjoys a distinct place. Chronicles maintains the idea of a unified Israel.

A lot of the book of first Chronicles is about David. In fact, 76 references to him. The God of Israel is presented as forward looking and merciful, committed to the restoration of God's and the Chroniclers interpretation of David and God's covenant with his people. God is saying although you went far away from me and eventually, I could not stand the injustice anymore, I have not given up on you. All through, the God of the Bible, is a God who will not give up on us. Almost from the moment that we broke away from God, he is planning how to get us back.

David's invitation to share in the joy of worship represents a significant contribution to the role of a worship leader. As Israel's worship leader, "David models and encourages the people to participate in worship, knowingly, and fruitfully" (NIV Application Commentary, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Andrew E Hill, page 355). Worship is important.

Psalm 150: 1-6, **150** Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.<sup>2</sup> Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.<sup>3</sup> Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.<sup>4</sup> Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.<sup>5</sup> Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals. <sup>6</sup> Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

Jesus Christ stands as our mediator so that we, though underserving in ourselves, can boldly approach God's throne and cry out for our needs to be met (Hebrews 4:14-16, 7:25). We are also told that God himself dwells within us through his spirit (Romans 8: 9-11) and helps us to pray (Romans 8: 26-27) so

that we may, by faith contemplate the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Every time we remember who we are in Christ we will find a heart to pray.

Romans 8: 15-16: <sup>15</sup>The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. The Holy Spirit assures us of God’s love.

The power of our prayers, then lies not primarily in our effort and striving, or in any technique, but rather in our knowledge of God. We can only know God because he chooses to reveal himself to us in Scripture. This means that our prayers should arise out of immersion in Scripture.

We should listen, study, think, reflect, and ponder God’s word. This will help us make a connection with God and direct our listening and our prayer. As Timothy Keller puts it in his book on prayer, “the wedding of the bible and prayer anchors your life down in the real God”. We pray in response to God himself.

Prayer is a conversation with God. Some conversations can become an exchange of information and do not lead to a relationship with God. We do not just want to know about God, we want to know God, to seek his face and presence.

Prayer is preserving and striving. Romans 15: 30, <sup>30</sup>I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Paul is urging the Christians at Rome to join in his struggle through prayer.

This means sticking thru the ups and downs of your feelings. Sometimes you may feel that you cannot pray because you are not feeling the Holy Spirit. Then pray until you do sense the Holy Spirit no matter how long it takes. Prayer can be hard work and sometimes an agony.

Often when we have time set aside to pray, it often feels that everything than can gets in the way of us praying. We also often wrestle in our prayers to concentrate. Our thoughts move back and forth between God and the many pressing duties which await us. While God can and will grant us times of peace and tranquillity, no Christian outgrows the need to struggle and persevere in prayer. Why? Because there is real spiritual power in prayer. David knew this.

Firstly, prayer gives us strength. At the end of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he instructs them to, “be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (Eph 6:10). He tells the believers to put on spiritual armour. Truth should be our buckler,

righteousness our breastplate and the peace that comes from the gospel is our shoes or boots. All the things that have been achieved through Christ must be personally appropriated for our daily lives.

But how do we get ourselves ready for life's battles? How do we get strong in the Lord? How do we become so spiritually sensitive that we can discern what is really going on in complicated situations? How do we get the assurance of God's wisdom and love and power so that we can turn to him and rest in him?

At the end of the passage of Ephesians Paul comes out of the Metaphor in Ephesians 6:18: <sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. When he comes to the end, he says, pray, pray, pray. Pray in the spirit, pray with alertness, pray all kinds of ways, and pray all the time.

You can't get more basic or direct than this. Prayer is the way all the things that we believe in Christ has won for us actually become our strength. Prayer is the way that truth is worked into our hearts to create new instincts, reflexes and behaviours. Want to be strong in the Lord- Pray!

Prayer gives us strength but secondly, it also gives us trust and hope. We need to find a balance between restful trust-, "Rest in the Lord" and confident hope. The final thought for every prayer must be for the help we need. However, we must accept thankfully from God the wisdom or answer he sends. Our father in heaven knows what is best for us.

Prayer gives us power, trust and hope and thirdly prayer gives us an opportunity to surrender ourselves to God. James 4: 3: <sup>3</sup> When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. We need to have a commitment to put God first and love and follow him supremely. This is necessary so he can grant our prayers without harming us. If we are living lives where God does not have our highest alliance, then we will use prayer quite selfishly. We may pray for things that are already or about to ruin our lives.

The truth is behind these words, James 1: 6-8. <sup>6</sup> But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

This throws many readers into great anxiety as it looks as if James is saying we must have absolute certainty in our minds as we petition God. This is not what he is talking about. He defines doubt in verse eight as double-minded.

This is the same language that was used for the disciple of Jesus (Thomas) who wouldn't believe Jesus had risen from the grave.

James is saying that make sure you have decided that this is actually what you want to pray. What you are asking for. Don't be wishy-washy. It means that you have put from your mind all other competing concerns genuine with God. Be honest in your prayers. While Christians will always be capable of great lapses of sin and battle with doubt, there has been a fundamental change in our lives.

We have accepted Christ as our lord and saviour and our only allegiance ultimately is to him. Therefore, every born-again believer can come to God without exception. Remember the ultimate goal of prayer is communication and fellowship with God.

Prayer gives us power, trust and hope and an opportunity to surrender ourselves to God. Prayer also operates with Grace. We must pray in Jesus name based on the gospels. We must always remember that our access to God the father is a free gift won by the costly sacrifice of Jesus then given to us by the Holy Spirit. To pray in Jesus' name is not meant to be a magic formula. It doesn't guarantee any more special attention to our prayers.

It is a kind of shorthand for his divine person and saving work in our lives. To come to the father in Jesus' name, not our own is to come fully aware that we are being heard because of the costly grace in which we stand. To pray in Jesus' name is to be reminded that we pray to God the father through God the son with the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is also accepting weakness and dependence. Many of us can find ourselves in situations of such absolute helplessness that not only do we not know what to pray for but we don't even want to pray at all. Paul's teaching is helpful here. He teaches that the spirit helps us in our weakness. He intercedes for us even if we are simply groaning and crying.

Romans 8: 26; <sup>26</sup> In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

It almost seems that the spirit's intervention on our behalf is triggered by our helplessness. To pray is to accept that we are and always will be totally dependent on God for everything. This dependence should not lead us to become worried about whether God will listen or not.

God is right beside us when we are feeling needy or vulnerable leading us to pray. He is waiting for our prayers.

David concludes his prayer as he started by praising God. David's life serves as a reminder that God is handling our lives well, that bad things will turn out for good, our good things can never be taken from us and the best things are yet to come. We must come to God so moved by his majesty that we are freed from what is bothering us or what we think we need to pray about. That way if we do not get answer to our prayer or not the answer, we are hoping for we can rest in his peace and grace.