1. **Intro:**

1.1. [Joseph Scriven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Scriven) never intended the hymn “What a friend we have in Jesus” for publication.

1.1.1. Upon learning of his mother's serious illness & unable to be w/her in far-off Dublin (He had moved to Ontario, Canada), he wrote her a letter of comfort enclosing the words of this text.

1.1.2. “What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins & grief to bear!

What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer.

O what peace we often forfeit. O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry *everything* to God in prayer.”

1.1.3. Every word & every line in Ps.141 is a prayer!

1.1.3.1. We also often forfeit peace, & go through needless emotional pain, All because we don’t carry *everything* to God in prayer!

1.2. **Q: Why is it that it is so hard to pray?**

1.2.1. I had to re-learn how to pray during my down time w/my neck.

1.2.2. I suggest 3 reasons why we don’t pray as we ought:

1.2.3. [1] We don’t know our God very well – “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.”

(Is.55:8)

1.2.3.1. Because we are not like God & do not know Him well, we are usually unsure what we should pray for.

1.2.4. [2] We don’t know our Bible very well – Our ignorance of God is traceable to our ignorance of the bible. God has revealed His thoughts & His ways in the bible *(what we can now understand)*.

1.2.4.1. Our ignorance of God is not His fault; it is ours!

1.2.4.2. If we want to pray well, we must know the bible well.

1.2.5. [3] We don’t feel we need God’s help – We often think we can manage well w/o God.

1.2.5.1. By instinct we pray when things fall apart.

1.2.5.2. But others times we feel very self-sufficient!

1.3. **Outline:** 3 Requests – A request for God to **Listen**! A request for God to **Sanctify**! A request for God to **Protect**!
2. **A REQUEST FOR GOD TO LISTEN! (1,2)**

2.1. (1) “Lord, come quickly to the rescue!”

2.1.1. **Invocation!** (Lat. “in=on; vocare=to call”) – Have audience w/God; come into His presence; count it a privilege not a duty.

2.1.2. A simple man used to start his prayers with “**Hello, Jesus, this is Jim**”. At the end of his life a friend was standing by Jim’s side when he said, “Jesus just came, & do you know what He said to me? He said, **Hello Jim, this is Jesus!**”

2.2. (2) David was not in the temple, nor was he a priest, but he sees the deep spiritual significance behind the “evening sacrifice”.

2.2.1. “The spirit of the worshiper is to be the essence of the sacrifice.”

2.2.2. He has caught the meaning of this **disciplined devotion**, & applied to his own praying.

2.2.3. See the daily offering in Ex.29:38-42

2.2.3.1. Here David fully **surrenders** to the Lord, & **totally** gives himself…like the evening sacrifice.

2.2.3.2. For the **morning sac.** see Ps.5:1-3 “Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the **morning**, O LORD; In the **morning** I will direct it to You, And I will look up.”

2.2.4. The highest form of worship is **giving yourself** to the Lord.

2.3. **Incense** – The incense on the altar was **mixed** together carefully.

2.3.1. **Ex.30:34,35** And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. "You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy.

2.3.2. We should mix our prayers carefully also. {Mix it up w/the sweet aroma of **Adoration**, the cologne of **Confession**, the perfume of **Petition**, the fragrance of **Thanks**, & the spices of **Submission** unto Him.}

2.3.3. Rev.8:1 “And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand.”
2.3.4. Allow the H.S. to ignite the altar of your soul! – Do not pray from a cold heart!

2.4. **Prayer Time** – Invoke God (ask for audience w/Him).
   2.4.1. If the highest form of worship is giving yourself to the Lord, decide to do that now.
   2.4.2. Offer yourself on God’s altar, picture your prayers as incense ascending up.

3. **A REQUEST FOR GOD TO SANCTIFY!** (3-7)

3.1. (3) What grows naturally out of vs.2 of pure prayer,…but a sanctification of our mouth & lips!
   3.1.1. Out of the same mouth there must not flow both blessing & cursing as James told us.
      3.1.1.1. James 3:10 "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."
      3.1.1.2. Xenocrates, the head of the famous Athenian Academy from 339-314bc, said, on one occasion, “I have often repented of having spoken, but never of having been silent."

3.2. When evil is near you & evil people temp you it is easy to say the wrong thing (as was happening in David’s life at the time).
   3.2.1. If the house of God needed its guards & doorkeepers, how much more the man of God?
   3.2.2. Jesus said, “I am the door!” (He loves fulfilling that office!)

3.3. **Prayer Time** – Let’s ask the Lord to purge our unclean lips (like Isaiah) by taking a coal off the altar & touching it to our lips.
   3.3.1. Let’s ask the Lord to help us take advantage of the 2 sets of doors He has equipped us w/to guard our mouth (our teeth & lips).

