

Psalm of the Holy Power

Ed Hays | Jun. 5, 2009

Psalm of the Holy Power

In the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Power.

In the name of the Holy Power, may I be kind
when I'm needled toward the edge of rudeness.

In the name of the Holy Power, may I be patient
when I'm at the end of my rope.

In the name of the Power to be nonjudgmental,
may I have the discipline to not be judge and jury.

In the name of the Power to pardon, may I forgive
when I've grown tired of practicing forgiveness.



In the name of the Power of Confirmation,

may I affirm others as I wish to be affirmed.

In the name of the Power to be brave, may I be strong
when I am fearful and feeling cowardly.

In the name of the Power of the prophets,
may I not fear to speak out or be out of line.

In the name of the Holy Power of Godliness,
may I be Godlike when I wish to be only human.

In the name of the Holy Power of Love,
may I love greatly when God becomes routine,
when my prayer life seems merely an obligation,
and religion only a blessed business with a bottom line.

Reflection: Spirit, like the older form, Ghost, is a vaopr word. Other than when it is combined with team, it seldom carries a zestful punch. Yet the Sprit of God is the animating force of life, the bestower of the essential gifts, which are presents of power.

Until Jesus was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit's gifts, he apparently did nothing worthy of recording in the pages of the four Gospels. Once empowered by God's Holy Power, however, all heaven seemed to break loose. By our baptism into Christ, that same Holy Power has been bestowed on us. What wonders might happen in our lives and our world if we took that gift of power seriously?

From *Psalms for Zero Gravity* by Ed Hays

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### **The Pharisee's Psalm**

God, come to my assistance;  
O God, come to my help.  
Faithfully I worship you every Sunday  
and return home feeling at peace.  
I find it so hard to honestly pray,  
"O God, pardon me, a sinner."

Daily, with devotion, I read from my Bible,  
finding righteousness in your words.  
Every month I pray with my prayer group,  
finding joy and consolation there.  
I enjoy a good standing in my church community  
and donate money to good causes.  
So I find it hard to honestly pray,  
"I'm a sinner, O God, forgive me."

O God, come to my assistance;  
make haste to help me, I plead.  
I even volunteer at a soup kitchen  
and feel good by feeding the poor.  
I picket and boycott for your causes,  
secure in knowing I'm doing your good work.  
So I find it hard to honestly pray,  
"O God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

O God, come quickly to my assistance;  
O God, make haste to help me.  
With great dread I fear that I'm a Pharisee,  
while you are known to hear sinners' prayers.  
O God, help me to be a good and holy person,  
who's also a wretch of a sinner.  
Help me, O God, who hears the prayers  
of sorry sinful Pharisees.

*Reflection: Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican about the self-righteous and sinners ([Luke 18:9-14](#) [1]) is just as relevant today as when it was told. Many Christians mouth prayers in which they call themselves sinners, yet they are more what theologian Robert Funk calls "honorary sinners." Jesus embraced as his friends*

*the untouchables of his society, those who lived in the zero gravity of not having a self-righteous ground to stand on. He welcomed honest sinners and challenged dishonest sinless saints to throw the first stone.*

*Honorary sinners are rarely scourged by sorrow. Rather than being exposed to the third degree, they are usually awarded an honorary degree. As honorary sinners we rigidly remain Pharisees when we have baptized our vices into virtues. We even let the good we do obscure our awareness of those baptized vices. Who can be grief-stricken about a sin dressed up as a pious virtue?*

*What is a baptized vice? It's making the letter of the law more important than the Spirit of the law, and making pious appearance more praiseworthy than love. Condemning the actions of others as evil and sinful -- elevating it to a religious duty -- baptizes the vice of judging others, so strongly forbidden by the Master. Subtly hidden within our religious principles can be a desire to make ourselves look better by putting others down. So include in your religious practice a regular search of your virtues to see if hidden in them are vices wearing fake halos. See how many of your principles you use as hammers, tools that can build the kingdom but may also be used to inflict injury. Then, even in the midst of your good deeds, you can pray the prayer of a genuinely sinful Pharisee.*

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Prayer action suggestion:

Where is your source of power? Use it to make a difference in the life of someone who is hurting.

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