

PRAYING THE PSALMS

PRAYER 9-1-1

Saturday, February 3

Reading: Psalm 70

Psalm 70:1 Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, LORD, to help me.

On a cold winter night in March 1964 around 2:40 in the morning, 28-year-old Kitty Genovese was attacked with a knife just a block from her apartment and died in her stairwell. Genovese's murder was a tragedy for her family and friends, but in the weeks and months, even decades following, her death turned out to have a life of its own.

The furor started with the initial report from The New York Times, which stated that police records showed 38 people admitted to hearing her cries for help, but not a single witness called to report the incident...one positive outcome from this tragic crime is that the case is considered one of the driving forces for the 911 emergency call system that the United States has used ever since.¹

Psalm 70 is almost an exact duplicate of Psalm 40:13-17. The opening and closing words are the major difference.

Psalm 70:1

Hasten, O God to save me; come quickly, LORD, to help me.

Psalm 40:13

Be pleased to save me, LORD; come quickly, LORD, to help me.

Psalm 70:5

But as for me, I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; LORD, do no delay.

Psalm 40:17

But as for me, I am poor and needy, may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; You are my God, do not delay.

The small changes in Psalm 70 reveal that the author is in a dire situation. This is an emergency prayer! He needs God's help and he needs it quickly. Being "poor and needy" does not refer to his physical condition as much as his emotional and spiritual state. He knows that only God can help Him and he is confident in God. Despite the dire need, he encourages all those who call on God for help to say "The LORD is great!"

PRAYER THOUGHT: What do we do in an emergency? One reason the number 9-1-1 was chosen was because it was easy to remember. Here are three easy things to remember when in dire need of God's help and deliverance.

- 1) Remember you don't need flowery words. Just cry out "HELP" to the Lord. He is not surprised by your situation and He knows what your need.
- 2) Remember that the Spirit intercedes for us even when we don't know how or what to pray for (Rom.8:26-27). And His prayers are always in accordance with God's will.
- 3) Remember that God answers in His time and according to His will. His plan is not our plan. So don't get discouraged if things aren't resolved quickly. God loves you and wants you to trust Him in every situation.

¹ <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/history-of-911-americas-emergency-service-before-and-after-kitty-genovese/>