3.4. (4) Now the prayer deepens & widens, going behind the lips, all the way down to the heart of the matter,…or the matter of the heart!
   3.4.1. Lk.6:45 “For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”
   3.4.2. Here he addresses 3 things:
      3.4.2.1. **Desires** (heart) – “lead us not into temptation.”
3.4.2.2. **Deeds**(works) – David is not too good for evil people; he is too much like them & therefore likely to be swept away by their wickedness if in their company.

3.4.2.2.1. Thus the need to be careful in our personal relationships, & partnerships in business.

3.4.2.3. **Dainties** – C.S.Lewis said, “…All mortals tend to turn into the thing they are pretending to be.”

3.4.2.3.1. If you pretend to act like your worldly friends, pretty soon you will be them!

3.4.3. If our heart is corrupt, our speech & action will be corrupt also!

3.4.4. If our heart is pure, our speech & action will be pure also!

3.4.4.1. But isn’t our hearts incurable? Didn’t Jeremiah say, “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (NIV-Jer.17:9)

3.4.4.1.1. Yes, so we need a heart transplant! & only God an give us one!

3.4.4.2. Yes but later Ezekiel added, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you” (Ezek. 30:36:26)

3.4.4.3. Only those given a new heart will start speaking only wholesome words & begin to act in a wholesome matter.

3.5. **Prayer Time** – Desires(heart). Reach way down past our lips & clean the “well” of our heart Lord.

3.5.1. **Deeds** – Lord, what evil thing have I inclined my heart to?

3.5.2. **Dainties** – Where are you most tempted to compromise?

3.6. (5) **Prov.27:6** “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

3.6.1. They may hurt, but like oil, they heal.

3.6.1.1. Oil was always helpful & refreshing.

3.6.1.2. **Prov.9:8** “Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.”

3.6.1.3. **Prov.15:31** “The ear that hears the rebukes of life Will abide among the wise.”

3.6.1.4. **Prov.17:10** “Rebuke is more effective for a wise man Than a hundred blows on a fool.”

3.6.2. In yesterdays **“Daily Bread”** the quote read “Being too nice can be a disguise for cowardice.”
3.6.2.1. Confronting a friend in an illicit relationship; or a family member becoming an alcoholic; or a buddy with a gambling addiction; or a co-worker trusting in his/her works to get them to heaven; all are not being judgmental but instead is biblical.

3.6.3. Q: Is it “nice” to live by the motto..."If you never tell me that anything I’m doing is wrong, I'll never tell you that anything you’re doing is wrong."

3.6.3.1. Sometimes being “nice” isn’t nice!

3.6.4. Someone said, “If one man calls you a donkey, pay him no mind. If two men call you a donkey, get a saddle.”

3.6.5. True friendship doesn’t flatter; it speaks out even though the words may sting!

3.6.6. David’s pray was answered later when he “did not refuse it”…from Nathan!

3.7. 6) When their leaders fall they are never to rise again, then they would turn to him(David) & take delight in listening to his(David’s)voice.

3.7.1. This is possible written when David was king but fleeing from Absalom, or right before he was king & Saul was in pursuit of him.

3.8. 7) This image is most likely speaking of the germ of hope of Israel’s Resurrection, even as plowing is for the sake of a new crop.

3.8.1. This also is expanded in the famous prophecy of Ezek.37. Where the bones of Israel will come to life. Read vs.11-14.

3.9. Prayer Time – Help me to expect rebuke. - Help me to evaluate it. Help me to receive rebuke(let my head not refuse it!). - Help me to wait on the Lord with it.

4. A REQUEST FOR GOD TO PROTECT! (8-10)

4.1. 8) The prayer is over. David is about to make his way from worship, back out into the world.

4.1.1. Q: What should happen to us as a result of the time spent w/God?

4.1.2. David says that we should leave w/our eyes fixed on God!

4.1.3. My eyes are upon You! – Keep your eyes of faith on the Lord, & he will direct & protect your steps(see next vs.).
4.1.4. **Example:** Fishing boat in Alaska. Asked me if I wanted to drive. Then he showed me **look straight** at a specific point on the island out in front of us.

4.1.4.1. When Zach started driving he would go to change lanes on the freeway, & as he would be looking over his right shoulder behind him, which way do you think we started swerving?

4.1.5. Here’s the key...“Where we look is the direction we go!”

4.2. (9) **Snares & traps** - If our **eyes are fixed** on God we will be able to **walk safely** through these many dangers & temptations.

4.3. **End:** Here is the secret of an **effective godly life** & the point at which all **true worship** should begin & end...“**looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”**

4.4. **Last Prayer Time** (Worship team come up)

4.4.1. I will find my refuge in you, & not in other things the world has to offer.

4.4.2. Keep me from the snares & traps of the enemy(as my enemy seeks to sift me as wheat!)

4.4.3. Help me to escape from my enemies hurtful words, backbiting, gossip, or evil stares.

4.4.4. Lord I am again “fixing my eyes on you!”...Let nothing in this world blur my vision of you!