

CALLING ON GOD WITH SALTY WET CHEEKS

I. Psalm 61:1-5

A. Psalm 61:1-5 (ESV) *To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. Of David.*

1 Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; 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, 3 for You have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. 4 Let me dwell in Your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of Your wings! *Selah* 5 For You, O God, have heard my vows; You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name.

B. Last Sunday we heard about several area people passing away. Before and after that we heard about cancer battles, major surgeries, a tiny baby born weighing barely over a pound. And all this within our little sphere. Sometimes the only prayer that cuts the mustard is one where we just weep out loud!

C. Listen to these quotes by Charles Spurgeon, a great preacher who cried out to God from the depths: "The best style of prayer is that which cannot be called anything else but a cry..." "Tears are briny rivulets of liquid prayer that point us to the Throne of Grace..." "True prayer is measured by weight, not by length. A single groan before God may have more fullness of prayer in it than a fine oration of great length..." "If I can bring Him nothing but my tears, He will put them with His own tears in His own bottle for He once wept; if I can bring Christ nothing but my groans and sighs, He will accept these as an acceptable sacrifice, for He once was broken in heart, and sighed heavily in spirit..."

D. As a young man I spent eight years in Lexington, KY. Out of a church of several hundred people I remember only two losses. One was a still born child and the other a very humble and devout brother. Both losses happened in our little cell group. Again, that was over the course of eight years. During the past decade or so here, it's been one loss after another. Our prayers sometimes contain *briny rivulets*.

E. Our Psalm in its original context may've been poured out by King David when his son, Absalom, sought to usurp the throne. The coup failed. Besides enduring a heart wrenching betrayal, David's beloved son, whom he ordered to be spared, was killed. Whether this event or another, David's anguish birthed this prayer-song of worship, one we can still pray or sing with very salty wet cheeks.

F. I wonder if Jesus prayed this prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane? Or Jesus' mother, Mary, as she watched her Son bleed & suffocate on the cross? Or perhaps Paul in the Mamertine prison just before Nero beheaded him? Or countless other believers through the ages who've suffered for their faith?

G. Psalm 61:1-5 (ESV) once again...

1) V1-2a: 1 Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; 2 from the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint. (Ever been to the ends of the earth? Your wits end? The pits of despair? Ever been to a '*God-please-don't-leave-me-here-place*'?! Warning, such places are part of the normal Christian life. But take heart, God doesn't want to leave you there! And He won't!)

2) V2b: 2b Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I, (I like capitalizing "*Rock*." I believe this is geology informing our theology. I believe the Rock is a Person. And when I'm in a place where all I can do is cry for help, it's our Lord's nearness, His mercy, His love, His strength, power, and help, that I seek. Geologically there's offers no such Rock!)

3) V3: 3 for You have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. (Protection! Security! Not every tower offers that!)

4) V4a: 4 Let me dwell in Your tent forever! (Notice it doesn't say, bunker or bomb shelter! As far as I'm concerned, the only way to be secure in a tent [or tower] is if God's in that tent [or tower] with you!)

5) V4b: 4b Let me take refuge under the shelter of Your wings! *Selah* (Soak in these words and let them seep down deep.)

6) V5: 5 For You, O God, have heard my vows; You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name. (I'm one of Yours Lord! I'm one of Yours!)

H. If you go on TV, the preacher there may say that if you're hurting or down or troubled, you don't have enough faith or you haven't confessed enough positivity, or you're merely letting Satan get the best of you. Declarers of such nonsense either haven't read Job or believe it should've been left out of the Canon. They might gloss over Paul's trials or audaciously suggest he lacked faith. Yes, Satan is alive and well; the world is still under

his influence; our flesh still craves detestable things. But we all wrestle with difficult things which God allows and those things often put us on our knees or faces and cause us to cry out to God.

I. The people you will grow to love more and more will not be the ones who stand over you when you're hit the ground and scold you or kick you. *'If you hadn't climbed the tree you wouldn't have fallen out and broken your leg--so don't come running to me!'* No! The people who you'll come to appreciate more and more are the ones who get down there with you, harmonize their cries with your cries, help you get up, maybe even throw you over their shoulder and carry you until you can stand and walk. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (ESV) says: 9** *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10* *For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!*

J. Consider these verses as well: **Galatians 6:2 (ESV) says: 2** *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Romans 15:1-2 (NASB) echoes: 1* *Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2* *Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. John 15:12-13 (NASB) are Jesus' words that take us to His cross: 12* *This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13* *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. Jesus demonstrated this the day after He spoke it!* **Psalm 30:12-13 (KJV) is the ultimate outcome of the cross where Jesus bore our guilt and shame. (We used to sing this back-in-the-day.): 11** *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; 12* *To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever.*

K. Painful losses and difficult ordeals come. We cry out to God. Or we see others crying out to God and we choose to cry out with them. Our tear-filled dirges can morph into sweet melodies of praise. Jesus, who also cried out in anguish, sees our tears and feels our pain. The Holy Spirit also cries out with us, with groans too deep for words. The God of all comfort, who knows us best and loves us most, hears us. He places our feet upon the Rock that is greater than we. And we're left with nothing but humility and gratitude in His holy, holy, holy, presence.

