

Psalms 141:0 ¶ A Psalm of David.

Guzik: This psalm “shows David as a man of tender conscience who asked God to deal with his own sin and weakness before addressing the wicked men who fought against him. It shows that David was even more concerned about evil inside him than he was about evil from others.”

Psalms 141:1 ¶ LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

Psalms 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as* incense; and the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.

David opens with a sense of intense urgency regarding his prayer. He wants the LORD to receive his prayer as a sweet-smelling incense, as a sacrifice of praise.

This reminds me of a few verses in Revelation that make a direct connection with our prayers and incense.

Revelation 5:8 “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”

Revelation 8:3–4 “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

The Greek for “odours” in 5:8 is a reference to incense.

Guzik: “When a child cries out to a parent, the parent hears not only the words by the **voice** of the cry. The LORD can hear the **voice** of His people when they **cry out** to Him, and it moves Him to action.”

Psalms 141:3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

Psalms 141:4 Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

In thinking of his prayers in connection to sweet incense before the LORD, David prays that the LORD will take control of what comes out of his mouth. Incense offered before

the LORD was to be sweet and holy. This reminded me of some verses in James, and I think David did not want to fall into that category of person.

James 3:8–10 “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”

David wants the LORD to take control of his life, of his heart, so that he won't even be tempted to become like those that are wicked and unrighteous. He wants no part of taking part in what gives them pleasure.

Spurgeon: “He who holds the heart is lord of the man: but if the tongue and the heart are under God's care all is safe.”

Psalms 141:5 ¶ Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness: and let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil, *which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*

Psalms 141:6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

David is asking that God even use righteous men as needed to rebuke him if he lets down his guard and begins to act in any way that aligns with the wicked; he will consider such action a kindness. I think he is especially concerned about maintaining control of his tongue. He is committed to praying against those that afflict others, causing great misery.

Verses 6 and 7 are a bit hard. I think he is saying that when the wicked are judged and eliminated from the strongholds of influence they have established, the people will recognize the sweetness of David's prayer (as expressed in this song) against such evil.

Psalms 141:7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth *wood* upon the earth.

Most translations apply these words to the wicked that have been judged and are comparing their bones to rocks that have been plowed under the ground and shown no respect in death.

Psalms 141:8 But mine eyes *are* unto thee, O GOD the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

Psalms 141:9 Keep me from the snares *which* they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

David is committed to keeping his eyes fixed in faith on the LORD God. He trusts that God will rescue him from his enemies and from the traps they have laid for him to draw him into sin.

Psalms 141:10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

David closes with a prayer that the wicked are ensnared by the traps of their own making and that he escapes being snared.