

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE PSALMS OF DAVID

Psalms 37 - 41

A VERSE-BY-VERSE STUDY

by

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[BOOK 49-G]

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WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?**Salvation is available for all members of the human race.**

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation, neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise, nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:

My sins are taken away (John 1:29),

I possess eternal life now (1 John 5:11,12),

I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),

The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (1 Corinthians 6:19),

And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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THE PSALMS OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR:

David was the youngest son of Jesse and ruled Israel from B.C. 1052 - 1012. He was a skilled musician even as a young man (1Samuel 16:18-23), and as is seen in 1Chronicles 16:7 and 2Samuel 23:1, continued writing psalms through to the end of his life. The first forty-one psalms are all attributed to David with a number of others scattered throughout the remainder of the book.

The book we have before us was the hymn book of the early church and of Israel beforehand. These Psalms form the finest musical expression of spiritual life, with all its ups and downs, than appears in the literature of any other nation that has ever lived upon the earth. The Psalms were the comfort to my old father as he walked the decks of his warship in World War II, and continued to be his comfort through the even darker days of cardiac caused episodic dementia as his life ebbed away in the Old Folks Home where he finally died full of years at 90. Through the most incredible pressures I have faced over the last eleven years in my own life they have comforted my soul with the same power they did when I was a young university student. I love this book!

I love my brothers in the Lord who wrote these psalms, and there were many authors, and they all testify to the grace, mercy, love, and patience of God with us all. David wrote all the psalms of the first section (or "book") of the collection, and he is a "trophy of grace" if ever there was one. David gives me hope every day, for if he could be forgiven and lifted up to serve again after his great sin, then there is hope for each and every one of us. The "Sons of Korah" later in the book also testify to the grace and mercy of the Lord, for they ought not to even live, given the great sin and judgment that came upon their forefather, and yet the "remnant of grace" survived and they lived on to sing the glory of the Lord who judged their ancestor in justice and righteousness and saved their posterity in loving kindness. King Hezekiah also figures as an author, and he also testifies to the grace and mercy of the Lord under the greatest time of national suffering.

King David was the youngest son of Jesse and ruled Israel from approximately B.C. 1052 - 1012. David learned to play music on the hills around Bethlehem and his skill saved his life several times from the madness of Saul. He was a skilled musician even as a young man (1 Samuel 16:18-23), and as is seen in 1 Chronicles 16:7 and 2 Samuel 23:1, continued writing psalms through to the end of his life. The psalms were his heart felt expression of his walk with God and his honesty with the Lord is at times overwhelming and humbling. The first forty-one psalms are, with a handful of anonymous exceptions, all attributed to David with a number of others scattered throughout the remainder of the book. The entire collection is called after him as he is the greatest of the singers of Israel, and their great king from whom Messiah is to come. It was probably collected into its final form that we see today by Ezra after the return of the Exiles from Babylon, but it had existed in earlier forms right back to the days of David and Solomon and in its five sections formed the song book for the Temple worship services, just as it will again in the Millennial Temple.

In the entire book of Psalms David is specifically credited as author of 73 Psalms, Asaph with 12, the Sons of Korah with 10, Moses with 1, Solomon with 2, Ethan with 1, Heman with 1, and 50 are anonymous.

I thank Brian Huggett, who did the earlier series of volumes on these Genesis Psalms, and I honour him for these works. My Reflections and Application points are the result of my present walk through a deep "valley of the shadow of death" that the Lord has allowed me to walk through at this time in 2014. It has been the severity of the trials I have experienced over recent weeks that has moved me to reflect deeply on these psalms and rewrite these books for our ministry. I have been encouraged and pray you will be.

PSALMS SECTION ONE**THE GENESIS PSALMS – PSALMS 1 - 41****INTRODUCTION**

The Psalms are arranged in five specific books. Book 1 covers Psalms 1 – 41, and is tied to the book of Genesis, book 2 covers Psalms 42-72 and is tied to the book of Exodus, book 3 covers Psalms 73-89, and is tied to the book of Leviticus, book 4 covers Psalms 90 – 106, and is tied to the book of Numbers, and book 5 covers Psalms 107-150, and is tied to the book of Deuteronomy. The book of the Psalms gets into its final form in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (around 440 BC) when books four and five of the Psalms appear to be added to the earlier collection. The longest Psalm, 119, dates from the time of the Exile to Babylon in the early sixth century, but there are others that may date from the times after the Exiles return in 535 BC, and even some from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century BC.

The dominant name for God used in this section is “Jehovah - JHWH”, the holy name of God given to Moses. It is used 277 times in this book of the Psalms, well ahead of the next three sections, with the last section alone getting close with 226 uses of this special name of God. This name of God was never pronounced so do not get into debate about whether it should be said as “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”, because it was simply breathed through by the readers, or the word “Adonai”, or Lord, used in its place. Other names for God used in this first book of the Psalms are, Elohim 48 times, El 15 times, Adonai 11 times, Alyon 3 times, Adon 2 times, and Eloah once. Refer to the doctrinal study on the names of God below to explore the significance of these names, as all carry important reference to the psalmist’s understanding of the triune God.

Just as Genesis was the book of beginnings, or “first principles” so this section of the Psalms covers doctrinal topics that are the “first principles of faith”. The section begins with the consequences of the Fall of Mankind in the Garden of Eden, where man confronts his daily choices as to what his eternal destiny is to be. This section includes many of the psalms of the Great Rebellion of Absalom where David must face the consequences of his own great sin with Bathsheba that let loose such evil in his own household. This section traces man’s choices and the terrible and gracious consequences of those as they work out in time. David must face the full reality of his life and works, both for good and for evil and bring them to the Lord for solution. 1 Peter 5:5-10. He does and we rejoice in the things we learn about ourselves through our brother David and the things we learn about our great redeemer through his honesty in confronting his sins, fears, doubts and errors.

These five Psalms (37-41) are Psalms that continue the theme of worship, as our response to God’s forgiveness and mercy. The King continues his theme from earlier Psalms and gives advice on worship in relation to forgiveness and deliverance.

Psalm 37	The Enigma of Temporal Prosperity – (How evil men can prosper and the righteous suffer)
Psalm 38	The Psalmist’s Cry to the Lord in Great Suffering
Psalm 39	God’s Compassion when We Fail to Live up to our Promises
Psalm 40	God’s Deliverance through Great Anguish of Soul
Psalm 41	Abuse and Assurance – Encouragement As We Face Evil Men

DOCTRINE**CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS****Notes**

Psalm 37

The Enigma of Temporal Prosperity – (How evil men can prosper and the righteous suffer)

A Psalm of David

David appears to have written this psalm in his old age (Psalm 37:25), and so it reflects his mature thoughts upon the prosperity of evil men and women and the time they appear to be “getting away with evil”. This is a reflection of older men and women, as we think upon the justice of God in time and in eternity. We know that God will balance all things out in the end, but we wonder at times about why some seem to be “getting away with murder” for a long time.

In its construction the Psalm resembles a chapter of the book of Proverbs, in that most of the verses are complete in themselves. It is a formally structured psalm and the very tightness of the alphabetic structure makes the argument more thoughtful. The thought here doesn't flow; it is point by point as we go and is meant to make us pause after each verse and think and pray about the principle contained in it.

“This is one of the ‘alphabetical’ psalms: In this psalm the uniqueness of the composition is, that the successive letters of the alphabet occur at the beginning of every other verse, the first, the third, the fifth... although there are exceptions.” (Barnes)

“This may have been not only a poetical invention, but a help to memory” (Spurgeon). This was a psalm that taught and so a psalm that was memorised and reflected upon by believers through the ages, as its themes are troublesome ones for us all as we grapple with the power that evil people can have at times.

Psalm 37:1-2

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.”

REFLECTION

These words speak directly into my soul and spirit this morning, as I face the financial pressures caused by people I cannot move or influence. I have over recent months and years been “fretting” over things I cannot control, and the Lord's message has strongly been, “Wait upon the Lord”. How often do we “fret”, building up a good head of steam over the impact of others upon us?

It is easy and normal, indeed an aspect of our fallen humanity, to worry and get “heated” over issues we have no ability to influence or control. As we stress about things the very metabolism of the body speeds up and creates heat within, and so this old Hebrew word is a good one to describe the physiological reaction that wears us out over time. Rather than burning internal fuel and wearing our body out with stress, David will counsel prayer in this psalm, as he has in others. This is his mature reflection upon worry about evil men's influence and their prosperity.

David identifies something beyond just the worry about the impact of evil men's activities, but the move to actual jealousy and envy of their position. I recall events over recent and distant years with a smile, for I have known this myself in the past. I have seen corrupt businessmen drive past me in their expensive car, heading for their mansion, while I walked because I could not then afford to repair my old car. The desire to kick their car, or them, was present with me! This was sin then and would be sin now if it remained in my soul, for it is sheer Old Sin Nature envy and jealousy and if left in the soul it creates deep bitterness that rots the soul itself. God hates it! Proverbs 6:16-19.

It is sinful not just because it is stemming from the Old Sin Nature area of weakness of pride and entitlement, but because it reflects satanic policy not God's truth. We are to daily decide what motivates and drives our life forward; is it to be human viewpoint lust for power, wealth, status and “security”, or is it to be the sole desire for God's path of service for Jesus through life? Proverbs 1:7-10, 19:3, 24:1-5, 19, Hebrews 12:9-15.

Satan's policy is to get us distracted by things, and lusting after the temporary things of this present world, rather than the eternally valuable tasks the Lord has called us to complete. What will it be; envy of men who are “cut down like the grass”, or focus upon the eternal rewards that the Lord has for those who serve him with eyes fixed upon the Lord Jesus? If Satan wins this battle for the mind and distracts us onto lust for things he wins a powerful victory.

Proverbs 2:1-12

*“1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;*

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.
 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.
 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.
 10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;
 11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:
 12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;"

Proverbs 3:1-18

"1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
 2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
 4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
 5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.
 8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.
 9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:
 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.
 11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:
 12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.
 13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.
 14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.
 15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.
 16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.
 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.
 18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her."

James 4:4-10

"4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.
 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?
 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.
 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.
 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.
 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

APPLICATION

1. Will we allow ourselves to be distracted by things, or focused upon the tasks the Lord has assigned to us? What is our focus in this world? If we lust after wealth we will open the door to jealousy and envy, but if we focus upon service we open the door to blessing. Open the door to blessing this day believer by prayer for guidance.

2. If it withers like the grass it is of limited value, and only short term use. If something does not last it is to be used to achieve eternal results, but not chased as if it matters eternally. All wealth, power, position and status are in this category. Let these things come to you, but do not chase them. Seek first and foremost the will of the Lord for you, for then he will add all that is needed to perform the assigned task.

Psalm 37:3

"Trust in the LORD, and do good; [so] shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

REFLECTION

Cast yourself firmly and totally upon the security that the Lord alone can provide for you; do not ever depend upon men or the power they claim to have. All the power of men is as the grass, and the slightest changes in world finance destroy all security. We have seen the truth of both these verses in recent years during the "world financial crisis"(2007-2012) and yet so many believers spend more time in the financial pages than they do in the Bible! Jesus words build upon the revelation he gave to David.

Matthew 6:28-34

"28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

The verse may be summed up in four imperatives; "Trust, do good, dwell, and eat". Firstly we are called to what we refer to as the doctrine of "Faith-Rest"; a complete trusting in the Lord's provisions, directions, and power. Trusting in the Lord means that we fellowship with the Lord daily, and so we draw deep strength from Him and focus upon Him alone for our security and power to walk his assigned path. As we saw above, the word of the Lord is clear, "In all your ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct your paths". Proverbs 3:6.

God calls us to living fellowship and close walking on the revealed path, and then total dependence upon the Lord for all provisions on that path. Having committed our way to the Lord we then focus simply on "doing good". This means doing what is "divine good" rather than human viewpoint "good". It means we follow God's priorities rather than our own, or other financial and career advisers. Our focus is the "well done" of the Lord, not the measures of success from men. Matthew 21:21-23.

APPLICATION

1. If we walk the Lord's path we will have a place to dwell and food to eat. All houses decay, and title to homes is nothing but legal fiction, for all land passes to others eventually and we are buried in the earth itself. We do not own the earth; it is our grave. Let us keep the perspective of the Lord on all things here, and see that we are temporary dwellers upon the earth, and it is here for us to use, but not be distracted by its pleasantness into thinking it matters and lasts, for it does not.

2. Trust and obey the call of the Lord upon your life. Be obedient to the Lord and serve Him in all things he calls you to, for in service you will have a place to live and food to eat.

DOCTRINES**CHRISTIAN LIFE – CAPACITY FOR LIFE****PROMISES****Psalms 37:4**

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

REFLECTION

We either delight in things, or we delight in relationships; few find they can do both. We either value things that decay or we value relationships and service to others, and if it is Christ centred, it is eternal in its significance. If we delight in the Lord and in his service, then our desires are for his glory and fulfilling our ministry before Him. If this is our desire then we serve with joy and we receive the blessing of the Lord in all things we do. Psalm 43:4, Isaiah 58:11-14.

Psalms 104:33-34

"33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD."

Our delighting in the Lord opens the door to absolute focus upon his plan for our life and then the fulfilment of that plan through Holy Spirit empowered living. All our prayers are then focused upon the fulfilment of God's Plan for our life, and our desires are all then directed towards the plan, and so they are all answered and everything we desire is provided, for all our desires are doctrine saturated and directed.

Read slowly and carefully the following three passages of the Word. John 15:7, 16, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Romans 12:1-2. We open the door to eternal blessing and temporal guidance by absolute focus upon the path the Lord has for us, and

we keep that door open by daily worship and praise. Daily worship involves bible study that shifts the thinking processes into the paths of God for us. As we think God's way so our very desires are oriented towards the work of the Lord and so they are always going to be met 100%.

1 John 5:14-15

"14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

APPLICATION

1. Let us walk through this day with focus upon the Lord's path for us, and let us commit to be his servants this day, and to keep our eyes away from the temptations to distraction by the "things of this world". Let us not be like Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10, and be enticed away from the path of eternal life into temporary wealth and power and security.

