

For Jesus to be welcomed as Savior

What holds us back from praying that God would be welcomed as Lord and Savior by many people throughout an entire community? It's right and good to pray for specific individuals. But it's also wonderful to lift our faith for God to do great things for many in sweeping waves throughout a people, a neighborhood, or a community.

1. For God to give great light (vs 27)

Whenever anyone comes into a relationship with God, it's never because they happened to discover God. Instead, God discloses Himself so we can truly know Him. This is all the more true when many recognize God's love for them and their need for Him at the same time. God is the One who gives illumines many at once. Don't doubt for a moment that God is able to penetrate the darkness of many people simultaneously. Ask God to bring light to the hearts and minds of many.

Psalm 118:22-27

22 *The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.*
 23 *The LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.*
 24 *This is the day the LORD has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*
 25 *O LORD, save us!*
O LORD, fulfill Your purpose for us! (as translated by S. Hawthorne)
 26 *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.*
From the house of the LORD we bless you.
 27 *The LORD is God, and He has made His light shine upon us...*

2. For God to bring a great day of salvation (vss 23-24)

All times are not equal. There are special seasons of harvest and ingathering in the ways of God. Ask God to bring such a day of His power. Pray that many would respond with amazement and wonder to His love.

3. For Christ to be received and no longer rejected (vs 22, 25)

We are all builders. In every city, people or family, people strive to put together a good life. But what we try to engineer usually comes to nothing. God wants to exalt Jesus, the finishing capstone for every life, family, city and people. He is the very One who has been overlooked, despised and rejected. Pray that God would exalt Jesus and stir the hearts of many to yearn for Him and receive Him.

- **Concerning our past: Save us!** We generally reject any notion of needing a Savior, because we reject the notion that we are afflicted by or complicit with evil. But our sin is real. In days of revival, many people come to see their need for a Savior. The Hebrew word for this prayer (*hoshia na*) is the root for the Palm Sunday prayer and cry "Hosanna!" Pray in identity with your city or people. You can pray "Save us! Be our Savior!" on their behalf.
- **Concerning hope for our destiny: Fulfill Your purpose for us!** The parallel prayer in verse 25 is one which is sometimes translated with language about success or prosperity. The basic Hebrew word means "rush" or "push toward fulfillment" or "accomplish what is intended." It's not really talking about acquiring more wealth. It's all about God accomplishing His intended yearnings for an entire community. It's a prayer of hope and purpose. Pray again in identity with your people and city. Pray for marvelous times of healing and hope under the masterful leadership of Jesus as people welcome Him as their Savior and King.

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Use this prayer session as a way of enlarging prayers beyond the on an single individual. It can be incredibly refreshing to pray with a large scale anticipation of a great ingathering to Christ.

Pray for specific problems in light of God's great purposes

These prayers may seem to some to be far too generic. It may be felt, or asked, "Why not deal with specific requests?" Particular requests for specific needs can be very helpful to focus our prayers. But when we get in a rut of what can be called "request management" we often articulate some solutions to problems. Such problem-solving prayers usually becomes boring and repetitive. Stretch toward praying toward a large and wonderful purpose.

Focus your prayers

Focus your prayers on a particular people, city, neighborhood, or network. Form small groups to reinforce prayers and keep more people praying.

1. Individual Salvation: Open by reading Psalm 118:17-21

You might want to open the session with a discussion about how God brings about individual salvation. Read this portion. Recount stories of how God has opened the way of salvation for particular people.

2. City-wide Salvation: Continue by reading Psalm 118:22-27

In contrast to the previous section, verses 22-27 are statements and prayers of many people at once. See if you can pick out how many of the parts of this portion are quoted on Palm Sunday, or the days following. Along with the Hosannas (vs 25) and the cry "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (vs 26) there was also the lifting of boughs and moving in procession (vs 27 in the NIV). There was also Christ's own quotation of vs 22 in Matthew 21:42.

3. Rounds of prayer

Of course, you can pray through the Psalm in any order, but the primacy of God's light may be the best place to start.

- **For God's light.** There are many ways to make this prayer more specific. Name people, or neighborhoods, or leaders. Or you can mention specific aspects of God's character and love that you want Him to illumine.
- **For God's day.** It's almost always wrong to assume that God isn't doing anything yet and that your prayers start something. Instead, pray for God to accelerate His work already unfolding in people's lives. Ask Him to do wonderful things that make people marvel. What would amaze people? God has done many wonderful things that go unnoticed. Pray that God would shed such brilliant light, that His love would become unmistakable.
- **For God's Salvation and Completion.** We are all builders. Pray that Jesus, the rejected One, will be acclaimed and welcomed as Savior and King. Find creative ways to pray in identity with the people of your city. Cry Hosanna! for them, as if they were crying out for God to save them in ways they never thought possible. Mention some of the different ways that God wants to thwart evil and bring a renewing work. Of course, He wants to bring people to eternal life. But salvation means so much more. Mention crime, family violence, disease, broken relationships, and much more. God's salvation brings about newness in all these areas.