Remembering Divine Mercy

Let us turn to our Bibles to Psalm 77. Psalm 77. Let's listen attentively to the word of God.

Psalm 77. I cried out to God with my voice, to God with my voice, and he gave ear to me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.

My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing. My soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and it was, it was troubled.

I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed. You hold my eyelids open. I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

I've considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remember it's my song in the night. I meditate within my heart and my spirit makes diligent search.

Will the Lord cast off forever and will he be favorable no more? Has his mercy ceased forever? Has his promise failed forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his tender mercies? And I said, this is my anguish, but I will remember the years of the most, the right hand of the most high. I will remember the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember your wonders of old.

I will also meditate on all your work and talk of your deeds. Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Who is the great, who is so great as a God is our God.

You are the God who does wonders. You have declared your strength among the peoples and you have with your arm redeemed your people and the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The waters saw you, O God, the water saw you and were afraid.

The depths also trembled and the clouds poured out water. The sky sent out a sound. Your arrows also flashed about.

The voice of your thunder was in the whirlwind. The lightnings lit up the world. The earth trembled and shook.

Your way was in the sea. Your path in the great waters and your footsteps were not known. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Let us pray. Here in the psalm, precious Lord, as you have granted by the guidance of the spirit, the pen of the psalmist to sing praises before you, but here to sing a particular praise, partly of sorrow of his difficulties in life, which is about half the psalm, Lord, which sometimes seems to reflect our lives and our struggles, but he does not stay there. He continues on to meditate upon your power and your might and your wondrous work, deeds among the people, especially among the church of the Old Testament.

May we therefore be encouraged and guided ourselves, Lord, especially if we are struggling with depression and heartaches and difficulties in life, Lord Almighty, to always keep our

eyes upon you and the work of Christ in our lives. We pray this for your glorious namesake. Amen.

In this powerfully evocative psalm, we have a twofold division. I think we can all see this. Sometimes it's not always clear exactly where the psalmist is going at times or where the change in topic arises in the verses, but here I think it's pretty clear.

First of all, we have a remembering of his misery and his heartache and his troubles up to verse 10. And lastly, we have a remembering of God's mercy. That word is used a few times already, isn't it? You can see both the action and the noun and the verb are used and thus the title of the sermon.

In the opening verses, the psalmist details his past experience of grief and sorrow over apparently immediate problems in his life. He even uses the word remembrance there in the opening verse, verse 6, because in writing the psalm, he has a purpose. He gives a contrast of his own hardships and grief with the greatness and wonder and mercy of God Almighty.

And he does this through remembering as well of the Lord's great power for himself in Israel, beginning in verse 10. I said, this is my anguish. I'll remember the years of the right hand.

I'll remember the works of the Lord. Surely I'll remember your wonders of old. Verse 11, I will meditate.

Clearly another way of describing remembrance, recalling to the mind. And thus he shows us the way, one way, to overcome our past hardships and troubles and griefs that may still weigh upon our minds and our hearts. Let us see how.

Remembering Earthly Ministry

Here in the opening verses 1 through 10, remembering the earthly misery, excuse me, his earthly misery, the troubles that he has here and now. He cried out to God Almighty. I cried out with my voice.

It wasn't just staying in the heart, but it moved out through his mouth. To God with my voice, he's emphatic here, and he gave ear to me. He had apparently a recent experience of misery and hardship.

We don't know exactly what it is, but he knows that God hears him. That is, the psalmist is praying to him. The prayer isn't here.

The idea is here. He's talking, of course, crying out. So it's a fervent speech, not just an intellectual conversation.

And he knows that Lord God Almighty hears him, and that's why he prays. And we must not lose sight of that, brothers and sisters. God hears us.

He gave ear to me. We know God does not have ears like a man. He doesn't have a body like a man, but he is attentive more so than any man or woman or child could ever be.