2. Delight in the Lord and his path for you through this life. Educate your desires with Bible doctrine and saturate your thinking with the words of Jesus and the apostles, and so shift your thinking into the paths of God for you. That way every desire and thought is "captured" by Christ, and every desire will be correct, powerful and fully answered by the Lord. Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Psalm 37:5-6

"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring [it] to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."

REFLECTION

Notice how closely these verses tie into the words of Solomon later in Proverbs 2 and 3, as we saw above. David is opening the door of understanding for his son by this late Psalm written while Solomon was a teenager, and he would have heard it standing by his father's throne. In his own early life he applied it, but sadly, like Demas, he slipped into lust rather than prayer and so his grip on eternal blessings slipped to be replaced by temporal pleasure. Solomon faced temptations that were greater than any man before or since in the pleasure area, but he had the doctrines from his father here in this psalm to keep him safe, but he valued pleasure above the Word. 1 Kings 11:4-10.

Commit your way totally to the Lord; rest solely in his path for your life and devote yourself to it. Trust totally in the Lord's path, person and power, and he will bring to pass all the elements of the plan, for it is his own! There is no doubt that the Lord can provide, for all he calls us to achieve he will ensure is achieved. God has the power and the ability to bring all things to pass that are required. Isaiah 50:2, 59:1.

Commit your ways to the Lord and he will bring into your life the "righteousness", or spiritual prosperity that is required to achieve all that is asked of you with joy and other fruits of the Holy Spirit. John 10:10, Galatians 5:16-24. You will see the blessing of the Lord over your life; it will "come to light" as you focus upon the path of the Lord for you. God's verdict over your life will be given with blessing eternally and will be as bright as the noonday sun. You will be blessed in the Lord as you commit your path to Him, and seek from Him alone the power to walk it. Ephesians 3:19, 5:1-2, 18.

APPLICATION

1. Praise the Lord this day for his person, his plan for your life, and the power to achieve all things in the plan to eternal glory. Commit totally to the Lord's path, person and plan, for in his path alone there is temporal and eternal blessing in abundance.

2. God will "bring to light" all the blessings that are worth having in this life on his path through this life. Walk his path alone believer; seek no other path. He will bring the path to fruition, for his good name depends upon it. If he lets you down he loses more than you; he loses his reputation! God will never do that. Commit your path and make it God's for you, and so receive all he has for you in this life.

Trust in the Lord, hand your life over to him and he will bring your righteousness to light as the morning sun, and your justification as the noonday. C.f. Proverbs 4:18

Psalm 37:7

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass.”

REFLECTION

“Sit still and see the deliverance of the Lord”. Exodus 14:13, Psalm 62:1. Just as the Children of Israel had to see and learn this truth; so do we. Rest in the character, and in the plan of God and wait for the Lord to move the mountain before you. God will at times place us in exactly the same sort of impossible situations as he did the Exodus generation, and this is not to be “mean” with us, it is to teach us to trust and obey. God delights in our obedience against all human odds, when we trust his Word above what our own eyes tell us! God seeks our trust and he will place us in places where this might build and grow strong.

Zechariah 4:6-10

“6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”

Do not get anxious about, nor be envious of the wicked man who, following satanic logic and using devious plots and plans, is able to gain temporary prosperity and power in this world. He may be profitable in all his dealings for a time, for Satan will look after his own for a time, but it is only “for a limited time”. All the plots and plans of evil men are limited in time and space, for they depend upon satanic logic and that is creaturely logic, whereas the believer who walks in the Holy Spirit’s power and under God’s direction walks in a plan worked out with eternal divine logic and foreknowledge. We cannot fail in time or eternity on God’s path, whereas Satan and his people cannot but fail in the end.

APPLICATION

1. Do not allow any envy or jealousy to grow within; pull up all such thoughts quickly before they rot your soul and dampen down your spirit. Hebrews 12:10ff. Evil men will receive rewards for their plans and schemes, but their rewards are brief and their judgment eternal. Revelation 20:10-15.

2. Rest in the Lord’s provisions and in the Lord’s plans for you, for they are perfect. Do not doubt the provisions of the Lord. The Lord will provide all that we need to walk his path and achieve his goals for our life. Wait upon the Lord and he will provide for you all you need for victory.

Psalm 37:8-9

“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil, for evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.”

REFLECTION

Do not think about revenge upon evil people, nor plan violent schemes to silence or eliminate them without just cause and legal authority. Just being angry at evil does not give you any colour of right to execute them. We must be careful of taking the law into our own hands, for as we judge so we will be judged, and as we mete out so it will be meted out to us! Matthew 7:2ff, Romans 14:10-13.

Forsake utterly violent rage towards others, even if they are evil and apparently “deserve” judgment. Leave all such judging to the Lord for the Lord is righteous and will judge evil people or lead them to salvation. Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:29. Remember the worst of men, Saul, has already been saved! 1 Timothy 1:15. Who knows what God might yet do with the evil man you plan to “get even with” in your understandable human rage. Put all rage and wrath aside before it destroys your witness and possibly ends your ministry or life!

Do not try to eliminate evil by planning more evil yourself, for evil cannot produce a good outcome. The judicial execution of evil men is not an evil, for it is just and right, but as a private citizen you must not in personal outrage execute judgment that belongs only to legitimate authority. Romans 13:1-5. Even though execution is valid a better option is always going to be the conversion of the evil prisoner by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel

message. Then a prisoner may become a pastor and so cursing becomes blessing. This is the greatest joy to the Lord as he tells us in the parable of the lost sheep. Matthew 18:10-15.

Evil doers will be “cut off” from life itself, and cut off from eternal life, and from all blessing. Do not worry about justice, for the Lord has all things in his hands and will repay all for their evils. John 5:22-30, 9:39, 12:31, 16:11. The Lord is gracious in his offer of salvation, but will be thorough in his judgment of all who reject his grace and mercy. Those who reject mercy have nothing to look forward to in eternity except judgment! The meek however will inherit the earth, for they have humbly received salvation from the Saviour. Matthew 5:3-11.

APPLICATION

1. It is always normal to fantasize about revenge on evil men, but it is wrongful to do so, and evil to express rage when we are called to deliver salvation not judgment. It is easy to be outraged at evil, but the Lord calls us to give the Gospel not deliver judgment. Do not give way to rage, transform it by prayer for the evil ones and seek any way for the Lord to use you to make the “Saul” you meet into Paul, an apostle of hope. We are called to turn prisoners into pastors, not make more prisoners by our own evil actions.

2. God will “cut off” the evil ones, we do not need to practise vigilante justice. We are to leave justice to the State and evangelism is to be our focus. Let us forsake all wrath and rage, and turn away from any envy or jealousy towards successful evil business and political people. Let us keep our eyes firmly fixed upon what the Lord has placed us here for.

DOCTRINES

FAITH-REST

SIN – SIN UNTO DEATH

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING

Psalm 37:10

“For yet a little while, and the wicked [*shall*] not [*be*]: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it [*shall*] not [*be*].”

REFLECTION

David uses the final fate of the wicked as the reason to pause in any self righteous desire to execute them without justice and the right to do so. He urges the believer to pause and reflect upon the fate of the wicked and see that none escape the justice of God, and that none enjoy the fruit of their evil unrighteousness for long. He urges believers to see that God will sort out any issue of justice and so pause before taking justice into their own hands without the right to do so.

The wicked are soon to die and face their maker and judge. Revelation 20:10-15. They do not enjoy life forever and their victories in time do not last long at all. They will disappear forever into the Lake of Fire, and will be heard of no more, for they are people of no consequence in eternity. They think they are so important, and in their narcissism they have abused the good and noble, but they will be nothing forever, so feel sad for their stupidity, for evil is doomed. Their “place” is eternal judgment and so they gain nothing from their evil designs. Isaiah 14:9-11.

APPLICATION

1. Our brief time here is but “a little while”, and the victories of evil men and women are even shorter. Evil cannot win, for its ultimate self centeredness always unhinges its success in short time as selfish people squabble over their successes. Evil is ultimately self destructive and they all implode in the end in the Lake of Fire. There is no end for evil except total judgment.

2. Do not envy the temporary victories of those who have nothing to look forward to except eternal judgment.

Psalm 37:11

“But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

REFLECTION

The Lord delights in humility, for it is the correct attitude of man towards his creator, but God hates arrogance and pride, for it reflects satanic rebellion. Proverbs 6:16-19, Matthew 5:2-12. Humility is simply the correct mental attitude when we face our maker and saviour. Meekness is the biblical label for the spirit of man when that person correctly sees that they do not have all the answers, do not understand the great mysteries of life and death, recognise their sinfulness, and bow in acceptance of the lordship of Christ as the Saviour from their sins. It is true strength of character, not ever a sign of weakness, for it reflects truth and reflects volition as the individual correctly sums up reality and by choice bows their knee to their Saviour and Creator. Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Timothy 6:11, James 1:21.

God’s message to all who see and respond to reality this way is to remind them of his promises relating to the earth; that Christ will return, and that he will rule over the earth, and that all who love him will share his rulership. The earth will itself be redeemed one day. We will reign with Christ and he will restore the earth to its correct pre-flood state, and all who have lived since those days will see and enjoy the earth as it was meant to be, in “abundance of peace and prosperity”. As we have seen in previous verses, there is no peace of spirit, nor any lasting prosperity for the wicked.

Isaiah 57:15-21

“15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

APPLICATION

1. Humility is the correct mental attitude for the believer when they face their maker and saviour. Let us be aware of our limits and celebrate them in worship, for then we will be lifted up to understand all that is possible this side of eternity.

2. The meek will inherit the earth. The Lord’s Word is clear that we have an eternal destiny that is way beyond our wildest dreams and that this earth will be restored to its pre-flood state. The best is yet to come in this tired universe, and its last phase will be its best through the regeneration of the Lord and Holy Spirit. Rejoice and praise Him for his plan.

DOCTRINE**PEACE****Psalm 37:12-13**

“The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.”

REFLECTION

Just by way of reminder, David returns to the theme of the wicked, and restates the certainty of eternal judgment for those who stand with arrogant hatred in their rebellion against the Lord. The arrogance and hatred of the unbeliever towards the Lord and the believers is extreme. These people grind their teeth in hatred and it continues even when there is no reason for it and useful purpose behind it. The mindless hatred of the lost towards the saints is a baffling thing to us all, and hurtful to receive, but it is “normal” in this present state of the universe with Satan still active. We are all called to set our hearts and minds firmly upon the Lord Jesus and focus upon meeting the Lord’s Plan for our life.

James 4:6-10

“6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

Do not waste energy on responding to such hatred; simply pray for them, **John 16:8-11**, and move forward, not seeking revenge or justice, just seeking the Lord's path for your life. Those who hate the Lord will stand before him one day and there will be no laughter then, only eternal and absolutely righteous judgment. Their judgment day is coming. They expect their “payout day” is coming, but they do not see that their “pay-day” is judgment, not blessing or victory of any sort. Believer, remain firmly stabilised in the place of humility, love, worship and service. In eternity God will judge, but in time God will laugh in derision at the pathetic attempts of satanic people to stop the Plan of God in your life. Psalm 2:4, Proverbs 1:26, Daniel 5:22-28.

APPLICATION

1. Believer, place yourself firmly in the place of blessing by walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Do what God has ordered and leave your life in his hands.

2. Relax with the fate of the unbeliever, for they have chosen the satanic path of rebellion against their maker, and so they must experience loss in time and judgment in eternity, but it is what they seek, and they will receive it all with interest. Having given them the gospel message leave them to their fate, and serve the Lord. No distractions believer, none at all are to separate you from the path that God has for you through the battlefield of this life.

Psalm 37:14-15

“The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, [and] to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.”

REFLECTION

In the ancient world the evil ones did what they desired, like the Mafia type crime families today. There was no police force and the local government could be corrupted by the local powerful families. If evil men got control of the local area they could use their militia to achieve their own evil ends. They were able to do all that they wanted to do without human restraints, except for the king's army.

These thugs have set their minds and hearts upon the destruction of the poor and humble for sport, and the judicial murder of all who are righteous. They have specifically targeted the groups that the Lord cares for; the needy, the humble and the righteous. They are determined to use their full military power to destroy the good people, but God's Word to them is that they will have all their military power turned back upon them. The enemy forces will be crushed by the Lord's direct actions upon them. God will fight for the believer, and in any situation where we are unable to defend ourselves we need to rest in his protection. Psalm 7:14-15, 76:3-11, Isaiah 37:33-38.

Jeremiah 1:17-19

“17 Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.

18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee”

APPLICATION

1. Mafia type organisations have abounded in history and will abound until the Lord judges all evil men at his Second Advent. Do not be impressed by them, fearful of them, or distracted from your work by their threats. Serve the Lord in spirit and in truth, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

2. God will turn all evil back upon itself and those who serve the satanic will be forced to accept the true rewards of such rebellion. All who serve power and violence will receive violence in due proportion as they have given it to others.

Psalm 37:16-17

“A little that a righteous man hath [is] better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.”

REFLECTION

Solomon will strongly and repetitively pick up this point of David's here. It is contentment that is the true sign of wealth, for wealth is only pleasant if it can be relaxed with and enjoyed. There is no joy at all for the man who cannot relax with his goods and actually use them without worry or other disturbing emotions. Proverbs 3:33, 15:16-17, 16:8, 30:9, Ecclesiastes 2:26, 4:6. The Lord's Prayer for the disciples captures these thoughts also.

Matthew 6:11

“10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

We can stabilise our thoughts and emotions on the path of the Lord and the will of the Lord for us and so enjoy all he gives and not feel envious of others about things we don't have, but the carnal person sees only carnal things and so they are never satisfied and cannot relax with what they have for someone else always has more. Having what you need to achieve the Plan of God for your life, be content with what you have and do the work. Philippians 4:11-13, 1 Timothy 6:6.

Matthew 6:25-34 (How many times is too many to re-read this passage?)