* Close with Prayer...

* **Psalm 66:16-20 (ESV) is an encouraging Benediction: 16** *Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what He has done for my soul. 17* *I cried to Him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. 18* *If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. 19* *But truly God has listened; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. 20* *Blessed be God, because He has not rejected my prayer or removed His steadfast love from me!*

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Psalm 61:1-5 (ESV)

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. Of David.

1 Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; **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, **3** for You have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. **4** Let me dwell in Your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of Your wings! *Selah* **5** For You, O God, have heard my vows; You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (ESV)

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. **10** For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

Galatians 6:2 (ESV)

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 15:1-2 (NASB)

1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. **2** Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

John 15:12-13 (NASB)

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Psalm 30:11-12 (KJV)

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; **12** To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever.

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16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what He has done for my soul. **17** I cried to Him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. **18** If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. **19** But truly God has listened; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. **20** Blessed be God, because He has not rejected my prayer or removed His steadfast love from me!

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"The best style of prayer is that which cannot be called anything else but a cry."

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"Tears are briny rivulets of liquid prayer that point us to the Throne of Grace."

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"True prayer is measured by weight, not by length. A single groan before God may have more fullness of prayer in it than a fine oration of great length."

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"If I can bring Him nothing but my tears, He will put them with His own tears in His own bottle for He once wept; if I can bring Christ nothing but my groans and sighs, He will accept these as an acceptable sacrifice, for He once was broken in heart, and sighed heavily in spirit."

Film Clips & Article Links

Bearing One Another's Burdens - John MacArthur - Ligonier Ministries

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/bearing-one-anothers-burdens/>

Bonus Stuff

Romans 8:18-28 (NASB)

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. **23** And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. **24** For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. **26** In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; **27** and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. **28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Quote by Martin Luther

"Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness."

Quote by Francois Fenelon

"Even if no command to pray had existed, our very weakness would have suggested it."

Quote by Jonathan Edwards

"The true spirit of prayer is no other than God's own Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this spirit comes from God, so doth it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and pantings. It naturally leads to God, to converse with Him by prayer."

Quote by E.M. Bounds

"The goal of prayer is the ear of God, a goal that can only be reached by patient and continued and continuous waiting upon Him, pouring out our heart to Him and permitting Him to speak to us. Only by so doing can we expect to know Him, and as we come to know Him better we shall spend more time in His presence and find that presence a constant and ever-increasing delight."

Quote by E.M. Bounds

"What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use--men of prayer, men mighty in prayer."

Quote by W.S. Bowd

"Prayer is weakness leaning on omnipotence."

Quote by A.J. Gordon

"You can do more than pray after you have prayed; but you can never do more than pray until you have prayed."

Quote by A.W. Tozer

"When we become too glib in prayer we are most surely talking to ourselves."

Quote by John Piper

"Prayer is the coupling of primary and secondary causes. It is the splicing of our limp wire to the lightning bolt of heaven."

Quote by John Piper

"Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den."

Quote by John Piper

"Without extended, concentrated prayer, the ministry of the Word withers. And when the ministry of the Word declines, faith (Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2, 5) and holiness (John 17:17) decline. Activity may continue, but life and power and fruitfulness fade away. Therefore, whatever opposes prayer opposes the whole work of ministry."

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"When a tear is wept by you, think not your Father does not behold; for, "Like as a father pities his children so the Lord pities them that fear Him." Your sigh is able to move the heart of Jehovah; your whisper can incline His ear unto you; your prayer can stay His hands; your faith can move His arm. Oh! think not that God sits on high in an eternal slumber, taking no account of you."

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"Earnest intercession will be sure to bring love with it. I do not believe you can hate a man for whom you habitually pray. If you dislike any brother Christian, pray for him doubly, not only for his sake, but for your own, that you may be cured of prejudice and saved from all unkind feeling."

Quote by Kay Arthur

"Where do you run for help? When you are in trouble, what is your first instinct? Do you run to others or to God? Is it usually the counsel of another rather than the counsel found in waiting upon God in prayer? Why is this the way it is? Why do we run to man before we run to God?"

