

Psalm 20

Easter Season 2026

Songs in the Key of Jesus

3.8.2026

Psalm 20

DELIVERANCE IN BATTLE

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

¹ May the LORD answer you in a day of trouble;
may the name of Jacob's God protect you.

² May he send you help from the sanctuary
and sustain you from Zion.

³ May he remember all your offerings
and accept your burnt offering.

Selah

⁴ May he give you what your heart desires
and fulfill your whole purpose.

⁵ Let us shout for joy at your victory
and lift the banner in the name of our God.
May the LORD fulfill all your requests.

⁶ Now I know that the LORD gives victory to his anointed;
he will answer him from his holy heaven
with mighty victories from his right hand.

⁷ Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses,
but we take pride in the name of the LORD our God.

⁸ They collapse and fall,

but we rise and stand firm.

⁹ LORD, give victory to the king!

May he answer us on the day that we call.

Let's play a game:

A. The person sitting beside you will give you \$20 if the first person you call answers their phone!

1. What if we played another game: we call a large corporate company at random, and we guess how long it takes to talk to a real person.
2. Less than 5 minutes? 20? Never?
3. Some companies are a lot like your teenager or young adult:
 - a. you can text, message, Snapchat, or DM,
 - b. but under no circumstances should you EVER CALL them on the phone!

B. David knew who to call when he was in trouble.

1. David is the king.
 - a. When he called out to his people, they responded.
 - b. When he made a call, it was picked up, and returned.
 - c. King David had lots of people whose job was to serve him completely.
2. When David was in trouble, he called upon the Lord.
 - a. David's life is full of moments of Brilliance, followed by moments of abject failure.
 - b. But David had this way about him, that no matter how bad a decision he had made, he knew to call upon the Lord.
 - c. David knew that when the situation was at its worst, the One he could always count on was the God of Israel.

May the Lord...

A. He begins the song, May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble.

1. He ends the Psalm: Vs9. May he answer us on the day that we call.
2. Everything in between:
 - a. the petitions and prayers,
 - b. the sure confidence of victory, and everything else, are included in this hopeful expression:
 - c. May He answer us...
 - d. Seven times, David opens with this expectant prayer and declaration: May the Lord!
3. Right in the middle of the song, we hear the confidence: Now I know he will give him victory; I know he will answer.

B. We don't know the context, the battle, or the history of this Psalm.

1. Something major was happening in his life, but it isn't listed.
2. Was it personal? Was it a national crisis?
3. Maybe this Psalm was a summary, combining all of his experiences into this song.
4. We simply don't know why David wrote this song.

C. Truthfully, it might be best we don't know the backstory because, even though David wrote it, he didn't sing it best.

Who sang it best?

A. Think about your favorite song:

1. You probably have a favorite version or artist of the song.
2. Some songs are simply at their best when a specific singer sings it.
 - a. My mom loved Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers.
 - b. As far as I'm concerned, only Dolly can sing 9-5 and Jolene and only Kenny Rogers should sing the Gambler.

- c. For you Christmas lovers, White Christmas is best sung by Bing Crosby.
- d. My Heart will Go On is best by Celine Deon.

3. Some songs are at their best when one particular person sings them.

B. King David gets the credit for this Psalm.

1. This was David's song and he could sing it with full conviction.
2. You and I can sing this Psalm, and it is true and powerful when we sing it too.
3. But the one who sang it best is Jesus.
4. When Jesus sings these Psalms, when they are placed upon His lips, we hear them at their peak, their perfection, the fullest extent of their glory.

Jesus' final playlist.

A. Psalm 20-24 can be read and sung from the perspective of Jesus' last days.

1. Psalm 120-134, what we call The Psalms of Ascent, were the playlist for Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passion week.
2. Psalm 20-24 apply specifically to the last hours of Jesus' life, with Psalm 22 being Jesus' Scripture and song while on the cross.
3. These Psalms perfectly describe what Jesus was facing during the Passion week.

B. I want us to hear what Jesus could have been singing in his last hours.

1. Imagine Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane singing this Psalm in the first person.

Psalm 20 in First Person.

LORD answer me in a day of trouble;

Father, God protect me.

² Send me help from the sanctuary

and sustain me from Zion.

³ Remember all my offerings

and accept me as your sacrifice.

Selah

⁴ Father, give me the desire of my heart
Which is to fulfill your whole purpose.

⁵ Let us shout for joy at your victory
and lift the banner of your great name.

LORD fulfill my requests.

⁶ Now I know that you give victory to me, your anointed;
you will answer him from your holy heaven
with mighty victories from your right hand.

⁷ This world takes pride in chariots, and others in horses,
but I will take pride in the name of the LORD our God.

⁸ They collapse and fall,
but I will rise and stand firm.

⁹ LORD, give victory to the king!
Answer me on the day that I call.

2. Can you hear this on Jesus' lips?

a. Can you hear Jesus crying out to His Father for victory in the day of His trouble?

b. Notice what Matthew recorded about Jesus' prayer in the Garden.

Matthew 26:36–39 (CSB)

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he told the disciples, “**Sit here while I go over there and pray.**” ³⁷ Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ He said to them, “**I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake with me.**” ³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell facedown and prayed, “**My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.**”

Luke 22:39–44 (CSB)

³⁹ He went out and made his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ When he reached the place, he told them, “Pray that you may not fall into temptation.” ⁴¹ Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and began to pray, ⁴² “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”

⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ Being in anguish, he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.

