

Psalm 86 is one of five Psalms that specifically says in the superscription that it is a prayer Psalm (**Psalm 17** - prayer of David; **Psalm 86** - prayer of David; **Psalm 90** - prayer of Moses; **Psalm 102** - prayer of the afflicted; **Psalm 142** - prayer of David).

Now when we were going through the Davidic Psalms, there was a lot of praying about enemies because David found himself surrounded by them. A true servant of God will have his share of enemies. One right with God will face some trouble. There will be those who are arrogant who will group together to oppose one faithful. That is what David discovered.

Now one thing we saw with David is that when he found himself in those circumstances, he prayed. David loved God and David loved the Word of God and when people opposed him, at times he had no clue as to why. So what David would do was pray. This is a great lesson we need to take from this book of Psalms. We need to learn to talk to God and pray. This is especially true when we are facing intimidating enemies.

WHEN WE ARE SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WHO ARE IN OPPOSITION TO US, WE NEED TO GO TO GOD IN PRAYER AND ASK FOR HIS HELP.

This point has come from David time and time again. He continually repeats the fact that when in opposition, he prays.

Now one thing that we want to observe is that there are three different names for God used in the first three verses: 1) LORD - YHWH - the self-existing covenant God of Israel (**v. 1**); 2) God - Elohim - the plural concept of the Godhead with God as Creator (**v. 2**); 3) Lord - Adonai - the sovereign master and Lord over everything (**v. 3**).

In this Psalm, LORD is used four times (**v. 1, 6, 11, 17**); God is used five times (**v. 2, 10, 12, 14, 15**); Lord is used seven times (**v. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15**). All three names are used interchangeably, which is something Jehovah's Witnesses deny, and the name Adonai is used the most in this Psalm.

Here is the point of all of this—David prays with a right grasp of who God is. In order for one to pray and expect God's help, one must have a perspective of the Sovereignty of God, the Trinity of God and the Lordship of God.

Now there are four main requests in this Psalm:

REQUEST #1 – In the midst of trouble, David asks God to listen to his prayer. **86:1-10**

When David asks God to hear his prayer, he is asking God to answer his prayer. There are three reasons why David wanted God to answer his prayer:

Reason #1 - Because David was afflicted and needy. **86:1**

This was very real; David was in deep trouble. He was hurting and under pressure. One commentator said don't you dare tell God things if they aren't true. There is nothing more despicable than one who uses a language of spiritual poverty when one actually thinks he is rich.

Reason #2 - Because David was a godly man. **86:2**

David was a godly man; he was not a sinless man. But his life was one that pursued godly things. He trusted totally and completely in God. Notice where his trust is—not in himself, but in God. The more holy one is, the more trust and dependence one will have in God.

Reason #3 - Because David cried regularly to God. **86:3-10**

Spurgeon said if you don't expect God to answer, you have no reason to pray. If you think you can accomplish something yourself, why bother asking God for help. When David prayed, he did so with eight descriptive concepts of God:

(Concept #1) - God is a God of grace. **86:3**

David was completely aware of the unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor of God. Even though he was a godly man, he recognized his dependency on God's grace.

(Concept #2) - God is the God who makes the soul glad. **86:4**

David was depressed but he knew the one who could bring him out of depression and lift his soul; it was God.

(Concept #3) - God is a good and forgiving God. **86:5a**

Here is one of the great theological truths to get hold of in your life—God is a good God and is ready to forgive people. Now why would David think about this? Because David realized that he was a sinner like all of us are sinners. He did not believe he deserved to pray and have God answer; but He knew that God was a good and forgiving God.

(Concept #4) - God is a God who is abundant in mercy. **86:5b**

Notice that He is abundant in mercy “to all who call upon” Him. Those who turn to God and call on God for His grace and mercy and forgiveness will receive it. Specifically David had believers in mind. However, the “all” covers all.

This kind of thinking about God can bring anyone out of depression.

(Concept #5) - God is like no one else. **86:8a**

Now let's think about this for a moment. All false religions and all false deities demand you do something. They have their system of laws and works. God says I will grant My forgiveness and My mercy to all who will call on Me. That is it. There is no God like the God of the Bible.

