

## **Permission to Speak Freely: In the Secret Chamber of Prayer**

By Ken Wilson January 6-7 2007

When a soldier needs to speak to an officer with a freedom beyond the customs of rank, he or she seeks "permission to speak freely."

We receive permission to speak freely in the secret chambers of prayer and there we learn to grant others the same permission. Thus we are to become a community that together learns to "speak the truth in love."

We don't automatically know how to do this

- + Christian groups as well as any, can short cut true love via group-think
- + Families may enforce "no talking" rules
- + We may think the only way forward is: "I'm not going to take it!"

Another approach: What if it's permission received, first from God for use with God in the prayer chamber, where we learn to grant this permission to others. Only then can we become the kind of community where the rule of love prevails as we learn to "speak the truth in love," and bring that freedom to all we do.

The Psalms confirm that God does give permission to speak freely.

**You know there's permission to speak freely when...you're free to be less than polite with God.** "Listen, God, to my prayer; do not hide from my pleading; hear me and give answer." Ps 55: 1-2

**You know there's permission to speak freely when...you don't have to put a lid on your feelings.** "I rock with grief...." (55:3)

"I groan at the uproar of the enemy, the clamor of the wicked. They heap trouble upon me, savagely accuse me. My heart pounds within me; death terrors fall upon me; shuddering sweeps over me." (55: 4-5)

In our efforts to be cool, calm and in control we put a lid on our feelings much of the time. Prayer is the zone of ultimate freedom: freedom to express our anguish and our joy in whatever shade or flavor it may come.

The range of feeling expressed in Psalms is the full human range, not the polite company range some of us try to live with all the time.

**You know there's permission to speak freely when....you're free to let the ugly out.** "Let death take them by surprise; let them go down alive to Sheol" (Ps. 55: 16) It's a plain fact: the Psalmists say some of the meanest, nastiest, ugliest things.

Psalm 137 in three stanzas:

First stanza; 137: 1-4, a bitter-sweet sorrow

Second stanza; 137: 5-6, a stirring national anthem

Third stanza; 137: 7-9, who let the dog out

What permission to speak freely to God doesn't mean:

- 1. It doesn't mean venting is the highway to wholeness.**
- 2. It doesn't mean we don't take some things back that we've spoken freely.**
- 3. It doesn't mean God isn't free to speak back freely. (Job)**

Putting it into practice:

- 1. Try writing God a letter when the words are stuck in your gut.**
- 2. Get familiar with the repertoire of prayer found in psalms.**

Our task in life is to learn our own melody to sing with God in the company of others. We don't learn our own part by closing our ears to the singing of others. Their songs are the scratch from which ours are made. Ultimately we are forming a choir in concert, only stretched across time as well as a stage.

- + put a sticky note in the book of Psalms for ready reference
- + try praying a psalm or two before bed
- + The Divine Hours is a way to get familiar with the psalms.

- 3. Save the choice lines in your memory file for ready retrieval.**