“25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Philippians 4:4-7

“4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

APPLICATION

1. The Lord will break the arms of those who think they can carry their goods into eternity. There is no lasting pleasure for any who do not recognise their creator. Live in total contrast to the pagan wealth centred person. Hold to the Lord's plan for your life and accept all his gives and enjoy the bounty of the Lord.

2. Peace and contentment comes only where the Lord's goodness is accepted and the Lord's path is walked, for then the things that come are accepted as tools to be used, not distractions to be focused upon. All the “details of life”, like wealth and goods are simply for our use on the path, not for their own sake. Enjoy all that the Lord gives, but do not be focused on gathering things that cannot be taken into eternity.

“Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”. Isaiah 41:10.

Psalm 37:18-19

“The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.”

REFLECTION

God “knows” our days, and the day of our death is precious in his sight. Psalm 1:6, 31:7, 68:20, 116:15, Matthew 6:32. We do not have to second guess God about the nature, length and scope of our life, we simply need to be obedient daily. We are here on this earth for a temporary time frame only, but in Christ Jesus, our life goes on forever in blessing because of his grace towards us.

We can be tempted by the logic of men around us to try to “guess” the path ahead of us and make the “best practise decisions” regarding our path, but such logic is deceptive. The only safe path through this world is God’s path, not the best possible path suggested by well meaning advisers. Only God has the facts that we need. I have made one major decision on the basis of “best evidence” rather than waiting upon the Lord and have lost heavily, as man would measure it through the last twenty years, because the “unexpected” occurred.

Now the massive change in market conditions wasn’t “unexpected” in the plan of God, but I had stepped out presumptuously and did what “made sense” rather than what the Lord specifically directed. The Lord has been incredibly gracious to me and I have been able to claim Romans 8:28 after my confession, but the loss remains. God’s path is the only path of security and mental stability. My inheritance is forever in Christ, but my error of judgment and faith means I have a reduced inheritance for my children in time.

When the path of God makes no sense, stick to it, for the Lord alone knows all the facts. He knows our days and will ensure we have enough in time and abundance in eternity. If we have abundance in time it is to enable us to share with others and bless them. Even if we “mess up” with a decision, after confession we can walk back into blessing again and claim the promise that we will not starve or suffer unnecessarily in time. The Lord protects and provides for his own, and his reputation depends upon this provision. Psalm 33:19, Proverbs 10:3, Isaiah 33:15-17, **Jeremiah 10:23-24**.

APPLICATION

1. Leave your provisions in the Lord’s hands, for he will always provide all that is needed to fulfil his plan for you.
2. Do not fear the famines and economic depressions that will come, for the Lord has a path through them all. Just walk obediently in his path for your life and rest in his power to provide.

Psalm 37:20

“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD [shall be] as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”

(Literal Translation of the Holy Bible)

“But the wicked shall perish; yea, the enemies of Jehovah shall be like the beauty of pastures; they are consumed; like smoke, they vanish.”

(Modern King James Version)

“But the wicked shall pass, and the enemies of Jehovah shall be like the beauty of pastures; they are consumed, like smoke they perish.”

REFLECTION

This verse requires a knowledge of the nature of the grasses of the Holy Land in the heat of the Summer. The lushest pastures look as if they will last forever in the early spring growth spurt, but they are deceptive in their beauty and depth, for the heat of the sun rises and burns them to dust over the next months. No matter how lush the prosperity of man, it is but for a moment and conditions can change and sweep away what looked so great and strong and lasting. Look at the legacy of the World Financial Crisis of 2007-2012 and see the truth of the fickle beauty and strength of man’s economies.

Jesus words remind us again of this truth. I repeat this again because it is foundational as a principle for us to live by in this world, if we would be without worry.

Matthew 6:28-34

“28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

APPLICATION

1. We are called to be free of concerns for the material things of this world; they are to be seen as “mere details of life”, and as such things that the Lord will sort out on the way. Material things are for our use on the way to ensure the plan of God for our life is fulfilled. They are for the Lord to provide and for us to receive with thankfulness, not to worry and stress about in advance of their provision.

2. The wicked will perish like the smoke of the bonfire that burns up the dead grasses in summer, and so will all burn up who stress about material things. Let us not waste our energy worrying about the things that end up smoke on the fire of life.

Psalm 37:21

“The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.”

REFLECTION

Financial responsibility is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and fraud and deliberate refusal to repay debts is a satanic sign of a life given over to evil. By their fruits you know men, and any man or woman who deliberately does not pay their debts is to be shunned in business thereafter. Those who make a habit of non-payment are to be marked out as satanic men. Deuteronomy 28:12, 43, 44, Nehemiah 5:1-5, Proverbs 22:7.

Righteous people are also known by the fruits of their life in the business world, for they pay their debts in a timely manner and meet their obligations as well as they can. Psalm 112:5-9, Isaiah 58:7-10. The righteous person goes even further than just paying their bills, for they look to bless others as the Lord has blessed them. The believer is not counting their money, but counting their blessings from the Lord, and seeking to pour out blessing to all they meet in any appropriate way.

One great saint, who saw himself as simply a humble businessman that the Lord blessed put his attitude to giving this way. “The Lord shovels blessing in to my businesses, and I shovel the overflow out to bless ministries, and I have found over the years that God has the bigger shovel”. We never lose by pouring out our blessings to bless others who serve the Lord. 2 Corinthians 8:7-9, 9:6-11.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be like the wicked in any shape or form; be known as a business person who pays their bills on time, for your Christian witness depends upon it. Identify the evil men who operate the other way and avoid all dealings with them.

2. Go beyond the demands for equity and fulfil the law of blessing. Pour out the bounty of the Lord into ministries and bless the Lord with your voice and your substance.

(Acts 20:35 c.f. Isaiah 58:7-12; Romans 15:1; 2Corinthians 9:6-12; Ephesians 4:28; 1Thessalonians 5:14).

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING – STEWARDSHIP

Psalm 37:22

“For [such as be] blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and [they that be] cursed of him shall be cut off.

REFLECTION

There is only one source of blessing that is substantive and lasts forever, and that is blessing that comes from the Lord alone. The Lord’s selected people alone will inherit the earth. Satan tries to control the earth and the people in it, but he is limited in power and his arrogance limits his thinking, and so he cannot ever inherit the earth, even in the Great Tribulation period he does not control everything, for he cannot. Daniel 11:41-12:3. Those who join Satan in stupid rebellion against their creator end their lives in judgment, and it is eternal. Revelation 20:10-15.

APPLICATION

1. God’s blessing lasts, and God’s judgment also lasts eternally. Evil will be cut off and judged.
2. Evil will be “cut off”. Satan fell and evil entered at that point, and with his judgment evil is cut off and leaves the creation, locked forever into the lake of fire. The creation is fallen, but it will be restored, and then replaced with perfection. The Lord’s greatest creative work is still to come, and it is well beyond our capacity of thinking.

Psalm 37:23-24

“The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth [him with] his hand.”

REFLECTION

God will establish your steps on the path of his choosing for you. Walk his narrow path and be delivered through to glory. Matthew 7:13ff. God establishes our feet on firm ground on the way through this life. Psalm 17:5,119:122, 121:3-8. 85:13. There is stable ground no-where else than in the path of God for us. God delights in our walking his path, and blesses us on the way.

Proverbs 4:20-27

*20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.
 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.
 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.
 23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
 24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.
 25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
 26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.
 27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.”*

APPLICATION

1. Walk in the blessing of the Lord. Walk in the firm places of his will for you, not the shifting sands of men’s opinions, or into the mud and quick sands of materialism.
2. God delights in the way of the righteous, and pours his blessings upon us as we focus only on his will for our lives. Let us seek the firm path of God’s will, not the apparently restful path of man’s opinions, for it is deceptive and will only ever lead to our destruction.

Notes

Psalm 37:25

“I have been young, and [now] am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

REFLECTION

David can look back over sixty or more years now and he reflects the truth as he has seen it, that those who walk with God are kept by God. Not all believers can claim this, any more than they can claim Romans 8:28, as the key elements of claiming the Lord's blessing is being able to affirm the Lord's path and your love for the Lord's path and Him above all else in your life.

The righteous will not be forsaken, but those who harbour sin in their life will be turned away from by God, and we have his word on that! Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 1:15, 59:1-2, 64:6, Jeremiah 5:25. We have a daily choice for blessing or judgment, and we must make it by thorough self examination and confession of sin. 2 Corinthians 13:5-9, 1 John 1:5-10.

APPLICATION

1. If you want to have enough to eat and work for the Lord focus all your energies walking on the path of the Lord and he will provide for you on that path.
2. Righteousness will never be forsaken by the Lord, and so walking in the breastplate of his provided righteousness keeps you safe, secure and fruitful. Walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit and walk securely believer, or allow carnality to destroy you! Don't complain about this, get with the Lord's policy and be blessed!

Psalm 37:26

“[He is] ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed [is] blessed.”

REFLECTION

God's nature is merciful, and that is why we can relax in our prayers asking for mercy and grace, for it is in his nature to give these things. Psalm 112:5-9. As God is merciful so are his righteous people, and this verse especially reminds us that the righteous have a habit of mercy and giving to others in need. If we claim to be the Lord's people we must resemble him in all ways in our character or we are open to the correct label of “fraudsters”.

As He loved us, so we love (agape – caring and practical love) others. This means towards the lost we give them the Gospel message. John 16:8-11, Acts 3:4-10, 4:8-14. Towards the brethren love and mercy means we meet their material needs as we are enabled to with the blessings the Lord has blessed us with. James 2:14-18, 2 Corinthians 8-9.

James 2:14-20

*“14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?
15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,
16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?
17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.
19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.
20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”*

Those who do not show love to others do not know God, let alone have a saving relationship with him. John 15:4-17, 1 John 3:11-19, 4:7-8, 19. The parents show love in Christ and the children will receive blessing by association with their loving parents. Hypocrites who claim to be followers of God and “righteous” are exposed by their lack of mercy and love to their brethren. Galatians 6:10, James 2:18-26. We are under no obligation to feed and clothe those who hate the Lord and are members of Satan's team, for their poor state may be God's way to bring them to salvation.

1 John 3:11-16, 4:7-8, 20-21.

*“11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.
12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.
13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.
14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.
15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

APPLICATION

1. Do not be mocked by hypocrites believer, check their fruit and expose the enemy's agents who seek to infiltrate the church and destroy it from within. If people have no mercy towards the genuine poor and needy brethren then they are not genuinely saved, nor do they know Jesus at all, no matter what they say.

2. Righteousness always bears fruit in the life, and not just in the life of that person but in the life of their children who are blessed in their father and mother's loving and merciful actions. Children are not judged for their parent's sins, Jeremiah 31:29-31, John 9:1-7. Children are however blessed for their parent's righteous actions.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MENTAL ATTITUDE

Psalm 37:27

"Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore."

REFLECTION

The appeal here is heart felt on David's part for he knows the eternal, and temporal, benefits of righteousness. The blessing of the Lord goes on forever. Those who determine in their hearts to walk in the Spirit and do well are placing themselves on the path of eternal blessedness. Those who walk away from the path of the Lord Jesus are walking downhill on the "broad way that leads to destruction". Matthew 7:13-23, Revelation 20:10-15.

It is an active choice to "depart from evil", and those who pull back from total commitment to righteousness pull back from eternal life itself. God wants our whole hearted commitment to his path. Psalm 34:14, Proverbs 16:6, 17, 2 Timothy 2:19. There are only the two blunt options and each man and woman must select their own daily path, and they must do so daily as they walk through this life. There are no short cuts to blessing, only the path of obedient faith in the Lord.

Isaiah 1:16-20

"16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

The results and consequences of obedience in all these matters of faith are eternal in their significance.

1 John 2:15-17

"15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

APPLICATION

1. Believer, depart from evil and the pathways of evil men. Walk away from evil places and evil men and women and have nothing to do with all their acts. Follow after righteousness alone.

2. There are eternal consequences for all actions in time. Follow after the things that have eternal blessedness in their wake, not evil and disaster.

Psalm 37:28

“For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.”

REFLECTION

God loves justice and will always be absolutely just and fair with us, for his reputation depends upon it. God loses more than us if we are let down; he loses his good name! Walk with the Lord Jesus and you walk in precious fellowship through life and into heaven itself. Acts 7:51ff. God does not leave, abandon, or let loose his saints; he loves and upholds and supports us all. Psalm 92:13-15. We have eternal security with the Lord through our faith in Christ Jesus, for He upholds us. We are secure in his arms. Deuteronomy 33:27. The lost are however truly “lost” to hope and eternal life, for they have walked away from it. They receive what they wanted. Revelation 20:10-15.

Isaiah 30:15-18

“15 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.”

APPLICATION

1. God is absolutely fair and just in all matters of salvation and in provision for us. The Lord will never let his people down, for he will not ever let down his own plan and purposes, and will never act against his own character. We may fail the Lord, but he will not fail us. 2 Timothy 2:12-13.
2. The wicked have made their life choice and they will face the eternal consequences of that in eternal judgment. They will be “cut off” from eternal life, for they have chosen to walk away from God.

DOCTRINE**ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT****Psalm 37:29**

“The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.”

REFLECTION

Those who obey the Lord fulfil his demands in the power he gives through the Holy Spirit; those righteous people will alone inherit the promises of the Lord. One of the promises of the Lord to the righteous is inheritance in the land. The Millennial Kingdom is going to be set up by the Lord and his people have a promise of rulership in that day, to actually enjoy this earth finally running as it was meant to be. Isaiah 11:6-9, Revelation 20:1-6.

There is also the promise of a new heavens and new earth which will be 100% better than this present creation, and in that new creation there is perfect environment forever. What is described is similar to the Millennial Kingdom at the end of this present earth's time of existence, but going on forever. Isaiah 65:17-25, 2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 21-22.

APPLICATION

1. God's best creative work is yet to come and it will certainly come, for this present creation is groaning with age now and is ready for replacement. Romans 8:22-23. We find ourselves “groaning” within this present world, but the Lord has a better one to come and we rejoice in advance in the success of the plan of God.
2. The Lord will allow us all to see this earth as it was meant to be in the Millennial Kingdom, but the best is yet to come in eternity when space and time themselves are abolished and we are part of something eternal.

