

Give ear to my words, O Lord,
Consider my groaning.
Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God,
For to You I pray.
In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice;
In the morning I will order my prayer to
You and eagerly watch.

Psalm 5:1-3

GROANINGS



In the early morning hours we often retrace in our minds what occurred the day before, and contemplate the challenges awaiting us in the new day. In the morning we take stock of where we have been, what our condition is at the moment, and what obstacles, trials or fears lie before us. And for many of us that process begins on our knees.

Please hear me, O Lord, and make sense out of my stumbling words. Incline your ear, my God, to hear better my cry. For my prayer is to You—the only One who can help. O God, at break of dawn You are already attentive to my needs; even as I rise, I am listening for Your reply.

Every morning we rise to a challenge, for, as believers, we dwell in hostile territory. But we never rise alone. We have a God, a King, a Father who cares, and who is able to translate our groanings into the language of heaven.

If there is a cry for help, there is also the assurance that help is present and real. If we voice a complaint about those who stand against us in the approaching day, there is also the confidence that God will meet out justice upon them.

You find no pleasure in evil things, You do not even permit it to visit. Those who live a life of lies and murder You loathe—in fact You send them off to perish in a desert crafted from their own deceit. But while You have shut

the door to evil, O God, You have invited me in—not by merit, but by Your great and limitless love for me. Therefore I will come in and worship You, my terrible and gracious God. O Lord, You know the way through those who lie in wait to ambush me. Your way is the only way—the way of goodness and truth. That is the path I choose; take me down it.

Even with this confidence in our God, however, there are mornings when we can't shake the tremulous stirrings within our soul. For we have dealt with these foes before. They seem to take pleasure in making our lives miserable—and they very often succeed. We know it is a blasphemous thought, but there are times when our enemies appear stronger than our faithful Protector. We know them well, and we want to make sure God knows what we are up against.

I can't believe a word they say. They are evil and corrupt to the core. Death and corruption spew from their throat while their smooth tongue oozes flattering lies. They are guilty, O God: pronounce judgment on them! Let their own evil plottings define their end.

In our anxiety and irrational fear we cry out to our God to meet out justice upon these who are being so unfair to one of His children.

Do away with them, God! Banish them, for they have rebelled against Your righteousness.

Within the fevered clutches of this early hour entreaty, His truth still reaches our anxious heart. He reaches down to calm our fears, to remind us of who He is—and how much stronger He is than any challenge we might face.

But, unlike my foes, may those who trust in You and seek Your protection be encouraged. May those who call upon Your name jump for joy! For everything good in our lives comes from You, O Lord. I need not concern myself about my enemies, for You have accepted me as Yours, so I am surrounded by Your strong shield.

Enveloped in His comforting embrace we find strength for the new day. Rising to our feet, we know now that we have nothing to fear. The enemy has not yet been vanquished; challenges will indeed come. But we will face them with the Lord at our side. His strong, impenetrable shield will never leave us.

For You are not a God who takes pleasure
in wickedness;
No evil dwells with You.
The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes;
You hate all who do iniquity.
You destroy those who speak falsehood;
The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and
deceit.
But as for me, by Your abundant
lovingkindness I will enter Your house,
At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence
for You.
O Lord, lead me in Your righteousness
because of my foes;
Make Your way straight before me.
There is nothing reliable in what they say;
Their inward part is destruction itself.

Their throat is an open grave;
They flatter with their tongue.
Hold them guilty, O God;
By their own devices let them fall!
In the multitude of their transgressions
thrust them out,
For they are rebellious against You.
But let all who take refuge in You be glad,
Let them ever sing for joy;
And may You shelter them,
That those who love Your name may exult in
You.
For it is You who blesses the righteous man,
O Lord,
You surround him with favor as with a shield.

Psalm 5:4-12