And the psalmist knows this, so he brings his grief to God, the Father. So our prayers and petitions should be the same as well. We should come before him knowing that he hears us, to believe that the Lord hears our prayers through Christ Jesus and his blood for us.

It may not feel like it. You can imagine it doesn't feel like it for him. He doesn't say, I cry out, but I cried out with my voice.

He's giving a contrast here of the past to the present in verse 10 and following. In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord. Of course, whenever that happens, he's going to seek the Lord.

But him crying out to God and bringing his prayer requests before him reminds us we must do the same thing as well. Whenever there are hardships and troubles and questions and grief, misery that comes upon us, one of the first thoughts should be, Lord, help me. Bring our concerns before him.

Our God hears us, but in a unique and special way. He hears and knows all things, of course. He's omnipotent.

He's omnipresent as well. He's everywhere. He sustains and holds all things.

He knows the hearts of men. But he hears his beloved, his children in the beloved, in a special and unique way. Let us not forget this.

We can come before him as his children because we are bought with the price of Jesus Christ and his blood. And he hears us in a unique and salvific way. Proverbs 15, 8 reminds us of this fact.

And that's why the psalmist comes before the Lord knowing he will hear him in spite of his frailties and his sins. The sacrifices of the wicked we read in Proverbs 15, 8. The sacrifices of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. But the prayer of the upright is his delight, his delight, brothers and sisters.

Sometimes it feels like God isn't there. How can I pray to him? He doesn't delight in me. That's not what the Bible says.

Of course, his delighting in us is because we have the Holy Spirit. We have the blood of Christ, to be sure. Without that, we have nothing.

Just like the wicked who give a sacrifice claiming to be one of his own, but in their hearts they hate God and are not one of his own. And God finds that as an abomination. Of course, sacrifice and fear is an act of public worship, an outward expression supposedly of the heart.

In this case, a bad heart. But the prayer, which is also an act of worship of the upright is his delight. He loves to hear his children, brothers and sisters, and so we must bring in our days of trouble, verse 2, all our prayers before him.

Of course, it's vague here, in the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. It could be his own private, personal issues that he dealt with, or it could be something common to Israel, we don't know. But these verses reflect certainly individual concerns as he uses the first person often, the trouble that he has here, that it keeps coming upon him.

And this reminds us again of the great usefulness of how God in his marvelous providence guided and directed the psalmists, the vast majority of which were written by David, of course, in such a way that we don't know exactly what all the hardship and trials and tribulations are about. What exactly was going on? Some of them are fairly specific. It mentions being attacked and violence, that's true.

But even then, we don't know exactly the violence or the circumstances or anything else for that matter. And such is the case here. In my day of trouble, what exactly is that? We don't know, but it's such that we too can come into the text, as it were, and make it our own and say, this is mine.

I can use these words for my own life, although I'm not David and I don't know what he went through. But it's such a universal expression for all of us, and that's why we sing the psalms, and we preach the psalms, and we learn through the psalms, brothers and sisters. And this is a good guidance for us.

For example, if we struggle with prayer, and this is a prayer turned to song, of course. If we struggle with prayer, just read through a psalm, make it your own to the extent that you can identify with the elements therein. And so here we have this psalm, and here we have his days of trouble.

He cries, perhaps, to God, as we know in other psalms. He complains, perhaps. We've run across that in some other psalms, it seems.

But certainly here, he is talking to God and asking for help. He's crying out to Him during his difficulties in his life, and we ought to do the same thing. In my trouble I have sought the Lord.

My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing. My soul refused to be comforted. So it's as though he was laying on the ground or on his bed, as he mentions in other psalms, and your body just flails out at times when you have so much grief.

Some more than others, of course. We shouldn't fall into the trap of thinking, if I don't have this kind of expression of grief, something's wrong with me. We're all a little different.

That's okay. Here, it fits the motif of elsewhere in the psalms in which we have a lot of body actions to express the heart of the matter, of his grieving and miserable existence, at least what it feels like to him at the time. He refused to be comforted.