Psalm 37:30-31

“The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God [is] in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.”

REFLECTION**Deuteronomy 6:3-9**

“3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

The fruit of righteousness in the human spirit is the evidence of the lips that speak the wisdom of the Lord and bless all they meet. If people do not share the things of God with others they do not know the things of God, nor do they know the person of the Lord Jesus. Those who walk with the Lord in righteousness are able to speak in terms of divine justice and fairness and make assessments of situations that reflect bible doctrines. Those who have “been with Jesus” are transformed by their walk with the Master, and those whose lives are not transformed do not know Jesus as they need to! Acts 4:12-15, 1 John 2-4.

The Lord’s promise to us is that as we walk with him, so he will keep our path and secure our feet on firm ground so that we do not slip and slide off the path. Psalm 18:33-38, 40:2, 56:13, 66:9, Ephesians 6:10-18. Let us “stand” firmly on the rock that is Christ Jesus and be assured that he will keep our feet securely in his path. Matthew 7:13-23.

APPLICATION

1. Walk on the path the Lord has for you and he will keep your feet firmly therein.
2. Speak from the fruit of your heart with all the wisdom of God’s Word. Let God’s Word fill your soul and so bless all you meet in spirit and in truth.

“The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the LORD [is] clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [are] true [and] righteous altogether.

More to be desired [are they] than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: [and] in keeping of them [there is] great reward.”

Psalm 19:7-11

Psalm 37:32-33

“The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.”

REFLECTION

The malice of the enemy is strong towards the believers who stand for the truth of the Word, for everything about us offends them and affronts their viewpoint. If they can get away with it they would kill all believers, and at times in history when evil men get control you see this actioned. In Hitler’s Germany the evil men got control and the death of tens of millions was the result. In the Great Tribulation Period there will be carnage that is presently unimaginable and it flows directly from Satan’s throne upon the earth, for he can bring nothing but carnage, for his hatred of mankind is so deep.

The challenge for all believers is to walk with God through the pressures that the enemy brings to bear and strengthen their hands in the Lord’s power and stand against evil. The Lord will not withdraw his protection from his people under pressure, but will uphold us with his mighty hand. Psalm 23:4-5, 31:7-8. He is “mighty to save”. Psalm 106:1-3, 132:1-5, Proverbs 23:11, Zephaniah 3:17.

Jeremiah 32:17-19

"17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

18 Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name,

19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:"

APPLICATION

1. The malice of the enemy is great but the power of the plan, purpose, and love of God is far greater. 1 John 4:4.
2. God will not leave us comfortless, but has already sent the Holy Spirit as our comforter and protector. John 14:16-21, 15:26-27, 16:7-16. We are kept and guarded by God; rejoice in this fact in the face of the enemy.

DOCTRINE**JUDGMENT – JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST****Psalms 37:34**

"Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see [it]."

REFLECTION

Wait upon the Lord, and renew your strength daily in the Word, as you await his specific orders for your advance down the path that he has for you. Psalm 25:3-5, 27:14, 62:5, Proverbs 20:22, Isaiah 8:17, Habakkuk 2:3. Guard his path and walk it faithfully, and do not step to left or right from it. Matthew 7:13ff. Hold the line believer and you will see the victory of the Lord, and you will be there to see the Great White Throne Judgment and see the wicked punished for their evil works. Justice will be done and those who delighted in evil will be cut off. You will see it and you will rejoice in the justice of the Lord. Rest now in his protection and advance into your called service area. Ephesians 6:10-20.

Joshua 23:6-11

"6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside there from to the right hand or to the left;

7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:

8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

9 For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

10 One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God."

Proverbs 4:23-27

"23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

APPLICATION

1. Walk the line believer. Walk the line the Lord has drawn for your life, for there alone is blessing and protection. He will keep you on the path. Devote yourself to the path of God and serve the Lord with all your heart and mind and body.
2. Do not be distracted by the fate of the evil ones, for they have made their choices and they will be cut off from the earth they claim to love. They are evil and wicked in their dealings, for they claim to love the earth and yet they hate the creator and their fellow creatures. They will pay for their wickedness, and so leave them in the Lord's hands for judgment, and just get on with serving the Lord.

Psalm 37:35-36

“I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he [was] not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

REFLECTION

The power of the wicked can at times grow great indeed. The greatest evil force ever to exist so far upon the earth was the Nazi party of Germany from 1932-1945, and its mighty armed forces were superior in the early days of World War II to all others, but even though they were mighty they fell! No matter how big the forces of evil, and how prosperous they are short term they will always fall in time. Psalm 73:3-11, Ezekiel 31:3-11, Daniel 4:19-26.

Isaiah tells us of a “funny” vision he has of the evil rulers of great and evil powers falling into hell to be greeted by equally evil men that they murdered. It is short but powerful, and only may be spoken of as “funny” in that the Lord has the last laugh on those who mocked him and his people.

Isaiah 14:5-11

“5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.

6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.”

I think of Adolf Hitler and his evil crew when I read these words. They all exercised power and dominance over others, but never repented of their evils, and so entered hell with the very people they despised. Stalin would join Hitler later, and even though he used Hitler’s skull as his ash tray for his last years of rulership, he also was to be buried and decay and will be judged eternally. The bodies of Hitler and Eva Braun are lost to history and rightly so, for such people deserve no memorial and they have none, for in eternity their very memory will be gone. Nebuchadnezzar had equal pride and arrogance to Hitler, but he was cut down in life and repented, and so does not join the evil ones in Hell. His testimony is interesting to read, for it contains the words that the determined lost will not say!

Daniel 4:34-37

“34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

APPLICATION

1. God will deal with the evil ones, and no matter how powerful they appear to be they will fall.
2. Do not envy the enemy his power or majesty, for it is as fleeting as a fallen green leaf. Focus on the Lord alone!

Psalm 37:37-38

“Mark the perfect [man], and behold the upright: for the end of [that] man [is] peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.”

REFLECTION

God will “mark out” for protection and guard with angels the righteous man. There is no danger to the righteous man for the Lord stands by him and protects his path. The final ending for the righteous man is always “peace” of mind and the prosperity that he needs to accomplish the will of the Lord for him. There is no doubt about the Lord’s ability to protect and provide for his people on his path. We see this principle again and again. Do not be concerned about repetition of this principle pastor, for the Lord wants his people to see it, hear it, and believe it. Proverbs 14:32-34, Isaiah 32:17, 57:2.

We rest in God’s Character in these things. 2 Timothy 2:12-13. The end of the believer is peace and blessing, but the end of the wicked is always the same; it is judgment and it is exclusion from the eternal blessings of God. There is no peace for the wicked, because there is no peace on Satan’s path. Isaiah 57:20-21.

APPLICATION

1. There is no peace, prosperity or lasting satisfaction for the wicked. Do not envy them their short term gains.
2. God has set you aside and marked you out for protection and guidance and you will receive it. Wait upon the Lord and He will guide you in every step you are to take.

Psalm 37:39-40

“But the salvation of the righteous [is] of the LORD: [he is] their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.”

REFLECTION

These last two verses are the summary of the principles of doctrine from the earlier ones. God is our salvation; there is no other. Psalm 3:8, Isaiah 12:2, Acts 4:12. He is our strength in time of trouble. Psalm 9:9-10, 91:15, Colossians 1:11, 2 Timothy 4:17. He will deliver, and He will guide us through to glory. He saves those who trust in Him, and do not lean to their own understanding and follow after human viewpoint! “Looking unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith”, for he strengthens us on the way to bring us through to glory. Hebrews 12:2.

Proverbs 3:1-8

*1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.
8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”*

2 Timothy 1:12-14

*12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.
13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.
14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”*

2 Timothy 4:2-8

*2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.
5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.
6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”*

APPLICATION

1. Rest upon his power for strength to keep walking and walk in the strength the Holy Spirit will always provide as we focus upon Jesus and seek to step out into obedient service.
2. He will deliver us from all the troubles that he has allowed to come across his path for us in this life. He controls the plan and he controls history. We cannot be better protected, nor better led through this battlefield. Let us commit to his path in his power this day.

Notes

Psalm 38

The Psalmist's Cry to the Lord in Great Suffering

(A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.)

Psalm 38, is a psalm recording David's deepest emotion as he faces sin and its terrible consequences in the individual and national life. He plumbs great depths of emotion here and deals with the terrible results of the Fall of Man and its individual manifestation in our lives in individual sins. As we read this Psalm we give thanks that we are forgiven in Christ Jesus, and we rejoice in the deliverance we have received by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:1-10.

"The title of Psalm 51 tells us that it was written, by David, in penitence for the sins of 2 Samuel 12:9-14, and if we compare that incident and David's penitence, with Psalm 6:1-10, Psalm 38 (this psalm), and then Psalm 32:1-11, there appears a chronological order and harmony of thought that legitimises the assumption of the previous paragraph.

The agony of remorse is God's rebuke of sin, and regret is to test and strengthen faith, yet when his chastisement has fulfilled its purpose (mortifying or 'putting to death' the deeds of the body - Romans 8:13) we should accept his forgiveness, for enduring regret is not something God would have for his child. David fights remorse and its debilitating effects, by prayer and petition. The psalm ends without any appearance of relief yet still with the prayer of faith." (From the introduction of Brian Huggett to this psalm.)

Psalm 38:1-2

"O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presses me sore."

REFLECTION

The rebuke of the Lord is what we call in doctrinal terms "Divine Discipline of the Believer", and it is spoken of in both Testament periods, for "whom the Lord loves he corrects", (Proverbs 3:11-12), and if we will not heed the gentle words of the indwelling Holy Spirit, then we will feel the Lord's rod upon our back. Proverbs 22:15. The Psalmist urges us not to be like a mule needing the rod to beat us, or the bit in our mouth pulling hard, but simply hear the gentle words of the Lord in our heart. Psalm 32:8-9, 119:105-107, 154, 169.

The believer is tasked with pleasing his Lord who gave his life blood for us. 1 John 3:16, 4:19. If we have been loved as much as we have been on the Cross, it should be "normal" for us to show great love towards the Lord in our service, our prayers and our worship generally. No spiritual believer seeking to serve the Lord will ever be under the wrath of the Lord, for all we do walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit is well-pleasing to the Lord. Philippians 4:18, Hebrews 13:21.

God deals with us as with cared for children, and if you care for your children you "chasten" them, and correct them in the paths that they should go. Proverbs 2:1-5, 3:1-9, 13:24, 19:18. We are beloved of the Lord and He will not let us wander off into evil paths without increasingly severe discipline to try to bring us back to the right path. We are not to get depressed about the Lord's discipline, but respond intelligently to it and deal with sins that have ankle tapped us and confess and forsake them. We are then to get up out of the mud and walk back into godly paths. As many as he loves he will discipline! Revelation 3:19.

Hebrews 12:5-13

"5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

David feels the "arrows" of conviction sticking into him and causing great distress. He knows God has "hit his target" in his soul and knows there are things to be dealt with within, and David will deal with his sins under God's conviction. Psalm 51 is the example of this, and Psalm 103 the expression of the depth of God's forgiveness. God's hand presses

him into the earth and reminds him he is a creature under his creator, and a servant under his Lord, and that the Lord has a right to expect absolute obedience. Psalm 39:7-11.

APPLICATION

1. Great kings would press their disobedient subject's heads into the earth and behead them or fill them with arrows, but God does not deal with us as a tyrant. God fires arrows of conviction into us to correct us, and he presses us into the earth in depression and affliction to get us to face reality. Let us face the reality of our sinfulness and deal with things quickly by confession so that the Lord does not have to increase discipline.
2. Let us teach the holiness of God more often than we do, for as we underplay the holy demands of our Lord and Saviour upon us so we give the impression that God "winks at sin" and we open our brethren to divine discipline for ignoring his holy demands. Let us be careful in these matters, for we sin greatly if we allow others to fall into sinful paths that we should have warned them of from scripture.

Psalm 38:3-4

"[There is] no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither [is there any] rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me."

REFLECTION

If we internalise stress we suffer physiologically within. The stress of guilt is the greatest stress short of great grief, and so to fail to deal with sin seriously will impact our health and do so quite quickly. David reflects the most common stress symptoms here. He describes first aches and pains, with burning sensations in his muscles and tendons. This is caused by the stress hormone Cortisol and as it builds in the blood supply under internalised stress it tightens muscles and causes both heat, sweating and pain. As the muscles pull on the bones and joints so there is joint pain and bones ache.

David is absolutely clear that the cause is his sin. Stress can be caused by other's sins against you, but David has examined himself on this matter, and he is sure it is his own sin that has brought him to his knees with symptoms of distress. Psalm 4:4, Proverbs 17:3, 2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 John 1:5-10. He realises that he has "drowned" in the consequences of his own sins, and he takes full personal responsibility for his distress, for he has brought it upon himself and it has overwhelmed him.

Psalm 51:1-4.

"1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

APPLICATION

1. Sin does not go away if it is ignored, nor does it stop working its evil within until it is confessed and forsaken. Remember David's distress and deal quickly with temptation and sinfulness, or else you will understand David's words in your own muscles and bones.
2. We are not made by our creator to hold onto guilt, but to deal with it by confession of the sins that caused it. Our very bodies are made to reflect any unconfessed sin and we do well to pay attention to our aches and pains and ensure they are just age and injury alone!

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

Psalm 38:5

“My wounds stink [and] are corrupt because of my foolishness.”

REFLECTION

If you do not treat a wound in a hot climate the flesh quickly rots and becomes gangrenous and fatal to the careless or ignorant person. When you treat a wound properly the dead flesh is cut away and the fresh wound is then treated properly with anti-bacterial agents and so it heals. In the ancient world papyrus or flax was cut into strips and the fresh flesh of the plant applied to wounds, as it will create penicillin to protect the wound as it heals naturally. Honey and wine were also used to treat and dress wounds and protect them from bacteria. Careful medical treatment like this was available from over 3000BC and it worked, but careless treatment led to a stinking mess that killed the patient and often encouraged disease in others and created an epidemic. Poor hygiene practises in our hospitals today have created super-bugs the same way.