(Concept #6) - God does work like no one else. **86:8b**

No one is capable of doing the work of God. Even the highest created angelic beings cannot do what God can do.

(Concept #7) - God will make all nations worship Him and glorify Him. **86:9**

Here is a stupendous work that only God is capable of doing. There will come a day when all nations of the world will come to Jerusalem and worship Jesus Christ and glorify the name of God. God will literally cause a Tribulation to hit this world that will force the nations to come and worship Him. This will happen at the end of the Tribulation, at the beginning of the Millennium.

(Concept #8) - God alone is God who is great and wonderful. **86:10**

David is praying to God with this theology about God. He realized that he is praying to a great and powerful God. He had a true grasp of who God is.

Our theology is very important to our prayer life. If we have doubts about the sovereignty of God or the greatness of God, we won't see God do much of anything.

REQUEST #2 – In the midst of trouble, David asks God to instruct him. **86:11-13**

In the middle of terrible opposition, David's desire was to know more and more of God's Word. He not only asks God to listen to him, but to also teach him God's ways.

You know, there is something to see here that I think is often overlooked. Many people take the position that I can just pick up the Bible and study it and understand it and intellectually figure it out. That is not reality. If one is to understand the Bible, one will need to ask God for help in understanding the Bible. Then one will need to sit under teachers who actually know what the Bible is saying.

There are four results brought out:

Result #1 - One being taught by God will walk in God's truth. **86:11b**

One being taught by God lives his life in the context of Biblical truth. One being taught will conform his life to the Word of God. **The quickest way to Biblical depth is obedience.**

Result #2 - One being taught by God will fear God. **86:11c**

One who is right with God has a fear and a reverence for God. The fear and the reverence is in the heart. People right with God have a reverence for God that works itself out in that they do not want to do or say things that are contrary to what God would want.

Many years ago, Mr. Miles was in a congregational meeting in which some of the people were proved to be liars. They were lying in the church and he said my thought was “These people don’t fear God?”

Result #3 - One being taught by God will thank God. **86:12a**

Thankfulness from all our heart is something that should dominate all our lives. Purpose to thank God more for all you have and all God has given you.

Result #4 - One being taught by God will glorify God forever. **86:12b**

The one thing that should cause us to always thank God and glorify God forever is that He has saved us from our sins.

Now what possible reason would one surrounded by enemies have for thanking God and glorifying God? Look carefully at **verse 13**—God’s grace and mercy is so great that it delivered David’s soul from the depths of Sheol.

REQUEST #3 – In the midst of trouble, David asks God to consider his enemies. **86:14**

Godly people will have their share of enemies. These will be arrogant men who rise up against you. David’s enemies were very arrogant and very real. They rose up against him and they were out to destroy him. David’s enemies had not put God first in their lives like he had. They were not interested in the Word of God like David was. So David prayed about them.

I have been reading through the Bible and this morning at about 4:45 A.M. I was reading in Numbers 12. I read that account where Aaron and Miriam started secretly speaking out against Moses. They did not like the fact that Moses was God’s man. As a result, Miriam was struck down with leprosy and had it not been for Moses’ intercession, God would have killed her. Jesus said, “I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overpower it.” When you pray to God and ask Him to intervene against your enemies, you may be certain God will hear and answer that prayer.

REQUEST #4 – In the midst of trouble, David asks God to help him. **86:15-17**

David knew that God was a merciful and gracious God who was slow to anger, but he needed God’s help and intervention.

He asks God to graciously turn His favor toward him and work so that those who were against him would be hated and ashamed. He did not think he deserved God to do this; but in His grace and mercy, he asked God to do this.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1) Acceptable prayer begins with one's concept of God. God is Sovereign God.**
- 2) Acceptable prayer stems from real need, not imagined need.**
- 3) Acceptable prayer stems from a life that desires to walk in God-honoring ways.**
- 4) Acceptable prayer is prayer about enemies.**
- 5) Acceptable prayer is prayer that recognizes the fact that we do not deserve the grace and mercy of God in even answering our prayers.**