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Lent Day 17: The Name

3-4 minutes

Psalm 72: 12-19 (ESV)

*For he delivers the needy when he calls,
the poor and him who has no helper.*

*He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.*

*From oppression and violence he redeems their life,
and precious is their blood in his sight.*

Long may he live;

may gold of Sheba be given to him!

*May prayer be made for him continually,
and blessings invoked for him all the day!*

*May there be abundance of grain in the land;
on the tops of the mountains may it wave;*

may its fruit be like Lebanon;

*and may people blossom in the cities
like the grass of the field!*

*May his name endure forever,
his fame continue as long as the sun!*

*May people be blessed in him,
all nations call him blessed!*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be his glorious name forever;

may the whole earth be filled with his glory!

Amen and Amen!

At the inauguration of a king of Israel, the Israelites would offer a prayer like Psalm 72. This prayer was not only an acknowledgement of the king, but also expressed a set of expectations and criteria for their leader. The king was viewed as the means by whom blessings came to the people from God and he was expected to uphold divine standards of justice and righteousness. Looking to the king for compassion and deliverance for the weak was not naive or wishful thinking, but a hope rooted in the character of the one who had anointed him. The God of Israel is by nature a rescuer and helper to the helpless, so must the king be. Prayers for the endurance of the king's name were based on that expectant hope, that the king would fulfill his commitment to the weak, so prayers for him meant safety and happiness for all.

From then until now, however, no king or leader has ever been able to fulfill these divine standards. Today many have lost faith in our leaders and distrust them all, while others spend their lives and money promoting this name or that name as the one who will finally save us. As followers of Christ, we can know that God has given us the One in whose name the needy, poor and helpless will truly find deliverance. We can know that in Christ, we have a king who is not only concerned with our needs and suffering, but compassionately identifies with them. We can know that in Christ, prayers for the flourishing of his name and reign will mean peace and blessing for all. Do you know that the King truly cares for you and all of your needs? Have you called on his name?

Prayer

Almighty God, we praise you that your Son is the king we all want and need; that his compassion far outweighs anything we have ever seen. Help us to trust and obey you as our righteous king, and may your name be forever praised. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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