That's how bad he felt. Some of us have run across that in our own ways. Sometimes that happens intentionally in a sinful way.

Other times, I think perhaps here he means it in a sense of not willful, whatever, I don't ever want to be comforted. I love my misery as much as it just highlights all the more, because it is poetic language after all, it highlights all the more how much grief and even depression he's going through. It's as though I just didn't want any kind of comfort.

That's how far down the pit I fell into. But of course, as a reminder again, sometimes people refuse in a sinful way. I don't want to be comforted.

I like my misery. There are people who do that. It's a strange thing.

I've seen it, but it happens sometimes. So he recalls God during his misery. I remember God, there you was overwhelmed.

Out of emotion and confusion here, we cry out before God as he does, and sometimes we speak in confusion ourselves. Our own minds are confused by how much misery we have. I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed.

He couldn't just even think straight apparently, and that's okay. Sometimes grief, especially loss of a loved one or something especially hard in our own life, spiritually speaking. And he continues on, you hold my eyelids open, verse four, I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

I have considered the days of old and years of the ancient times. He continues on about remembering again of the past struggles that he had. But verse four is interesting.

You hold my eyelids open. The idea seems to be he just wants to keep them shut and just perhaps cry all the time, or he's so wiped out and so miserable that he can't keep his eyes open because he's, as we read here, in the songs of the night, remember it's verse six, of my song in the night, and my meditation of my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search, verse six. I don't think he's saying I'm having a nice, interesting, contemplative time in my life in the middle of the night, but he's crying.

His song, he's speaking poetically. He's describing his anguish in his words. I don't think he's actually singing a real song.

He could be, but it's a song of grief in this case. Everything up to this point is describing grief, misery, hardship of the soul and of the mind and the heart. And so his eyes then, he can't be open because the trouble is so strong he can't even speak.

Words can't even come out of his mouth. So all this piles up and describes to us the kind of state that he finds himself or he found himself in at the time. Verses five and six, we're coming a little closer to more of the latter half of the verse.

I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times, and remember the song in my night, the songs in the night, reflecting upon the past, in other words, here, the days of old, the years of the ancient times, perhaps to the former days of Israel in which it was tied to

his troubles or his griefs and former issues of Israel. We don't know exactly the case. And he continues on in verse six here to recall the song in the night, as I already said before, a song of anguish or just a poetic way of saying he's just miserable and mumbling and nothing really coherent's coming out.

But it's in the night. Why? Because nighttime often for people is a time in which the busyness of the day is gone. And now your mind is easily able to focus on the wrong thing sometimes and focus on the miseries of life at times.

And it just becomes overwhelming. It's a quiet time for many people. But our mind, when not quite too tired, but getting there to that point, can easily turn to other things such as sad things and things of grief.

And from this nighttime grief, this meditation of anguish in his heart, where his spirit is making diligence, what kind of diligent search? A diligent search of questions, of inquiries of where the Lord God Almighty is. It's a thirst, excuse me, a search of anguish. And so we have therefore verses seven to 10, painful questions.

Will the Lord cast off forever? Will mercy cease? Will grace be forgotten? And I think these are all piled up here in parallel form as typical of the case of Hebraic poetry, as you recall. Will the Lord cast off forever? Parallel with, will He be favorable no more? To be cast off is to have no more favor with God. Verse eight, has His mercy ceased forever is parallel with, has His promise failed forever more? The two would go hand in hand.

And verse nine is, has God forgotten to be gracious, right, to me? He doesn't say to me, obviously He means to me. Has His anger shut up His tender mercies? Again, two parallel ideas. He's heaping on poetic waves expressing, I feel alone and lost as though God left me and there was no more compassion, mercy, nor longsuffering.

The covenantal mercies are gone, it feels to Him. Now we know the answer of course is no, He has not. God has not forgotten.

God's mercy has not ceased forever. The Lord has not cast off forever, but it feels that way, that's the point. We as humans are emotional creatures, some more than others.