David's point here is very graphic but absolutely applicable to sinfulness. If sin is dealt with and the wound washed by the water of the Word, and the evil forsaken (cleansed away), then the person recovers and their life smells sweetly to the Lord. If sin is not dealt with it deepens in the soul in its cancerous power and rots and stinks! Ephesians 5:26, Titus 3:5, 2 Timothy 2:17. God's appeal to mankind through the centuries has been the same; face the evils and remove them before they rot out your very life itself. There is hope, but only in their facing of the truth about their sinfulness.

Isaiah 1:4-10, 16-20

“4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

APPLICATION

1. Cancer untreated spreads, and sin is a cancer of the soul. If it isn't faced it will destroy everything in the life. The body itself will rot under the influence of unconfessed sin. Let us deal with sin and encourage others to deal with it thoroughly before they are overwhelmed by its consequences and destroyed with others by their foolishness. Galatians 6:1, Jude 22-23.

2. God will heal and restore us, but we must come before him and deal with our sins with the Blood of Christ that is provided for us.

He will keep us, but we must come to the One who loved us and desires to keep us well.

Jude 22-25

“22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Notes

Psalm 38:6-7

“I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome [disease]: and [there is] no soundness in my flesh.”

REFLECTION

David describes clinical depression here really well, and it is clear from the story told in 2 Samuel about his time after the great sinfulness of Bathsheba and himself that he was depressed. I reflected a great deal as I wrote our EBCWA Bible College Commentary on 2 Samuel about the serious consequences for David of his great sin. He spent nearly a year out of fellowship before being fully convicted and dealing with his great sin and evil. While he was forgiven by the Lord, for the Lord always will forgive all who come to him and ask, the flow on consequences for David were disastrous.

David lost the respect of the majority of his people as a result of his sinfulness and then his subsequent lack of action over Absalom, and so when Absalom raised rebellion against him he secured far more help and support than he deserved. Many thousands would die as a result of the Great Rebellion and all their deaths were firmly at David's feet, for his sin had opened the door to all the evils that flowed from it. David is bowed down with the terrible responsibility he feels, and he is rightly “cast down” by his thoughts about his sin. This psalm will lead to confession, acceptance of the Lord's punishment upon him, of his own judgments on himself, and so there is full restoration of fellowship with the Lord.

We must accept that if we have made a terrible mistake in life, or committed a terrible sin or series of sins, that we will, even after forgiveness and restoration be “bowed down” with regret and sadness at times for what we have unleashed by our earlier foolishness. It is not wrong to feel guilt and sadness when we are responsible for great suffering for ourselves and others by a previous action. David experiences severe physiological pain and discomfort also, and his description of the burning and itching rash in his loins may be any manner of skin disease caused by poor hygiene, Immune System collapse through stress, or may even be a sexually transmitted disease of the herpes family. He is in serious discomfort of soul and body.

Physical pain is one thing, but mental anguish is even more destructive of energy and motivation. What we do with our guilt and sadness will determine whether we compound our earlier sin or heal from it. We are to take our guilt and sadness at our past before the Lord, remind ourselves of his great grace and total forgiveness and we re-enter his sweet fellowship, accepted in the beloved. We may be old fools in what we have done, but through his gracious forgiveness and restoration we are renewed sons and daughters every day in Christ Jesus! Psalm 103:5-17, 2 Corinthians 4:16.

APPLICATION

1. Whatever our past sinfulness, if we have brought it before the Lord we are forgiven and restored and all our sins are taken away totally! We have absolute forgiveness and the challenge is to pick ourselves up, Hebrews 12:5-15, and get back into the battle for the Lord. We are wounded and we will feel the twinges and aches in old wounds at times, but we are to be thankful for their healing and get back to the fight, draw the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and re-enter the fray!
2. The consequences of unconfessed sin deepens as time ticks by, but we are forgiven by the Lord and are to be restored to the fellowship and service of the Lord. Let us not sit in our distress, but stand in our forgiveness! Let us not weep for past defeats, but in the Holy Spirit's power wield our sword to win present victories.

Notes**Psalm 38:8**

“I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.”

REFLECTION

David is right to recognise that he is indeed “feeble/faint” and weak in his own strength, for in our own strength we can accomplish little, but in the power of God we can achieve all he calls us to achieve. We will be crushed by past sin, past foolishness, and by present demonic assaults, but let that crushing be like the release of the rich purple dye from the crushed worm! Psalm 22:6. The purple dye that dyed the garments of kings came from crushing the life out of the sea slug that had it deep within its tissue.

David was crushed by his guilt and unworthiness, but this reality opened the door for him to die to self and live for God totally. Philippians 1:21. That is God's purpose in crushing the life out of us at times; that we might let go of all that we hold dear in the flesh, and open ourselves only to power of the Holy Spirit as our sole source of spiritual life. Ephesians 5:18. We will be crushed at times by things we have done and what others do to us, but we take this pain and anguish to the Lord and seek his balm to heal us.

Deep moaning in the spirit is common with those who are feeling crushed and beaten down by stress. I have worked with many that quietly and without even being aware of it moaned audibly and sighed repeatedly as we spoke together. It is one of the hallmark symptoms of depression. God hears and answers our deepest moans and groans before him. David is sighing deeply in his grief at what he has done and the cost to others, but he pours out his sadness to the Lord and in doing so will find healing for his soul, what is referred to as a "balm of Gilead" for the body and soul.

Romans 8:26-28

"26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

APPLICATION

1. We will be crushed by grief and despair at times, but if we allow the Lord to heal our pain we will be restored to health and strength, and brought through to service for the Lord again. Keep your hope fixed upon the Lord alone.
2. We are heard, even our deepest groans and anguish is heard. Rest upon that believer and keep plodding forward in prayerfulness to seek the place of service, for you can find it again if you are alive. If we live let us commit our path to the Lord alone, for he hears and will guide us to victory. If we live there is victory still to be won.

Psalms 38:9

"Lord, all my desire [is] before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee."

REFLECTION

David affirms the things we reflected upon above. David knows that his deepest heart's desire is being heard by the Lord. This challenges us again, as in earlier psalms, to ensure our heart's desire is fixed upon the Lord's will for our life. We can be sure the Lord will always bring us through to meet his plan for our life. The passage quoted above from Romans Chapter 8 is relevant for us to reflect upon; for our deepest groaning is heard by the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. Nothing is hidden from the Lord; our pains and our deepest desires are all heard.
2. Commit your heart to the keeping of the Lord, for when it breaks under pressures that can come, you will be healed in his loving arms. Rest your soul in the arms of Jesus believer, for with Him alone there is eternal and present hope.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

Psalms 38:10-11

"My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off."

REFLECTION

How many times has your "heart panted" under stress believer? I had thought David too passionate and personal in his prayers in past years, and wondered at some of his words. That was until I had experienced suffering at his levels and so understood the tachycardia that he is experiencing here under the stress he feels. Palpitation of the heart is a sign of

high levels of stress and I see many in my clinic with this symptom on referral from the cardiologist. Their heart is fine but their stress levels are surging and they need to find peace and calm.

David expresses this deep desire for calm and peace and comfort from family and friends. He seeks for strength but he finds all those he thought he could depend upon fleeing from him. He is unable to see things clearly as the stress wraps itself around him and affects his eye sight. As stress builds the muscles that focus the eyes are affected and the vision become blurry as the stress hormones stop the eye muscles working in a proper manner. Only relaxation and calming strategies will reverse this over time.

APPLICATION

1. Peace in the Lord's arms will alone calm the body and the mind. Prayer and deliverance from the Lord alone brings us to the place of safety.
2. When friends and family desert us we are caught under the Lord's protection alone. Let us rest in his arms and depend upon the Lord alone, for he alone has the strength to keep us.

"Blessed [is] the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Psalm 1:1-2.

Psalm 38:12

"They also that seek after my life lay snares [for me]: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long."

REFLECTION

There will be people who passively hate us, and just make negative comments, but there are others who will actively work against us, and will "lay snares" to catch us out and destroy our reputation or life. David faces real hatred, and in his role as king that is to be expected for he had to act as judge and commander of the army and so people were killed on his orders, and "blood feuds" would be set in motion by such things. David is relaxed about his responsibility before the Lord for his people and will continue to exercise his judicial function, but he is human and he feels the power of the hatred that is expressed towards him.

Do not believe for a moment that evil people are seeking truthful things and "facts" to destroy you, for they don't need such things. Evil people are always content with lies for they follow Satan and lying is his "stock in trade". Do not fear the attacks of such people for they are always going to be based on lies and the only way to deal with such is to tell truth only.

If you focus upon truth alone you will not have the stress the liars have, for you simply need to recall actual events. Do not doubt for a minute however that the enemy will lie, for they will amaze you at their lies. They imagine things and then speak as if they are real. Do not be amazed – this is simply the legacy of satanic thinking.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be surprised when evil is evil; for that is its nature! Take these people and lay them before the Lord in prayer and keep your spiritual armour on.
2. Accept that the enemy hates you with a passion and do not budge from your position, for if you take your stand where God wants you then you can call on his 100% support.

Psalm 38:13-15

"But I, as a deaf [man], heard not; and [I was] as a dumb man [that] openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth [are] no reproofs. For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God."

REFLECTION

David faces evil the right way; he totally ignores them and focuses upon the Lord's instructions and is obedient to the Lord's direction. David did not pay attention to evil, nor did he waste time answering their lies. To engage with liars is a waste of time and energy, for they will simply shift their lies in new directions when found out in one. He had no

arguments against them for he left his safety and security in the Lord's hands alone. It is the Lord alone who will deliver him and he rests in that reality, not in the fantasy that liars can be rebuked and corrected – for they will not allow it.

1 Peter 2:1-3, 21-24

“1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

Psalm 103:1-8

“1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”

APPLICATION

1. Do not waste time on answering liars, for they will simply answer with more lies and deception. Cast them upon the Lord and let the Lord judge and eliminate their lies by truth that cannot be argued against.
2. Do not be surprised when evil men plot and plan, for they can be expected to.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – JUSTIFICATION

Psalm 38:16

“For I said, [Hear me], lest [otherwise] they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify [themselves] against me.”

REFLECTION

Even having adopted the right attitude towards the evil men there are doubts and fears that will naturally come upon us. We are only human and as “dust” we crumble at times under pressure and need to get back to our knees and plead with the Lord for strength and power to stand and fight. It is appropriate to ask the Lord to not allow the enemy to rejoice over us, for our disgrace is the Lord's shame also, for we are his servants and the master is known by his servants.

Be aware that the second our foot slips we will have evil people laugh, mock and insult us. Do not be surprised by this level of hatred, for it is satanic in origin. Those who have not felt this have simply not been in the place of maximum service yet. Mature spiritual service will bring great evil against you, but mature spiritual service will have great spiritual resources available to you to draw upon. Get on your knees and expect the Lord's miracles to deliver you. Psalm 13:3-4, 35:24-26, 94:18.

APPLICATION

1. Our desire is for the reputation of the Lord and as his servants we seek the blessing of the Lord in all things we do. Anything that distracts from the glory of the Lord is an important issue, and if we are at fault we need to confess and deal with such things immediately. If the enemy is busy we need to pray for the full power of the Lord upon the enemy to bring them to their knees.

2. Focus on where you put your feet today believer. There are places you ought not to go and paths not to walk. Establish safe paths for your footsteps and don't get careless in the devil's world lest he win a cheap victory over you and you "sprain your ankle" in a place where greater care was needed.

DOCTRINE

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Psalm 38:17

"For I [am] ready to halt, and my sorrow [is] continually before me."

REFLECTION

There will be times when we are "ready to halt" and just rest under a tree, and at such times it may be fatal to do so. There is a time to run, and a time to rest and sleep, and if you get it wrong you die! 1 Kings 19:4, 13:1-30. It is not wrong to experience great depression and sadness at the sin around you, for you may be simply experiencing the pain the Lord feels for his people, but it is always sinful to be disobedient because of your emotions. You may feel great sadness, and great sadness may be appropriate and normal in such circumstances. Feel it but still do what you are tasked with doing.

APPLICATION

1. Do not let feelings stop any obedient action that you are called to make. Feel normal emotions, but still seek the path of the Lord and obey the instructions the Lord has given you. Tough it out believer; don't wimp on the Lord.
2. Sorrow may be before you, and depressed people around you, and all you may desire is rest, but if the Lord has called you to advance and fight, then pray for strength and draw your sword and advance and fight. Obey the Lord at all times and bless his name as you step out, for he will strengthen you when none is left physically.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "...we glory (rejoice) in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope". (Romans 5:3-4).

Psalm 38:18

"For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin."

REFLECTION

Face sin, confess it and forsake it. Do not ever hide the reality of sinfulness for the Lord has seen it anyway and so nothing is hidden from him. Be straight forward in your dealings with God, for he knows your heart. David is not just "sorry" he has been caught, he is seriously anxious about his sins. To be anxious means he is concerned about their impact upon him and upon others.

David is seriously concerned about his sinful activity and seeks the Lord's way through by confession and restoration of fellowship, for he knows that only God can bring blessing from the cursing he has brought upon himself through sin. There is a time to weep for your sins and feel deep sadness and anxiety, for it is appropriate that you feel the full seriousness of the actions you have committed. Take them to the Lord and seek his healing touch.

2 Corinthians 7:7-11

"7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

James 4:7-11

“7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.”

APPLICATION

1. Face sin and be honest with God about it. God knows anyway, so deal with things as you should and confess and move away from evil patterns of behaviour. Do not hide your confession of what has been very public sin, deal with it before God and men and so assist others to confront reality also.

2. There is a time to confront sinfulness with tears, and even after confession and forgiveness to be ready to weep for what has been done, and so remember with bitter tears, the better to ensure you never walk down bad paths again.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE****Psalm 38:19**

“But mine enemies [are] lively, [and] they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.”

