

January 25, 2026

Psalm 4, NIV 1984

Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer. ²How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Selah

³Know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD will hear when I call to him. ⁴In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah

⁵Offer right sacrifices and trust in the LORD. ⁶Many are asking, “Who can show us any good?” Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. ⁷You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. ⁸I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.



Sleep in Peace

Psalm 4

BIG IDEA: When people and circumstances make us distressed, turn to the righteous God in prayer, trusting in him alone for your vindication, well-being, joy, security, and peace.

OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Dynamics of prayer (v.1)

1. Honest prayer
2. Pray with confidence
3. Focus on the Lord's attributes
4. Finding our affirmation in him

II. Encouraging others to pray (vv.2-5)

III. Results of prayer (vv.6-8)

Conclusion

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Have you ever been falsely accused? What did that feel like? How did you react?
2. What does Psalm 4:1 show about how David responded to false accusations? Why was David confident that God would hear his prayer?
3. How does David deal with his accusers? Read 4:2. What warning does he give?
4. In Psalm 4:1, David prays, “Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!” In other words, David is saying, “O God who declares me innocent” (of false accusations in this case). This tells us that God is omniscient. He knows everything about David’s situation and about the false words of all of his accusers. David knows God to be his defender. Read Psalm 4. As you read, list the attributes of God
5. Recall God’s faithfulness in the past. How can His attributes that you find apply to a particular moment in your life?
6. Refer to Psalm 4:4. This week, when you feel anger rising (whether from injustice, hurt, or frustration), what is one practical step you could take to “think about it overnight and remain silent” before responding? How might inviting God into that quiet reflection time change the outcome?
7. Review Psalm 4. In what ways does David say that God affirmed him? How can David’s thoughts about God apply to your life?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

David finds himself surrounded by “many,” so David surrounds the “many” with prayer. In his prayer, David looks to a merciful God to deliver him from distress by vindicating him. He needs vindication from the groundless accusations and slanderous lies that are ruining his reputation, so he not only addresses God in prayer, but he also addresses his accusers.

- Mark Futato

Praise to Jesus – We praise you, Lord, because you are the God who is our defender. You free us from troubles, and you hear our prayers. By offering your Son, Jesus, as the sacrifice for our sins, you set us apart for you. You answer our prayers. You are most trustworthy. You offer greater joy than anything this world has to offer. We can rest because you keep us safe. Thank you, Father!

Repent through Jesus – Lord, we confess the times when we responded in anger, which led us to act in a sinful way towards our accusers. We confess the times when we have panicked and worried about how others think about us rather than resting in the knowledge that you see us, you will defend us, and you bring us joy.

Consecration for Jesus – Lord, because we are reminded that our joy and peace (the fundamentals of our faith in you) are for our well-being when we are falsely accused and tempted to trust our own attempt at self-vindication, we take refuge in prayer that trusts the Lord for vindication. In so doing, we are following in the footsteps of Christ, who at times did not even reply to his accusers (Matt 27:12) and yet was fully vindicated by his resurrection from the dead.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. Who wrote this Psalm? (The title or superscription says this is a “Psalm of David.” But we don’t know the circumstances for the writing of this psalm.)
2. Who do you know that you find it easy to talk with? (Talk with your children about how David shows us in this psalm that he found it easy to talk with God in prayer.)
3. From verse 1, what gives David confidence in God as he asks God to hear his prayer? (In verse 1, we read that “you have given me relief in my distress.” God’s past faithfulness to his anointed king gives David hope for current and future prayers.)
4. In verse 8, David wrote that “In peace I will both lie down and sleep.” What does this psalm and the Bible teach us about how we can have peace from and with God? (This psalm is a reminder that it is God who provides for and brings peace to those who trust in Him. Jesus taught about how He brings peace. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:7 that when we look to God in prayer, we can have “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.”)
5. Take time today or this week to ask your children to help you rewrite this psalm as a family prayer and then pray it with your family.

Recommended Resource to study the Psalms with your children:

WonderFull: Ancient Psalms Ever New by Marty Machowski

Scriptures for further study:

Hebrews 4:14-16

Philippians 4:4-7

John 16:33

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

Isaiah 54:17

Ephesians 4: 25-32

Hebrews 4:14-16

Philippians 4:4-7

John 16:33

Romans 15:13

1. Read verse 1. What specific phrase shows David's confidence in God's past help? What does this teach you about how remembering God's faithfulness can shape the way you pray during current challenges?

2. In verses 2–3, David speaks to people who are turning away from truth. How does David remind them (and us) of their identity and God's care? What do you need to be reminded of about your own identity in Christ right now?

3. Read verses 4–5. What does David say we should do when we feel angry or tempted to respond in frustration? Why is it hard to be silent or trust God in those moments?

4. In verse 6, David says many people are asking, "Who will show us some good?" What are the kinds of things our culture tends to look to for joy or fulfillment? What does David say is the real source of joy?

5. Verse 7 says, "You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound." What does that kind of joy look like? Can you think of a time when God gave you peace or joy that didn't depend on your circumstances?

6. Read verse 8. Why is it significant that David ends the psalm talking about sleep and peace—even while his troubles weren't fully resolved? What would it look like for you to end your day with that same trust?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. As a new believer, it is especially important that you learn more and more how to pray.

Question: In Psalm 4, David had his own particular life challenges weighing on him and causing distress. What is troubling you at the moment? How does it help you to learn from David that we can bring to God anything that we are feeling? Can we be honest, open, and real about anything on our hearts?

2. David ultimately focuses his prayer not on his circumstances but on his “righteous God.”

Question: When you pray, do you typically spend more time praying about your situation and making your requests, or do you spend more time focusing on and emphasizing the God who can handle your situation?

3. David encourages us here that it is best not take matters into our own hands but instead seek the Lord for vindication or affirmation.

Question: Can you think of a time when you tried unsuccessfully to handle something yourself rather than just giving it over to God?

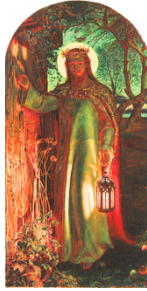
4. In some ways, Psalm 4 is a call to repentance: to turn from falsehood, or sinful anger, and seek a right relationship with God or with an offended party.

Question: What are some areas of your life where you currently need to turn from sin and instead turn to the Lord?

5. Psalm 4 strongly encourages us to think about some important matters.

Take some time to ponder: 1) Where do you find your joy? 2) Where do you find your security? 3) Where do you look for affirmation? 4) Where do you look to find peace? 5) In what are you placing your ultimate trust? 6) Are you seeking true blessedness in anything other than in right relationship with God?

The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



"The Light of the World" (1851-1853) by William Holman Hunt

Psalms Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul. As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

About the artwork and artist.

The Light of the World, 1851-1853, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt. The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios, hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.