We know the divide between men and women, that hasn't changed the fact that men too are emotional in their own way. And the psalmist here expresses that. And it's so bad for him that these questions come out of his mouth.

I do not believe there are questions of doubt any more than we had in the other psalms we've been through. We've been over half the psalms now. But questions that reflect a heart being what? Verse three, overwhelmed, grieved, a soul that refuses to be comforted, he's fallen so far into the pit of despair.

That's what they reflect. He hasn't given up because if he gave up, why would he be praying? Ask yourself that. Why would he be praying? Why are you talking to God if you gave up on God? It feels like he gave up on God, I know that.

But you haven't because you keep praying, keep on praying and never stop praying, brothers and sisters, even if it comes out to painful questions such as this. And the circumstances weigh us down and our struggles and our hearts come easily upon us. Grief and misery bear down upon him and upon us.

We struggle with our sins. We struggle with other people's sins and our own on top of that. It just feels like it never ends at times.

Never lose hope. Never stop praying. Keep your eyes upon him.

And he gave ear to me, verse one. At the time, it probably didn't feel that way because he's writing the psalm later in his life. But he did pray to him and you must never stop talking to God.

Remembering Divine Mercy

And that leads us to the second point, verses 10 to 20, remembering divine mercy in contrast to remembering his own misery, his own grief, his own hardships and all these questions that come upon him when he's weak of spirit and body. And I said, this is my anguish, all these questions, I believe. But I'll remember the years of the right hand of the most high.

Remember the works of the Lord, God of the covenants, Jehovah. Remembering the right hand of God, in particular, verse 10. So from focusing on the misery of his life and probably the effects of the misery continuing on into his existence at the time of writing the psalm, he sees God.

And we who anguish the trials of life, thinking upon the we must leave that, turn our eyes from that to instead remembering the right hand of the most high. What does that mean? Well, I think many of you recall by now, the right hand is an expression of God's power and his might. He stretches out his right hand to deliver us is the imagery of the Bible.

Never forget, in other words, the omnipotent power of your God. This is providential, the sermon here, talking about the power of God, as well as the sermon this morning, which had the topic of the power of God. And Paul's prayer at the end of chapter one of Ephesians, verses 15 to 23, gives that long prayer.

And he mentions there the power that works in those who believe, that power, which gave the resurrection of Christ and sat him on the right hand of God, that power that brought him above, above all principalities, powers and all the names that are named. Same thing, same idea. In both cases, the spirit is telling us, don't lose sight that God is in control.

Because I know it feels like at times, especially during election cycle and season, my daughter's like seeing more ads. She's like, what's up with all these election ads? I know it's every, every, every year, but especially every two years. And then the fourth year.

So yeah, and it can be overwhelming. I know it can be, but we are told to remember God is in control. Remembering God's works in particular, verses 11 through 12, I'll remember the works of the Lord, not just the right hand of the most high in some abstract or metaphorical sense, but in particular is that the actions of history where God works.

Now we're going to meditate upon all your work and talk of your deeds. And remember, remember the wonders of old. And so by his concrete acts in history, his work in particular of among the Old Testament churches, a number of the Psalms, of course, reflect.

And this one does as well. He goes back to his own church history of the Old Testament, how God protected them through the Red Sea and guided them by Moses and Aaron, that God is indeed in charge. And of course, his work among the New Testament church for ourselves.

These are our forefathers, right? In Hebrews 11, we can reflect upon this, why God gave us the Old Testament. This is our Bible as well. And then we have the New Testament.

In addition that the Psalmist doesn't have, David doesn't know what happened in the New Testament era, the history and the book of Acts where God delivered and preserved his people through the hour of persecution, especially in chapter eight, where they are spread out from Jerusalem because they weren't leaving apparently. So God brought persecution and they scattered through the four corners as he told them to do at the beginning to leave Jerusalem, go to Samaria and go to the ends of the earth. This is part of the Great Commission.