REFLECTION

The enemy may be lazy and that can save us at times, but David's were energetic as they thought they had a chance to destroy him totally. They were numerous and tough and they multiplied throughout his reign and he certainly didn't help himself with his evil and sinful actions with Bathsheba and his betrayal of Uriah.

We can be seriously outnumbered at times and we can be up against great odds that are daunting, but with the Lord we are in secure hands and need to rest secure in his arms. Even for myself as I write this I am short of work and unable to pay bills and under such pressures must rest upon the Lord and trust his battlefield provision to keep me moving forward. We have Jesus words upon it that we will be hated, but we have his promise of comfort also.

John 15:18ff

“18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”

APPLICATION

1. We can be outnumbered but if we focus upon the Lord's work we have his strength and power to draw upon. Let us draw upon his power and keep moving forward even when provisions run low and pressure builds up around us.

2. Look to Jesus alone for strength, never consider the numbers of the enemy, for with the Lord there is victory.

DOCTRINES**CHRISTIAN LIFE – FORGIVENESS****CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS**

Psalm 38:20

“They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow [the thing that] good [is].”

REFLECTION

Some people are not openly enemies, and may even pretend to be friends, but they give evil for good. I have just sat with an able and loyal employee of a firm that has treated her badly, rewarding her loyalty with redundancy simply to replace her by a cheaper staff member who is a friend of the boss. They have rewarded her evil for good and yet say to her it's just “good business”. They may call it that but I used the term “evil” to describe it, for that is what it is.

Even if the people who care not for God work evil, we must hold to the good, for our life and witness depends upon our testimony of the truth. Let us take our stand as David did; we stand for God. Psalm 109:3-5, Jeremiah 18:20. We make our stand with David and the saints of old for goodness and for truth, irrespective of the numbers who stand for unrighteousness. Hebrews 11-12.

1 Peter 3:13-18

“13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:”

APPLICATION

1. Let us keep our eyes off the crowds of evil men and women who mock us, and hold to truth, eyes fixed upon Jesus, for he is the author and the finisher of our faith. It is all about his power and plan not our own.

2. We do not render evil for evil, but by the power of God himself we see the evil fall in God's perfect time. We rest in the plan, person and power of Almighty God.

“We may feel deeply guilty before God, and yet be entirely innocent of any wrong to our fellow men. It is one thing to acknowledge the truth, quite another thing to submit to be belied (lied about). The Lord may smite me justly, and yet I may be able to say to my fellow man, “Why smitest thou me?”” C H Spurgeon.

Psalm 38:21-22

“Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.”

REFLECTION

It is bone fide to cry out thus for deliverance as the pressure mounts upon us. We can claim the great promises of the Word, like 1 Corinthians 10:13 and Romans 8:26-39, but we can still cry out for urgent deliverance. It is alright to let the Lord know our distress, for he knows our heart and wants us to pour it out towards him. The Lord delights in encouraging us with the answers to this prayer.

The Psalmist's deepest desire is for the Lord's close company and the assurance of his holy presence with him. It is deep and abiding fellowship that was David's strongest desire. He sought the Lord's deliverance and he sought it passionately and soon. It is the Lord's delight to encourage us in our passionate pleas to Him. He seeks reality in relationship with us, not form and staid structure.

APPLICATION

1. Let us pour our heart out to the Lord our King, for he seeks to meet us in our deepest desires and needs.

Psalm 39

God's Compassion when We Fail to Live up to our Promises

(To the chief Musician, [even] to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.)

This psalm possibly follows on directly from Psalm 38, and reflects David's mature thought upon the subject of sinfulness and man's frailty since The Fall. He is struck by the sadness of sin, aging and death and as we grow older this becomes a serious theme that we can become preoccupied with.

We find ourselves reflecting upon the shortness of our life and the number of friends who have suddenly died in recent years. We walk past familiar places and we see ourselves there as young people and we feel the swell of the throat and the tear in the eye as we think back to bygone days.

Just this day I went back to my old township and as I drove back to our present house I thought of decisions made and realised that I didn't regret any, as the Lord has woven meaning and purpose into every one, but I became more focused upon today and tomorrow to make the most of them, for the days now fly past and I have that sense of the closeness of the end.

David's challenge here will be felt strongly by those who are older, and my prayer is that the younger ones reading these words will be encouraged to "buy up the days of their youth" and make them count!

Ephesians 5:14-18

*14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"*

Psalm 39:1

"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."

REFLECTION

In the presence of the wicked it is important to keep your tongue in your head, for they will use every careless word to destroy you with. We are often not as careful in the presence of evil men and women as we need to be. One careless word and the enemy leaps upon it and misquotes it further, and if the truth is we made an error we give the enemy free rein and they act as if they are perfect and we are base. David humorously notes that he keeps his mouth still with a bridle, like a horse, so that he doesn't slip any word out at all in the presence of evil men and women.

Solomon builds on this verse of his father's. **Proverbs 4:23-27, 13:1-3, 21:23.**

*4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.
25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.
27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.
13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.
2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.
3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.
21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles."*

APPLICATION

1. Let us be far more careful than we are in private gatherings with evil people, for they will use our words against us and try to destroy us with them. They will lie about us anyway, and claim we said things we did not, but it is crucial that we do not hand them words to use.
2. Let us be careful to speak truth at all times and only truth. Let us hold to the truth, for the truth alone sets us free. If the truth is abused by the enemy, then so be it, but let us be sure we state it plainly without our own additions. If we are to go down in any judgment, let it be for saying what Jesus said, as Jesus said it.

Psalm 39:2

“I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, [even] from good; and my sorrow was stirred.”

REFLECTION

David was not just silent because he knew it was the “right thing” to be silent. He was also silent because he was overwhelmed with sadness at the mental attitude of the evil people who abused him. There was a “deep stillness” that came over him as he saw what was really happening in the interaction before him. This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, when all the politics, courtly behaviour, and “correct” speaking is stripped away from before your eyes and you glimpse through the façade presented by the people, right into the truth in the soul of the person speaking.

David sees the terrible evil behind the words and smiles, and feels the sadness that I have felt in recent months as I have seen great evil worked out by men in business and politics and felt the pain of their eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire, and yet still seen their arrogant disregard for God and God’s people. It is incredibly disturbing in your spirit to see and feel the hatred of the evil ones, but also see their “lostness” and feel also the great satanic power of the arrogance that holds them in their hopeless place. Our Lord felt this on the Cross and David gets a glimpse of it in his spiritual maturity. It is a powerful insight and removes any temptation to hatred towards those who hate you and the Lord. Isaiah 53:1ff.

APPLICATION

1. Reflect upon the lost state of hate filled satanically deceived men and women. One great preacher said that no-one can preach about hell until they have felt the pain of those in there, and that is what David expresses here. He sees that these people are culpable, and are without excuse, and that their hatred and malice is real and dangerous. He can also see that they deserve judgment, but he feels for their pain for it is all so pointless and meaningless, as has their life been. Let us reflect upon the state of the lost and preach the Lake of Fire with tears in our eyes, and if they do not come we had better be silent before the Lord until we see the lost as Jesus did - with great longing for their salvation. Matthew 23:37-39.
2. Be silent before the Lord and think upon the truth of heaven and hell; of eternal blessedness with God and the alternative for those who reject the Lord and his plan. In that awareness preach the Gospel to those who hate it and hate you, with tears for them, not hatred of them.

Psalm 39:3-4

“My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: [then] spake I with my tongue, LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it [is; that] I may know how frail I [am].”

REFLECTION

David let his heart warm from the fire as he watched it burning in his hearth. This verse gives us a clue that it is winter in the palace and David is in reflective mood looking into the dancing flames. Just as the fire is hot, so his heart warms within him as he reflects upon the truths that the Holy Spirit is bringing before his attention. We speak about getting “hot under the collar” or “becoming hot” with a topic, and that is the meaning here. David “warms to his subject” as the Lord brings thoughts together and his thinking flows into the psalm. Jeremiah 20:9.

When he speaks it is not to men around him, especially not to the evil people who have been so disgraceful in their attitudes, but directly to the Lord. It is to the Lord that we need to speak and pour our heart out in these matters, for it is the Lord’s provisions and directions alone that make sense of our brief journey through time and space. Ephesians 5:14-18.

David asks the Lord to underline the awareness of space and time to his soul and spirit. He desires a daily awareness of the shortness of his life so that he might serve with more focused energy and not be distracted by the things of time that have no eternal significance. He seeks a strong awareness of the temporary nature of this life so that he doesn't put any energy into things of no consequence but pours all his power into things that matter eternally. Job 14:13-15.

Psalm 90:9-14

“9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

Psalm 119:81-84

"81 My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.

82 Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

83 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.

84 How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?"

APPLICATION

1. Let us reflect daily upon the shortness of our life and so commit each and every day to the Lord, for guidance and direction in all our steps.
2. We are here for a short time and all that matters is that we play our part before the Lord well, and achieve all the Lord has called us to. We must be able to say Paul's words, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

DOCTRINE**BIBLE – INTERPRETATION****Psalm 39:5**

"Behold, thou hast made my days [as] an handbreadth; and mine age [is] as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state [is] altogether vanity. Selah."

REFLECTION

David is not being negative here; he is being realistic. Solomon will go far further than this verse in Ecclesiastes and that is the logical study to do after these last two psalms, but David sums up the truth here well. Our days are, even if long to men, short in eternal terms. Even when we consider the years of our ancestors in our land our own days are short, and how much shorter are they before the throne of eternity.

One of the great things about my work in the past as an archaeological field worker on stone age sites is the awareness of the shortness of man's life and the little that remains of our time here. Even on Roman sites when you see the pitiful broken remnants of people's lives 1800 years ago you realise just how short the span of man is and how fragile our walk upon this crust of earth is.

The question for us to reflect upon is the meaning of our works here, for truly if we judge by material things all our work is "vanity". If we judge by God's standards however we can come to a different assessment. All that we do in the filling of the Holy Spirit is of great and eternal value. It is "gold, silver and precious stones" forever, rather than the "wood, hay and stubble" of material things. Ezekiel 13:10-11, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. Even then however, what we do is little, and we need to keep our humility, for none of us "do great things for God", but if we allow the Spirit to use us, we are able to rejoice in the Lord doing "great things" with us.

Psalm 90:1-6

"1 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth."

APPLICATION

1. Let us remain in a state of humility and focused attention upon the Lord's will for our life, and let us in the filling of the Holy Spirit fulfil the Lord's purposes for us here.
2. Let us place value on no other thing other than the will of the Lord completed and fulfilled in our days. Let us seek no other thing than the path of God and the work of the Lord, for nothing else has any significance.

Psalm 39:6

“Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up [riches], and knoweth not who shall gather them.”

REFLECTION

David reflects upon three forms of vanity in man. The first is the man who walks with dignity, as if he is someone important. Today we say that such a person is “foolish enough to believe his own publicity”, but many are in this category. David had dignity as a king, but he was always ready to put aside all pomp and circumstance and praise the Lord with joy. 2 Samuel 6:12ff. There is no such thing as “dignity of the clergy”, there is only cant and nonsense from such windbags as think they have “dignity” when they are just stuffed shirts.

The old English phrase “stuffed shirts” comes from these reflections of David and the words of Jesus towards the Pharisees and other “hypocrites. They are just “shirts” stuffed with decaying bodies. All men will die and decay to dust, and we need to remember that when we claim dignity that is not ours to claim. Let us walk in the Holy Spirit’s power and humility of Christ Jesus and serve the one who gave his all for us.

The second category of people fooled by the “false pride of life” are those who allow themselves to be “disquieted” within by things that do not matter eternally. We can all get “wound up”, “stirred up”, put into “inner turmoil” by the things of this life, and it is all wasted energy, for the things we grieve and stress over do not last. Material things, and reputation, and power wielded for a time, are all things of no consequence apart from the will of the Lord. It is only the Lord’s use of things, opportunities, and people that give them meaning, for death takes all else. Luke 12:16-21, 16:19-31.

The third category of wasted effort in time is hoarding of material goods and wealth. Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 6:20-34, and James also builds on this insight in James 5:3. Gold and silver is saved by people but they cannot know who will inherit or steal such items of value. They are of temporal value and they are held in fragility, for health may alter and all is lost in a few seconds. An old relative of ours had a great deal of money saved in a safe, but illness laid him low and in a weak moment he gave the safe combination to a young and greedy relative and she stole all the money and wasted it in a few years. We cannot save anything for a “rainy day” and have any certainty that it will be there and of value. David is not criticising intelligent savings plans, but he is reminding us all that unless the Lord is guiding our steps all the savings we have will be wiped away in an instant. James 5:1-6.

James 4:13-17 (Also refer Luke 12:16-21)

“13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us measure our days in opportunities for service and worship, not in dollars and goods. It is only what is done for the Lord’s glory that matters; all else is nonsense.

2. Let us be wary of those who act as if this life’s glory matters, for the fruit of such a life is based in arrogant and pride filled soil. Such people are earth bound and the Lord wants us to be heavenly focused. Let us keep eyes on the Lord’s “well done” alone, for it alone matters.

“What shadows we are, and what shadows do we pursue”. Edmund Burke.

Psalm 39:7-8

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope [is] in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.”

REFLECTION

What do I look expectantly for if I am correctly oriented to space and time? I stand with David firmly, I look to the Lord alone and I seek his valuation of my life choices alone, for only his valuation matters at all. What am I waiting for? I am waiting for the Lord to make the path ahead clear, for I seek no other path than the Lord's clear path. Psalm 38:15, 130:5-6, Romans 15:13.

It is only the Lord who can save us, deliver us from evil, forgive our sins, and lead us through to victory. David feared only making a fool of the Lord's reputation because of his own actions. It is to be a concern of ours daily, that our actions do not bring disgrace upon the Lord in any way. Let our prayer daily be, "Lord do not let me be the cause of any reproach on your holy name". Psalm 25:11, 18, 51:7-10, Romans 2:23-24.

