

PRAYER, THE CRY OF THE SOUL

The book of Psalms undoubtly expresses our cries in many ways. For that reason, we often go there to find comfort and learn how to present our cries to the Lord. They are testimonies of God's faithfulness in every situation. Psalm 42:5 says, "Why are you cast down, o my soul? And why should you moan over me and be disquieted within me? Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him, for I shall yet praise Him, my Help and my God." Reading the psalms, we find similarity with the writers of the Psalms. It is as if they were expressing our feelings in many cases. The book of Psalms is filled with praises and acknowledgement of Whom God is. Merciful, loving, powerful, patient, etc. In Psalm fifty-one King David expresses sorrows for his sin with repentance, seeking God's forgiveness. The cry of his soul is evident in the acknowledgment of his desire to be clean from his sin: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and guilt and cleanse me and make me wholly pure from my sin, for I am conscious of my transgressions and I acknowledge them; my sin is ever before me... Create in me a clean heart, o God and renew a right, persevering and steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:2-3,10).

The Patriarch Job's testimony of faithfulness to God written in his book, is a book we must not overlook. One, where he expresses his feelings of frustration being confident of his innocence before God and to his friends who came to comfort him. He expresses himself saying, "Surely, I wish to speak to all Almighty, and I desire to argue and reason my case with God" (Job 13: 3). In his deep hurt, where his heart cried before God, he prayed, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat! I would lay my cause before Him and fill my mouth with arguments; I would learn what He would answer me and understand what He would say to me" (vs. 23:3-5). That's the prayer cry from his soul, when suffering was intense and there was no answer to his prayer. Job's desperation brings home to us as we too ask, God, "where are You"? Day and night we find ourselves submerged in the agony of doubt, Where is God? Our sufferings are not to be compared with Job's sufferings, but everyone's soul go through a valley or a desert hard enough to call on God for help. That's where prayers from the soul cries to God in intimacy, waiting for His deliverance as Job, did. In spite of his sufferings, Job still feared God. He had much to say that showed his faith and taught us patience. He so declared, "For I Know that my Redeemer and vindicator lives, and at last He will stand upon the earth and after my skin, even this body, has been destroyed, then from my flesh or without it I shall see God, Whom I, even I, shall see for myself and on my side! And my eyes shall behold Him, and not as a stranger!" (Job 19:25-27). That's a declaration of faith knowing that his eternal future was secure in the hands of His God.

Our Lord YAHSHUA'S prayers to the Father came to Him in deep sorrow of His soul. One, while in the Garden of Gethsemane, before His trials. He prayed, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet, not My will , but Yours be done; and being in an agony [of mind], He prayed more earnestly and intently, and His sweat became like great clots of blood dropping down upon the ground" (Luke 22:42,44); Before then, He confessed to the disciples the agony of His soul by saying, "My soul is very sad and deeply grieved, so that I am almost dying of sorrow" (Matt.26:38). Another prayer was uttered while He hanged on the cross: "My God, My God, why

have You forsaken Me? While the sun's light faded or was darkened; the curtain of the temple was torn in two, He cried with a loud voice, saying, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit! And with these words, He expired" (Luke 23:45-46). Redemption completed- IT WAS FINISHED! His voice echoed through Jerusalem with the message of salvation for the nations.

Time and time again, we are faced with emotional and physical pain; time and time again, we direct our attention to our heavenly Father to be alleviated from it, but many times, as Job suffered God's silence, we go through it too. A silence which causes doubt weakening our faith. The Prophet Jeremiah was a weeping prophet. He suffered much in the hands of his own people, who would not receive his message of warnings from the Lord and they tried to kill him several times. In his trials, he said, "(God) You have bereaved my soul and cast in off far from peace; I have forgotten what good and happiness are; and I say, Perished is my strength and my expectation from the Lord. [O Lord] remember my affliction and my misery, my wandering and my outcast state. The wormwood and the gall. My soul is continually in remembrance and is bowed down within me." (Lam. 3:17-20). We too have many complaints we take to the Lord, as our soul waits for answers to our prayers. However, there is yet room to remember the past goodness of our God toward us, as Jeremiah did in the midst of his complaints: "But this I recall and therefore have I hope and expectation: It is because of the Lord's great mercy and loving-kindness that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great and abundant is your stability and faithfulness" (Lam. 3:21-23). The Word of God instructs us saying, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and supplication and thanksgiving continue to make your wants to God. And His peace will guard your heart and mind in Messiah YAHSHUA. For the rest, brethren whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:6-8). A guideline that will unite our spirit with the Holy Spirit, bringing comfort and hope to our soul, even when not yet seeing the results to our prayers. YAHSHUA'S twice agonized in his trials: the first time in the garden and the second time, at the cross. There is some place out there where we must meet with our Savior alone to cry our hearts out to Him. YAHSHUA'S prayers of the moment were not answered, because the divine purpose was for Him to suffer in order to redeem the human race. He knew that He must go through it, so, He prayed, "Not My will, but Yours be done." There was no other way for the human race to be redeemed. We do not know the hidden will of God for our trials, so, we must adopt YAHSHUA'S submission to His will. The Apostle Paul three times called upon the Lord and besought relieve and begged that his trial might depart from him; but YAHSHUA said to him, "My grace is enough for you; for My strength and power are made perfect and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. Paul's answer was, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ may rest upon me!" (II Cor. 12:8-9).

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways are My ways, says the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isa. 55: 8-9). Realizing our limited knowledge of the future, our desire must be God's desire for us. We must submit to the sufficiency of God's grace, as did the Apostle Paul, no matter the difficulties we are going through, no matter how long have we

prayed without an answer, no matter if the prayer was not answered according to our desire. Let's remember, His thoughts and His ways are higher than our thoughts and ways. His plans for our lives are perfect in the accomplishing His will for us. At the end of the road we can say, "It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes" (Ps. 119:71).