So that persecution reminds us that God preserved the church nevertheless. And even up through history itself. This is why we have church history every few years.

I hope many churches do. I don't know. This is my only Reformed church.

But we go through every number of years. I'll go through church history again. I kind of add on to it as I learn more through church history.

So we can see how God indeed works with the particulars of our own collective existence after the New Testament era. He didn't stop working in the Old Testament. He didn't stop working in the New Testament.

He's even working today. It may not be through miracles. It doesn't matter.

All things are guided by His hands. Once you understand that, it makes more sense. If you don't have a God who's in charge of every little thing, I can see why you'd be terrified.

Because those little things, as you know, add up to a big thing and destroy your life. One little mistake. It was unintentional.

So He meditates therein. And this gives Him comfort. It should give us comfort.

And what's interesting is He does in some of the other Psalms as well. Verse 13, He speaks of your deeds. Verse 11, the things that you have done.

Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary. What He means there is your way is found or explained in the sanctuary. Not as though I can only find God in the sanctuary and I can't pray to Him anywhere else.

Of course not. Remember, the whole sacrificial system had a twofold purpose. The first great purpose, of course, is to point to Jesus Christ and His future work when He comes, the Messiah, the promised seed.

The second function, as only God can, He collapses two functions together and works in their life, is to teach them through visible means to grow closer to God, to be comforted by these things. Because we are creatures that want to touch and see and hear things, and so God gave them things to touch and see and hear, the sacrifices, the days of celebration, the sanctuary, and the temple. We have a lot less of that because God expects us to be a little more mature.

We don't need all the physical, tangible things anymore as much. And so He does this here, and He finds more significantly, with more significance in His own personal life, of course, of God in the sanctuary. That God's redemptive power, of course, is expressed through the symbolism of the ceremonial system, of His power over sin and death itself, but also the teaching of the priests.

They're supposed to teach. And today, of course, we have preaching in the sacraments. All that outward pomp and expression has now been reduced to simple activities of public, formal worship in the sacraments.

And we have the preaching of the pastors, who can now be dedicated more to instruction than the priest could, because the priest had to spend a lot of time taking care of the temple with the Levites and killing the animals every day. Managing the animals and the instruments and all that takes time. Smelly animals and it takes a lot of work and whatnot.

That's gone. Now we have even more instruction than we ever had in the Old Testament. These are the public means of grace in particular.

That's what it's referring to here, the time of worship and praise before God. In the Old Testament forms of it, of course, these are tools by the Spirit for your good, brothers and sisters. It's one way to overcome grief, going into worship and being encouraged and being directed or even being admonished at times.

You're grieving too much. You can grieve too much in your life. And God is indeed with us and He's with the saints.

We have one another. And you can see that we're all together. Again, we are social creatures.

That's how God has designed us. And so He has done this in His great wisdom as He knows us, giving us the public means of grace so that we can overcome our grief. This is yet another method for us.

But it's there that we see the great majesty of God Almighty, who is so great a God as our God. Not their gods, not the gods of the Philistines, the gods of Canaan, the gods of Egypt. They have a dung god.

It took insects and the dung beetle was one of their gods. We can't compare anything that we have to our Lord. That's how wonderful He is.

And He shows His might and power through the miracles of the Old Testament, the greatest miracle of Jesus and His resurrection and redemption for His people. And all these things that He has done is for us. Who is so great a God as our God? None.

The question is clearly rhetorical. None. Nobody.

Nothing is comparable to Him, for He created all things. They worship the sun. He created the sun.

They worship the dung beetle. He created the dung beetle. We coming to worship before God to the sanctuary.

I know sometimes Christians use the language of sanctuary today more metaphorically, of course. This isn't a temple. We can be anywhere we want.

We're not limited to a specific spot of land anymore as they were then. Wherever we have times of worship, public praise and honor, there ought to be preaching and teaching so that we can learn of the wonders of God, of His work, His almighty power of deliverance for us. And we can say with the psalmist, who is so great a God as our God? And it continues here from this marvelous theme.