APPLICATION

1. Let us wait upon the Lord for clear orders, so that our advance is always firmly heading in the right direction and we are sure of the Lord's orders. Let us wait for orders if we are unclear. It is hard to wait, but let's wait for the Lord, so that we serve Him and his will alone.
2. Let us be fearful only of bringing shame upon the Lord. Let us be fearful of falling short of his standards and plan for our life. Hebrews 4:1-12.

Psalm 39:9

“I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst [it].”

REFLECTION

David is struck dumb by the realisation that the Lord has all his issues in hand and so he sits in silence before the Lord. We can be tongue tied and yet still be heard as Paul notes in Romans 8:16-28. The Lord hears us even when we cannot find the right words to say, for the Lord looks deeply into our heart and speaks deeply into our soul his love and keeping power. Let us not be "quick to speak", but quietly ponder the Lord's will within and sit in silence before our God and hear his words into our spirit. Psalm 38:13, Leviticus 10:1-4.

APPLICATION

1. God does it! It is only what God does that matters. Let us sit with what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do, and seek his will for our life only.
2. When we have nothing to say, let us just sit with our thoughts and make them prayers for help. The Lord hears our thoughts, and so let us sit before him in silence and await his orders.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING**

Psalm 39:10

“Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.”

REFLECTION

If we face divine discipline, let us sit beneath it and learn everything that the blows of the Lord can teach us about values and sins. Let us hear his words in pain that we did not, or could not, hear in prosperity. Let us also pray for forgiveness and restoration, for the Lord will graciously answer our prayers. Psalm 25:16-17, Psalms 51, and 103.

David felt diseased by the Lord; struck down by debilitating complaints, but he took them to the one who he knew loved him and cared for him. He felt overwhelmed and consumed by the blows the Lord reined upon him, but he knew that the Lord was not going to destroy him, for he knew he was called to do a work and that God would accomplish all he intended. 2 Timothy 1:12ff, 4:6ff, Hebrews 12:4-12.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord will beat us sorely at times, and at times allow the enemy to bruise us for his glory, but all that comes to us is allowed, and is for eternal glory. Let us pray for brethren who are under pressure and let us uphold all who suffer for the name of Jesus, and think of them as if we ourselves were suffering in their place, Hebrews 13:3.
2. When we feel “consumed” by the discipline or testing of the Lord, let us take our pain and distress to the throne of grace and seek the Lord’s solution and glory in the path through it.

DOCTRINE**MERCY****Psalm 39:11**

“When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man [is] vanity. Selah.”

REFLECTION

When man is dealt with for any sin or iniquity they truly get “eaten up” by their remorse and the Lord’s rebuke hits their body and soul very hard indeed. All our human beauty is “eaten away” by stress, and guilt seriously destroys “good looks” over time. It is sometimes a shock to see just how bad a person can look after a great time of stress, or after a life time of sinful deceit and guilt. We say of some, “Their life is written over their face”, as the ugliness of the soul is now upon every line and crease of their hate filled face. These things are a warning to us, not to sit upon sin, but rather, confess and forsake it.

Every man is a vapour, and our life a brief dance upon this shallow crust of earth. Let us number our days and be cautious of taking ourselves seriously at all, for we have little time here and most waste it on self centred things that matter not at all. Let us not be focused upon the things of this life, but on the things of eternity. Psalm 38:1-8, 90:7-10.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

“9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us ensure that grace and truth, joy and praise are written upon our faces, not ever worry and hatred. Let us write the Lord’s work upon our lives and witness to his power, not our own.
2. All our lives are just empty breath unless the Holy Spirit fires us up and moves us forward to honour the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

DOCTRINE**ANGELS – SATANIC ATTACK ON BELIEVERS**

Psalm 39:12

“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I [am] a stranger with thee, [and] a sojourner, as all my fathers [were].”

REFLECTION

We know the Lord hears, but it is alright to ask the Lord to hear, for the Lord delights in our cry to Him and wants us to verbalise our faith; He will indeed hear and bless us. David cries to the Lord and expresses his total dependence upon the Lord for help and recovery.

Many are shocked that David prayed with tears often, but do not be amazed, for he had a passionate faith and expressed his emotions to the Lord freely and the Lord delighted in him for this. Let us not be afraid of sadness and deep anguish, but pour it all out to the Lord.

We may feel like strangers at times, but we are friends and family. 1 Peter 2:9-12. We are sojourners upon the earth, but like Abraham, we are God’s travellers and we are here to serve. Acts 7:6, Hebrews 11:9, 1 Peter 1:17. Do not expect to be anything other than your fore-fathers in faith were, and they were all pilgrims and sojourners upon the earth.

APPLICATION

1. How attached are you to this world believer? Do you value the applause of men and the wealth that man gives? Do you see your power, position, wealth and social network as anything other than God’s provision for service? Are you using all things for his glory here?
2. Let us be challenged by Abraham and live with the same tent dwelling mentality he had, and have a “loose grip” upon things. All that decays is of no eternal value, only temporary use, and so let us use it for the Lord’s work.

Psalm 39:13

“O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.”

REFLECTION

In the context of an ancient court a person was safe when the king’s gaze moved from them to another object for judgment. David seeks for the Lord to lift his intent gaze from him and allow him to move forward in service again. David seeks the freedom to move forward and serve again. He feels like he has been under the divine microscope and been beaten hard by the Lord, and he seeks the lifting of the judgment and the freedom to serve and praise again.

He knows that if he remains under the Lord’s judgment too long he will simply die, for he has no strength, nor any personal righteousness to withstand the gaze of the Lord. He knows he stands before his Lord as a sinner but also knows it is as a forgiven sinner. He seeks to move forward in that truth. Psalm 103:10-17.

APPLICATION

1. We are forgiven, and our armour is provided, not earned by us. Let us take the armour provided by grace accept his forgiveness and advance into the battle of today in the Holy Spirit’s strength, not our own.
2. The Lord will not just let us recover strength, he will provide strength once we have bowed thoroughly before his majesty.

DOCTRINE**BITTERNESS**

Psalm 40

God's Deliverance through Great Anguish of Soul

(To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.)

David has been praying for dramatic help in dramatic situations where sudden death was possible for large numbers of people, and he has been answered by the Lord and in this prayer he rejoices in the Lord's faithfulness through the years of trouble. My suspicion is that this psalm goes with the earlier two psalms and is the formal summary and praise anthem for all past answers to prayer. It is David's mature faith summary of praise for God's faithfulness in very difficult times through many hard and disastrous years. Yes, he has sinned in the past, but he has been forgiven, restored and is under God's great grace. He praises God, as his descendent James does one thousand years later, for God always gives "more grace".

James 4:3-10

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

Psalm 40:1

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry."

REFLECTION

As David reflects on his life he sees a pattern of spiritual power, and it involves his patient prayerful expectation and the Lord's powerful solutions later received. He sees that the first step is an essential step. He must patiently wait upon the Lord, and that means trusting in God's Character and timing, not his own plans. It means positioning for blessing through confession and then having dealt with sin, not to worry about discipline, but focus on the path of blessing, for confession has led to total forgiveness, and so total expectation can be focused on blessing! Psalm 103:10-18. God hears and God answers in the timing of his eternal plan – we wait upon the Lord!

Patience isn't just a time word it's a mental attitude in the Hebrew, and it is the mental attitude of expectation of good things to come from the king. Having faced and confessed sin there is the 100% promise based expectation of being heard and answered. What is our hope of the Lord? I have been seriously challenged by this through my present time of great trial, for I had started this time expecting the Lord to "lobber me", even though I had no biblical or personal life evidence of any behaviour from the Lord other than blessing me.

What was my expectation? Did I have the correct viewpoint of the Lord? I had to answer these questions through these last four months and realise that I had been wrong about the Lord, and wrong in my initial expectation, for I now see that the suffering I have gone through has shown me the depth of God's love in revealing things to me that only this level of suffering could teach. It wasn't about punishment for forgiven sin, and it wasn't about discipline for wrongful attitudes. I have understood David for the first time properly, and would not have, had I not been suffering this badly. I now see the time of suffering as a blessing not as a curse. It was never a judgment, even though I felt it was (without reason) beforehand. God wasn't "lobbering me"; he was training me on a tough and advanced confidence course!

I have "waited patiently/expectantly" now for the Lord's answers to the problem I face, and as I write this I still have no clear path through to the other side, but I can see that the time frame isn't over yet, and that when it is I will get the answer and come through with rejoicing. I can see that my fear of the Lord's discipline was inappropriate, as he was doing a different thing, and when that process has run its course, the next phase begins, which is the path out. Romans 8:24-28, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

David challenges us to walk with God through the difficult things that come to us in life. He challenges us to keep speaking with the Lord in prayer, and through deepened fellowship, feel his love that never changes, and so draw closer to the "father-heart" of God. As our father he never tires of us and punishes us unless there is unconfessed sin. If we

have dealt with things as we need to then anything occurring is about blessing and education for greater service. Focus forward and discover what glory He is working us towards.

APPLICATION

1. See things God's way, not man's way. Men hold grudges and do the "pay back", but God does not. Confessed sin is forgiven totally, and the Lord's dealings with us are always designed to focus us forward for service and power. Pause and see it believer and draw closer in fellowship and enjoy it.
2. If we have dealt with any sin and are focused forward for service in prayerfulness and spirituality, then we can have the expectation of blessing and opportunity for future service. Let us "gird up the loins of our mind" and ready ourselves for the work he will call us into this day. 1 Peter 1:13.

Psalm 40:2

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, [and] established my goings."

REFLECTION

Pits were used as dungeons in the ancient world, and the prisoner was cast in such places to die of thirst and hunger slowly as a warning to others. David has felt like he has been "imprisoned" in his testing situation and left to die there, but he now sees that the Lord, in His good timing has rescued him from the pit and restored him to the place of blessing. The noisy and abusive place of pressure has been replaced by the rock of stability and blessing.

The reference to the "pit" was also a reference to hell/hades itself, and the pressure situations of David's life have felt like "hell" in the sense that there is fear of death, anguish of soul and spirit, and the company of evil men who abuse around him. He has felt the terror of the enemy's constant and vicious hatred. Psalm 57:6.

The pits of the ancient world were also latrines and drainage holes, so they filled with sewerage and filthy clay/earth at their base. David has felt like he was "mired" in the stinking mud of evil and confined by his circumstances, but he sees that the Lord has brought him through these things, lifted him out of the "miry pit" and placed him on the solid ground of God's Plan for his life. Jeremiah felt these same things, Jeremiah 18:20-22, 43:43-44. He was thrown into a sewerage hole in the palace prison in Jerusalem and in God's grace was just rescued in time. Jeremiah 38:6-13.

APPLICATION

1. When we find ourselves in constricted places which create great distress and suffering we are to cry out to the Lord as the one who will certainly deliver us out of the "miry pit" and place our feet on the rock again. Cast yourself on the mercy and grace of the Lord believer, for he is in the "rescue business", and we can often find ourselves in need.
2. God will establish our steps again on solid ground, for he seeks for us to walk with him into blessing and glory. The Lord desires our service and he will lift us up to achieve this. We will either be lifted up to greater service, or we will be lifted up into heaven, whatever is in accordance with the Plan of God. We relax in his arms.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

In Psalm 18:2, David declares that **"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower"**.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE

Psalm 40:3

“And he hath put a new song in my mouth, [even] praise unto our God: many shall see [it], and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”

REFLECTION

God has put a new song in our mouths, and the only way anyone can learn a new song is by being taught in a new situation. It is only in new places that we can learn new songs, and as we go through “miry pit” places it is the learning of new songs that may be the Lord’s purpose. It is only in some forms of suffering that we can learn deep things from the Lord, and if this is his purpose then let us rejoice in this and sing as we emerge from the pit, or like Paul and Silas, start to sing with our backs still cut and bruised while we yet remain in the prison. Acts 16:23ff.

The Lord is teaching us all manner of things on our journey through this world. He wants us to learn about Him, his plan and his power, but even more, He wants us to be a witness to all these things. We are left here to serve, and to worship, and service is often to be by witnessing to the truth. The truth of the Lord’s saving power is a truth that none can argue against, for you are standing there before them. God wants many to see and learn the “fear of the Lord” and learn to have trust in the Lord themselves. Psalm 34:1-6, 35:27, 52:6, 64:9-10, 142:7, Acts 2:31-41, 4:4-12.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be fearful of the dark places and the various forms of “pits” that you may find yourself in, for the Lord’s purpose, once any sin has been confessed, is always blessing and the learning of new songs to praise his grace and mercy, for it is to be found in all the dark places of this world.
2. Let our focus always be upon what the Lord is doing, not be side tracked by what men are doing to us. What is God doing in your situation believer? Is it a pit experience? Then seek the new song, learn it, sing it like Paul and Silas with the pain still real and powerful, but seek the opening of the prison doors by the earthquake the Lord will bring.

Psalm 40:4

“Blessed [is] that man that makes the LORD his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.”

REFLECTION

We are blessed by the Lord in and through our relationship with Him in Christ Jesus. Blessing is seen and felt however only as we consciously “make the Lord our trust”. It is our conscious choice and action to make the Lord our trust that delivers us from fear and anxiety well before we are delivered from the particular miry pit we have found ourselves in.

The conscious decision to trust the Lord in our “miry pit” experience is the faith-rest challenge of the moment and one we must meet daily. These are not “one off” decisions, for the “pit experience” may go on for months or years. My particular one has been intense for the last eighteen months, but has been in existence and felt for over ten years now. The Lord has taught me incredibly wonderful “new songs” and enabled me to work for Him in ways that have been powerful only because the suffering has been powerfully effective in deepening my walk. Psalm 118:8-9, Jeremiah 17:7-8, Romans 15:12-13.