Quote by Charles H. Bent

"A man must not stop listening any more than praying when he rises from his knees. No one questions the need of times of formal address to God, but few admit in any practical way the need of quiet waiting upon God, gazing into His face, feeling for His hand, listening for His voice."

Quote by F.B. Meyer

"Fall on your knees and grow there. There is no burden of the spirit but is lighter by kneeling under it. Prayer means not always talking to Him, but waiting before Him till the dust settles and the stream runs clear."

Quote by Jerry Bridges

"Today as we pray for the healing of friends or loved ones who suffer severe illness or disease, we too should believe that God is able to heal, either directly or through conventional means. To say I have faith that God will heal is presumptuous since we do not know the mind of God, but to say God is able to heal is to exercise faith."

Quote by Tim Keller

"So there's a certain sense that you either get what you prayed for or you get something better, even though it could look a whole lot worse."

Quote by D.L. Moody

"Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all."

Quote by J.C. Ryle

"Fear not because your prayer is stammering, your words feeble, and your language poor. Jesus can understand you."

Quote by J.C. Ryle

"To be prayer-less is to be without God, without Christ, without grace, without hope, and without heaven."

Quote by Leonard Ravenhill

"If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere."

Quote by S.D. Gordon

"If there are two persons praying, there are three. If three meet to pray, there are four praying. There is always one more than you can see."

Quote by John Bunyan

"In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."

Quote by John Bunyan

"Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan."

Quote by William Gurnall

"When people do not mind what God speaks to them in His Word, God doth as little mind what they say to Him in prayer. " - William Gurnall (a saying of a Puritan preacher).

Quote by Tim Challies

"Never resist the least urge to pray."

What Does it Mean to Bear One Another's Burdens?

By S. Michael Houdmann

<https://www.gotquestions.org/bear-one-anothers-burdens.html>

Question: *"What does it mean to bear one another's burdens?"*

Answer: [Galatians 6:2](#) says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the [law of Christ](#)." The word burden here means "a weight of personal and eternal significance." It can refer to a character flaw, a struggle, or a moral requirement. Some have wondered at the meaning of this verse as it compares to [Galatians 6:5](#), which says, "Each one should bear his own load." Are these verses contradictory? How can we bear someone else's burdens if we are each supposed to carry our own loads?

The Greek word translated "load" in [Galatians 6:5](#) is *phortion*, which refers to an individual burden that is not transferable. We each have certain obligations for which we alone are responsible. For example, God has given each of us responsibilities for our families ([1 Timothy 5:8](#)), our churches ([1 Corinthians 12:18](#)), and our personal holiness ([1 Peter 1:15-16](#)). We cannot assume the responsibility for someone else's behavior. We can, however, bear other burdens; we can come alongside a struggling brother or sister and help shoulder the weight of a trial or temptation that threatens to pull him under.

We can illustrate the idea of bearing one another's burdens with the picture of a man staggering beneath a heavy load of grain. He must somehow get this grain home to his family, but he is about to crumble beneath its weight. A brother sees his distress and rushes to his aid, lifting a part of the burden and thereby easing the weight of it. Although the supportive one does not assume the whole load, his help allows the struggling one to carry on to his destination.

The church at Antioch is an example of believers bearing one another's burdens. [Acts 11:27–30](#) records that the church learned of a coming famine in Judea. Though they did not personally know the ones who would be affected by this difficulty, they took up collections to send to them by way of traveling apostles. The Antioch church did not assume responsibility for total provision, but their generosity lightened the load for those who would be suffering.

We are each responsible before God for the gifts and resources He has entrusted to us ([Romans 14:12](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). We cannot blame others, shift responsibility, or make excuses about why we were unfaithful with the assignments we've been given—we must bear our own loads. But there are also times when life threatens to overwhelm. A spouse dies. A child is injured. A job folds or a house burns down. As part of the family of God, we are to come to the aid of our brothers and sisters in need ([Philippians 2:3–4](#)). When a load suddenly becomes too heavy for one person, we are to bear one another's burdens. The added strength and encouragement of others is often the difference between pressing on and giving up.

Unfortunately, there are a few who isolate [Galatians 6:2](#) and make a career out of asking for help. They misuse God's command to bear one another's burdens to avoid their own responsibilities and habitually harass their church families with expectations of aid. Walking in the light of God's Word is a delicate balance between selfless giving and responsible [boundaries](#). If we err too far on one side, we become self-focused and overly independent. But erring too far the other way leads to assuming responsibility for other people's messes. When we aim to bear our own loads, while always being available to bear the burdens of others as the Lord leads, we will strike that perfect balance.

- While he is not the author of every article on [GotQuestions.org](#), for citation purposes, you may reference our CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.