You are the God who does wonders. He's going to answer His own question here. You have declared your strength among the peoples.

So He moves here, verses 16 to 20, then, of deliverance from Egypt by way of the Red Sea, to the thunderings of Mount Sinai, to the travels in the desert. And He kind of mixes up the order there because it is poetry after all. The waters were afraid, verse 16.

The waters saw you, O God, and the waters saw you, they were afraid. The depths also trembled. This is clearly a poetic description of the separation of the waters, of God's control over all things, as though there were living creatures shaking before God.

Of course they aren't. But it's a beautiful way of expressing how much power and might God has, a God that no one else is comparable to. And it continues on in verse 17.

The clouds poured out water. The sky sent out a sound. Your arrows also flashed about.

Arrows flashing? Lightning, clearly. Lightning. Describing lightning as arrows.

And the Red Sea again, verse 19. Your way was in the sea, your path in the great waters, and your footsteps were not known. His path was through the water itself, as though God was stepping through it for His people, imparting it before them.

In verse 18, the voice of your thunder was in the world when lightning lit up the world and the earth trembled and shook, which seems to allude to Mount Sinai, when He gave the Ten Commandments and the covenant to Moses. And then lastly here, in verse 20, you led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. They were led there from Egypt through the sea, through the desert, up to the promised land itself.

His readers know their history, so he's alluding to it without being very expressive until you, of course, get to Moses and Aaron. It becomes even clearer for the rest of us, goyim, as it were. We should know our history as well.

Even before we get to Moses and Aaron, our kids should say, oh, waters are separated. That's the Red Sea. Thunders and lightning, oh, that's Mount Sinai.

And the history of the church is our history, and it should be there to comfort us as well. The history of the Old Testament, what they went through, as I went through on Wednesday nights, I hope it was as edifying for you as it was for me, for 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, all the particular ways in which God overcame the weakness of His own people, of the great King David. His sins are nevertheless covered by the mercies of God in spite of His foolishness, and He does the same for us.

Now, one thing I want to note here is that God led the people in verse 20. How? You led your people like a flock, we are sheep, He is our shepherd, by the hand of Moses and Aaron. So they are often described in systematic theology as the under-shepherds.

You can use the word shepherd as we understand it. There's a small s and Christ is a large s. Under-shepherd makes it more clear. They are servants.

But what's significant here, at least for me, I hope for you to see, is that God led His people not directly in the sense of seeing Him and all the wonders, although they had a little bit of that. They had the separation of the waters, they had the cloud by day and the fire by night as a token or a part of an expression of His love for them. But in the midst of everyday life, they had two men with feet of clay that led them.

Men like Moses, who was not always being a prophet all the time, he was kind of a combination of a king and a ruler and a prophet as well. He didn't know what to do with two, we estimate two and a half million, which used to be the size of Denver Metro and not anymore, led through the desert and he is their judge. And so his father-in-law was like, what are you doing? You're exhausting yourself day in and day out judging these people.

He wasn't using his common sense, his sanctified common sense. So his father-in-law tells him, look, why don't you make a layer of courts, divvy up the labor, so you don't have to do all of it yourself. Find wise men.

Is there not anybody who has wisdom and prudence among you? My point being, he used ordinary common sense method that we would use in every other part of life, but in the church, in this context, and God led through that. He blessed the efforts and the wisdom of Jethro, his father-in-law, in this manner. God uses people, he uses ordinary providence.

That was a struggle for me when I was charismatic because I was always expecting something miraculous in the sense at least of I get some kind of instinctive understanding of what to do without thinking. God, give me an answer to this question. Should I take this job? Should I go this direction? Should I do this? I know God's going to speak to me.

That's the language we use all the time. And I find that sometimes, unfortunately, even in reform circles, they don't use that kind of language. What they'll say is, well, God will take care of it.

