

Heard Prayers

Scripture Reading — Psalm 70:1-5

[Jesus] offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. — Hebrews 5:7

Does God hear our prayers? Yes. Does God answer our prayers? Yes. Not always when we want. And not always the way we want. But we do have this assurance: “In all things God works for the good of those who love him” (Romans 8:28).

Psalm 70 is framed by a single plea: “God, hurry up and help me!” (see vv. 1, 5). The poet is in trouble. People want to kill him, or at least ruin him. So the poet pleads for God’s help, saying, in effect: “Give me a reason to rejoice. Give me a reason to praise you” (v. 4).

When I read this psalm, I imagine Jesus on the most difficult night of his life. He knows that a cross awaits him, so he prays. He pleads with God: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:39). Three times he says that prayer. Minutes later he is arrested. The next morning he is nailed to a cross to die.

Did God hear Jesus’ prayer? Did God answer his prayer? Hebrews 5 says Jesus was heard because he submitted himself to the will of God. And God’s will was that Jesus would die. In the death of Jesus, God was working “for the good of those who love him.” How can we not love him?

Prayer

God, when we pray, help us to remember that you gave Jesus for us, and help us to trust that you are always working for our good. Amen.

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