C. Jesus, in those terrible hours, knew that the Father would hear his cry.

1. Jesus knew that victory, though disguised and hidden by suffering, was certain and sure.
2. Jesus knew that the plans of men would fail, and the wicked schemes would collapse.
 - a. YET the pain, the fear, and the hurt were real.
 - b. The enemy was defeated, but the battle continued.
 - c. Victory was assured, but the suffering remained.
3. YET God answers when He calls.

D. The faith of David and the faith of Jesus hinged on this one thing:

1. God hears the cries of His People.
2. That whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord is saved.
3. That when we are overwhelmed, surrounded, and terrified, all we must do is cry out to the Lord, and He answers.

E. Notice the content the Psalmist Sings:

May the Lord answer you

May He send you help.

May he remember the offerings you gave by faith.

May he give you what your heart desires.

May the Lord fulfill your prayers and requests.

May He answer us on the day that we call.

F. For David and for Jesus, real strength and help only come from God.

1. A lot of things are helpful.
2. Counseling, therapy, degrees, financial success, exercise, all can be beneficial.
3. But if those things are separated from God, they are not helpful in the end.
4. We all need, first and foremost, an active, living relationship with the God of the Universe.

David sang it first, Jesus sang it best, and the Church sings it still.

A. One way the Church sings this song is by thanking Jesus for what He has done.

1. One of my books said it like this:
2. The history of Christian piety knows another way of praying this psalm...as a prayer of the Church addressed to Christ Himself, who on her behalf mounts the hill of Calvary “on the day of affliction.” The whole psalm thus becomes an “Amen” to the redemptive work of Christ.¹
 - a. It would be wrong of us to make this Psalm about us before we confess that it was first about Jesus.
 - b. We don’t want to plagiarize the work of Jesus.
 - c. To use our song analogy: I can cover the song, but it belongs to Jesus.

B. Watch what happens when we sing this song about Jesus!

1. Imagine being a believer and follower of Jesus, watching Him walk toward Golgotha’s Hill.
2. Maybe you met Jesus the day he was feeding the 5,000.
3. Maybe you were one of the people in the crowds who were healed by Jesus.
4. Maybe you’re the cousin of the woman who had the issue of blood.
5. And over the last few years, you believe that Jesus IS the Anointed King and Messiah.

¹ Patrick Henry Reardon, *Christ in the Psalms* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2000), 37.

6. So you dust off the Psalm and sing as Jesus passes by:

Psalm 20 (NLT)

¹ In times of trouble, may the LORD answer your cry.

May the name of the God of Jacob keep you safe from all harm.

² May he send you help from his sanctuary

and strengthen you from Jerusalem.

³ May he remember all your gifts

and look favorably on your burnt offerings.

Interlude

⁴ May he grant your heart's desires

and make all your plans succeed.

⁵ May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory

and raise a victory banner in the name of our God.

May the LORD answer all your prayers.

⁶ Now I know that the LORD rescues his anointed king.

He will answer him from his holy heaven

and rescue him by his great power.

⁷ Some nations boast of their chariots and horses,

but we boast in the name of the LORD our God.

⁸ Those nations will fall down and collapse,

but we will rise up and stand firm.

⁹ Give victory to our king, O LORD!

Answer our cry for help.

C. This morning, we join with King David, with the Ancient Church, and all believers through history as we proclaim the death, resurrection, and soon return of Jesus.

1. These Psalms help us to observe two directions at once. We look BACK to the great victory at the Cross and Resurrection, and we look FORWARD to Jesus' victory at His return.²

2. And because Jesus is victorious, we can sing this song with confidence.

When I call, He answers.

A. When the struggle and trouble are just beginning, I'm convinced that when we pray, God answers.

1. When I'm in the middle of the fight, I am convinced that God hears and answers my prayers.

2. I am convinced that when I'm at the end of the struggle, the end of the journey, and even at the end of my days, I have this confidence: God answers on the day I call.

3. God didn't abandon David, and He didn't abandon Jesus, and He hasn't abandoned me.

B. I don't know what you are going through, but I'm confident that the prayers and the cries of God's people aren't wasted.

1. The Lord was faithful to David; that's why he wrote this song.

2. The Lord was faithful to Jesus, who experienced the perfect, prophetic fulfillment of these words.

3. The Lord is faithful to us, as we call upon the name of the Lord.

In your Day of Trouble, who are you calling?

A. Who is the first person you go to?

1. Who is your emergency contact?

2. It is a good thing to have friends, counselors, doctors, and pastors in your life.

3. But our first call must be to Jesus.

B. Jesus doesn't want to be your last resort.

1. Do any of you have people in your life who only call when they need something?

² Ash, 231.

2. That isn't a relationship, that's a transaction.

3. And when we reduce God to a transaction, we have a religion without the power of a relationship.

4. Even among Christians, we tend to call upon the Lord either for emergencies or for the simple.

C. Beyond emergencies, the Psalmist prays that the Lord will give you the desire of your heart.

⁴ May he give you what your heart desires

and fulfill your whole purpose.

⁵ Let us shout for joy at your victory

and lift the banner in the name of our God.

May the LORD fulfill all your requests.

1. If the Lord was to give you the desire of your heart, would that desire glorify God?

2. To carry our song analogy just a little further, and forgive me if you don't like music.

1. Too many Christians have a Carrie Underwood theology.

2. One minute you're singing "Before He Cheats" and the next minute you're singing "Jesus Take the Wheel."

3. As a believer, you can't sing both songs.

3. The Lord hears, and He answers, so be sure of what you pray for!

Prayer

How many here today need Jesus to intervene?

Is there anyone today who needs Jesus to save them from their sins?

Is there anyone today who needs Jesus to give them victory in the day of your trouble?

Is there anyone who longs for the confidence that God hears your cries and is willing to help?