He's in charge. Okay, that's true, but you still have to do something, right? God works through us, the doctrine of concurrence, right? And so we must not just sit on our laurels and wait for something miraculous to happen, but get up and do whatever it is we are called and our responsibilities in life. God works through ordinary means.

He works through humans. And you don't know sometimes what's going to happen until you do it and you find out that prayer has been answered. And so God has also as well today given us leaders, men with feet of clay, to be sure, that is, they're like us, and that's helpful.

You're like, oh, Yeltsin, he's not some super special holy guy. He's kind of like me. Or unfortunately, if we struggle with our sins, of course, we turn it on its table, on its head and go, well, well, there you go.

That's his problem. No, God did it for a good reason. We might twist it the other way, but he knows that we like to see leaders and to follow men and to listen and to grow.

That's how he's designed us. There's just no way around it. Even in the picture of heaven, the book of Revelation, we have leadership, 24 elders.

There's the imagery there. I don't know exactly what's going to happen in heaven, but that's the imagery there around the throne room of Christ. And so here and now we have hardships and problems that weigh upon our soul, and God has given us human leadership to help us in this regard.

One another, of course, he doesn't say everything in any given psalm, of course, but we have also the leadership that's supposed to be there to help us and to guide us and protect us and preserve us and encourage us, that we too are like you, that we too understand where you have been, because God indeed can seem distant to us. It is hard to pray to someone who's not talking to you. That is, it's hard to talk, and he's in prayer, he's talking to God.

It's hard to talk when no one else is talking back to you. You kind of feel like you're talking to yourself sometimes, but you're not. Your purpose is to talk to God.

He is hearing you, and that's how he's designed it. And he does all this as well when the pastor prays in your stead. That's what I'm doing with the covenant prayer of his people.

I'm praying for and with and through you, as it were, and all of us together bringing our prayers before God. We have hardships and problems, and God has given us the church. He's given us church leaders to help us therein, ideally, of course, in the best of all worlds.

And we have a Father in heaven who is greater than all our sins and all our struggles and all our miseries, and we should always cling to that. And the best way is to remember God's goodness in Christ in particular. Get a Bible.

I'm sure you all have Bibles. Read it. Know the Old Testament history.

Go through it, because the failures of Israel shows the goodness of God, his faithfulness, and keeping the covenant in spite of them breaking it left and right for hundreds and hundreds of years. Read, listen to sermons, not just on Sunday, throughout the week. In fact, they have, I found on YouTube, people have been reading the sermons of Manton, Thomas Manton, or Jonathan Edwards on YouTube.

So you can just sit there and listen to it like in your car or if you're exercising or whatever. You can listen to a sermon of the Puritan forefathers. Recollect what he's done for you.

Write it down. Teach your kids and your grandkids how he preserved you from a car accident, for example. It seems kind of like, well, you know, it happened, but you know, no, God was behind that.

God preserved you in there, and that's a good example, because otherwise, lots of things in life kind of seem mundane. I know you know God's behind it, but we're kind of slow, and shocking things wake us up, and near accident should remind us and our kids, God is watching us, and he's protecting us. And of course, he's protecting our soul, more importantly.

Our Redeemer, our Father loves us, brothers and sisters. He has called us, regenerated us, justified us, and he's now sanctifying us, even through our grief. And through the grief and misery of the psalmist here, he's reminded to go back to God Almighty, because God hears him, and he knows that God has done wonderful things for his people and for himself.

And in all things, we ought to also think along those lines as well, to pray, to talk to the Lord God Almighty, for he listens, and he has power, and he's exercising even here and now for us. Let us pray. Father Lord, may we as your people remember your divine mercy and the power therein.

Help us, we pray, to meditate upon such truths in our lives, that you delivered us from the Satan and his kingdom, brought us out of Egypt, and you continue to guide us, and bring us out of the Egypt of this world, of the fallen world, of the sins around us, and even within our hearts. We do indeed struggle, we do have misery in our life, God, may we not be drowned in it, but ever rest upon you and cling to you more and more, we pray. Amen.