The impact of the pit experience is that the attitude to worship and to the Lord’s Plan is changed, but also there is a total change in the attitude we have towards people. Those who walk in lies are separated from, and those who are filled with pride are turned aside from. Our life values shift after pit experiences, and what and who we value alters dramatically. Psalm 101:3-7, Isaiah 44:18-20, Jeremiah 10:14-15.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord alone is our deliverer, and the evil men who value themselves are of no consequence to us. We truly see who is “powerful” and it is not the proud man and liar, but the man who walks with God. Let us walk with God and let Him alone lift us up.
2. Consciously this day commit your way to the Lord. Make the Lord quite consciously your trust today and seek his meetings and his purposes within them. Let the Lord guide your very steps this day and so meet the people he has for you to meet, and have the discussion that he desires, and achieve the goals he has for you only.

DOCTRINE**ANGELS – SATAN’S STRATEGY AND TACTICS**

Psalm 40:5

“Many, O LORD my God, [are] thy wonderful works [which] thou hast done, and thy thoughts [which are] to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: [if] I would declare and speak [of them], they are more than can be numbered.”

REFLECTION

It is good to remember the creative works of the Lord who made this universe. It is even better to recall the Lord's marvellous works towards us as his children. God has done extraordinary things to assist us and bring us through to where we serve today. I reflected upon this truth yesterday as I walked in the great park behind our present home. How much the Lord has done for me, and how many times the Lord has brought me through deep waters of difficulty and impossibility to produce situations of glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 71:15, 92:5, 136:1-4, 139:16-17.

We are unable to “reckon” (count up and be sure of all) the things done. Job 38:1-6. We think like the theologians of Job's day that we have God in our “system of thought”, but forget to our peril that we are in his “system” and we know very little of it, but we all know enough to give him the glory and honour and praise forever! David wants to praise the Lord as He is worth praise, but realises that all his praise will but inadequately catch the glory of the Lord's work on his behalf.

Isaiah 55:6-12

“6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

APPLICATION

1. Just the open acknowledgement of the great debt of glory we owe the Lord is worship in itself, for in our humility and joyful thankfulness we recognise the truth that needs to be expressed to stabilise our troubled hearts in difficult situations. The Lord truly has the power and the will to keep us, guard us, and bring us through to glory.

2. Let us praise the Lord and lift up our hearts and voices to the Lord who has given us all blessings and all power to achieve all that he has called us to achieve. Let us rest in his plan and praise him for coming victories even before we see the next step.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – THANKFULNESS****Psalm 40:6**

“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.”

REFLECTION

God does not seek formal religious responses from men, although they are bone fide and where believed and felt can be meaningful. God does not seek the sacrifices of obedience as much as he seeks the “open ear” to his instruction. There are two sorts of obedience to a command; the first is what is referred to as “Man pleasing”, the second is the loving response of faith and hope. The “man pleaser” does what is right and demanded because he is being watched and wants to “win points” with the auditor. The man of faith hears the command, and because of his love for his commander, he believes the words, feels a deep desire to obey the commands, and willingly and fully obeys them with joy, looking for the “well done” of his master and commander. Colossians 3:22-25.

Ephesians 6:5-8

"5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

It is a strange statement that Burnt offerings were not required, for of course under the Mosaic Law, they were most certainly required and would be for the next 1000 years. Be clear of David's meaning here 1000 years before the Cross when the burnt offerings would cease to have meaning and significance. Psalm 50:8, 51:16-17, Isaiah 1:10-18, Jeremiah 7:21-28. Both the great prophets Isaiah, and Jeremiah, would repeat David's words even more powerfully for the Lord sought genuine life change reflected by the sacrifices then brought in truth. God sought and still seeks those who worship him to worship in Spirit and in Truth alone. Actions without faith behind them and heart and life change embedded within them are of no value at all. James 2:13-26.

APPLICATION

1. God delights in a contrite spirit and a Holy Spirit transformed life, and only then does he receive our sacrifices and offerings. Without holy life change our sacrifices are hypocrisy and masquerade. God hates play acting in matters of faith, for he wants truth at the heart of all we do. John 4:23. Let us be truthful and so we will be powerful.

2. Let us open our ears to truth and hear and obey the Word of God. The Lord seeks a willing and contrite heart not the form of religion without its reality and power. Let us be humble before the Lord and hear his instructions to us.

DOCTRINE**OBEDIENCE – OBEY****Psalm 40:7**

"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book [it is] written of me, "

REFLECTION

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would quote this and clearly apply it to himself, as would the apostles. John 5:39-40, Acts 10:43-46, 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, 1 Peter 1:10-11. All the prophetic words of the scriptures speak of the coming messiah, but they also speak of our place individually in the plan of God also. We are all bound up in eternity through the plan of the Lord for us.

In the Lord's "Book of Life" we are all recorded, and our lives are "hid with Christ in God". Colossians 3:3. We are known from eternity past and the plan with all its provisions has been in place since that time. God has provided for us and knew our names from before time and space were made. Let us rest in the certainties of his plan in the temporary troubles of today.

APPLICATION

1. We are made of the same dust that made the stars, but even more we have our origin in the mind of God from before this present space-time universe was made. We are in his hands and secure in all his provisions for us.

2. Let us praise the Lord for his "Book of Life", for our names are engraved in that book and will never be removed because of the blood of Christ shed for us.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

"And it shall be, when he (the King) sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of [that which is] before the priests the Levites:

And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, [to] the right hand, or [to] the left: to the end that he may prolong [his] days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

This interpretation is in keeping with the overall context of verses six to eight.

Psalm 40:8

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart.”

REFLECTION

David could say this with passionate commitment and enthusiasm. He loved the Lord and loved the words of the Lord that he had received. As an author of the scriptures himself he enjoyed the earlier material he had received; just the Mosaic Records of the Exodus and the five books of the Law, and probably early copies of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and some other books now lost. Numbers 21:14.

The will of the Lord is contained in the Word of the Lord, and David had read all he could read and was so passionate about the Word that he had taken it, believed it, memorised it, and engraved it upon his heart, and applied it into his life. David failed dramatically at times, but he always bowed before his Lord again and was restored through confession and grace. He loved the Lord, and loved the Word, and showed both facts always by return to obedient living before the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. We may fail the Lord at times, but if we love Him and his Word we will return to the Lord and in humility apply again the truths that we need to correct our paths. Proverbs 3:1-17.
2. O believer, let us be sure daily that we delight in the Lord's will for our life and affirm that delight aloud in our prayers. Let us remind our forgetful heart that the paths of God alone satisfy and the paths of God alone lead to meaning and purpose in this brief walk through space and time.

Psalm 40:9

“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.”

REFLECTION

David had not held back from any truth that he needed to confront; there was no fact that he ignored in his work for his people and the Lord. Many people have “blind spots”, where they refuse to accept things that they need to accept for effective and focused service. The sad result is that they do not achieve what the Lord desired of them. David has been solely focused (except when in his state of unconfessed sin, and he has dealt with that and so is forgiven - Psalms 51, 103 and has been restored) before his great sin and thereafter upon the righteous standards of God and he has preached them without minimising God's demands.

David has eliminated this concern and preached righteousness in the sight of all the people at the great feasts. He has clearly and openly “nailed his colours to the mast”, and been transparent in all his dealings with his people. He has made it clear to them all that he desires the Lord's will alone, for himself and for his people. He has not held back for political reasons from telling the truth in passionate power. No consideration has ever affected David's desire to speak the truth about God's holy demands for his people. He calls upon the Lord to bear him witness on this matter.

APPLICATION

1. Even when David broke God's righteous standards he still believed in them and preached them with power and focused energy. As soon as he was restored he returned to them 100%. It is tempting after a great sin to step back from condemnation of evil for personal embarrassment reasons. David had never done that, and even though people would point the finger at him in some matters, he kept preaching the truth, and so must we! When our own sermons convict our past lives, let us preach the truth with power and tears if necessary, but let us always preach the truth, for it alone will set people free, just as it has set us free.
2. Let us proclaim the freedom that is in Christ Jesus, and let us be trophies of grace and mercy, for in truth this is what we are. We have been forgiven, and we have been lifted up from the “miry clay of our own sinfulness and stupidity, and so we are to let the Lord's people know just how great our Lord is, and how abundant are his mercies towards us. We are to be encouragers of the Lord's foolish sheep, for in us they can see the gracious forgiveness of the Lord towards his servants.

Psalm 40:10

"I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation."

REFLECTION

It is easy to believe a doctrine and then "hide it away in the heart" but never proclaim it to the Lord's people. Such "faith" is not worthy of the name, for the Lord's people have a witnessing responsibility and if the truth is clear, then "let the people of the Lord say so!" Truth is not to be concealed but proclaimed and if it is not proclaimed then the herald of the Lord has failed in their duty to the Lord and the Lord's people. Roman 10:9-10, 2 Corinthians 5:9-11.

Ezekiel 3:17-21

"17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

There are to be no "secret believers", but only people who proclaim the truth in Holy Spirit power. We are here to witness to truth, not sit on the truth and hide it from those who need it least they drop into hell! The Lord's unsaved people need to hear of the salvation of the Lord, so that they can take advantage of the grace gift offered. They need to hear of the faithfulness of God so that they can rest in that truth in difficult days and trust the Lord their God. They need to know the loving kindness of the Lord their God and rest upon this truth in all its powerful encouragement.

APPLICATION

1. Let us proclaim the loving kindness of the Lord and give praise to him. Let the people of the Lord be encouraged regarding the truth, and let the unbeliever hear it that they might have no excuses before God if they reject his great salvation.

2. Do not hide the truth, rather proclaim the truth, so that none may ever say, "he/she didn't tell me".

DOCTRINE**JUSTICE****SALVATION – IMPUTATION****Psalm 40:11**

"Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy loving kindness and thy truth continually preserve me."

REFLECTION

David is not casting doubts upon God's holy character here. He is not expressing doubt that the Lord will keep him and protect him, but he is sharing his very normal human fears as he faces great pressures. He is doing the right thing with his fears, he is bringing them before the Lord and casting them before the Lord's throne of grace and mercy. Hebrews 4:14-16.

He does not seek "justice", for he is a sinner, he seeks tender mercy. Notice the exact meaning of this phrase, for it reminds us of the love of God towards us. God's gentleness will always preserve us. David wants to be under the Lord's forever care and loving kindness, for he knows that without this level of loving protection he is lost without hope of deliverance indeed. Psalm 23:6, 57:3, Proverbs 2:8-11, Hebrews 5:7-10.

APPLICATION

1. We are not under the care of the Lord as the God of righteousness and justice alone, for then we would be without hope. We are under the God who meets the holy demands of righteousness and justice by grace and mercy, and receives us daily in his loving kindness and tender mercies.
2. Let us praise him this day for his gracious mercy and loving kindness towards us, for it is in this place he meets us every day.

Psalm 40:12-13

“For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.”

REFLECTION

Telling the Lord how we see things is not a sign of lack of faith or intelligence, for the Lord of course knows all the most intimate details of our plight. Pouring our cares out to the Lord and enumerating our enemies is commanded by the Lord and he seeks our heart felt release of all our cares at the foot of his throne of grace. Psalm 55:22-23, 75:1-7, 1 Peter 5:5-10.

David sees his enemies multiplied before his eyes, but also he is acutely aware of his sinfulness, even feeling that his sins are more numerous than the hairs of his head. David sees his true nature and does not hide himself in false pride and arrogance from the truth of his sinfulness and human frailty. He does not demand anything of the Lord but in humility comes before the Lord and seeks loving kindness and mercy forever. He asks that the Lord will take pleasure in assisting him, and pleads for speedy deliverance.

APPLICATION

1. We are challenged by David's honest humility and reminded of our own sinfulness and foolishness. Let us be like David and pour our concerns out to the one who loved us and gave himself for us. There is no doubt that the one who loved us that much will hear; he will hear and he will deliver us.
2. Be pleased Lord to deliver us. Let this be our daily prayer to the One who has a plan and will execute all the details needed to bring us to Him.

Psalm 40:14

“Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.”

REFLECTION

Let the Lord arise and let his enemies be scattered and ashamed. Psalm 68:1. This remains a bone fide prayer in the church age period, for the enemies of the Cross will indeed be scattered by the Lord and we are to desire this that the truth may be seen proclaimed amongst men in power.

Let us remember the intentions of the enemy, and never forget their murderous plans and evil heart towards the people of the Lord. Too many foolish believers through the ages have forgotten the evil hearts of satanically influenced people and seen the innocent suffer later as a result. Do not judge David for lacking love here, for he loves God's people and seeks their safety from those who plan evil against them. He sees, quite rightly, that as the king he is the lightning conductor of evil assaults upon God's people, and that as that lightning conductor he is to stand and receive the enemy's malice and withstand it in God's holy name.

He expresses his desires before the Lord here; that the enemy be driven backwards and rendered powerless before the Lord. He desires that all their evil plans be turned backwards upon themselves. His prayer is that as they have wished evil upon him, so might they receive the evil upon themselves. As they have planned so let it happen to them. Psalm 31:17-18, 70:2-3, Acts 9:1-6. David is not praying for judgment alone, but for total flattening of the enemy so that they, like Rabbi Saul, might look up and be saved and transformed into God's servants rather than God's enemies.

APPLICATION

1. Let us commit the enemies of the Cross to the judgment of the Lord and let us seek the Lord's deliverance from the plans of evil men. Let us place ourselves firmly and totally in the hands of the Lord alone.

2. Let us pray for the conviction of the evil ones who assault the truth and hate God and his people; if Paul could be saved, then there is hope for all mankind.

Psalm 40:15

“Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.”

REFLECTION

It is not spiteful on David's part to express this prayer. Let us stand and confess any negative attitude we have ever had towards David for such prayers, for they are certified as correct by their inclusion here in God's holy Word. Many psalms and proverbs did not make it into the Word of God and so those that did have the Holy Spirit's seal upon them. Psalm 69:24-25, 109:6-20.

David desires the devastation of the enemies of the truth, for he knows that unless evil men see their hopes totally dashed they will not have any hope of facing the truth. Unless their faces are pushed firmly into the mud they will not admit any fault. They sought the rewards of unrighteousness, and so let them inherit and be paid out in full with shame in time, that they might confront truth and have eternity with God. Those who mock the servants of the Lord need to feel the power of mockery and so realise the justice of God and their need of grace and mercy.

APPLICATION

1. The wages of sin is death. The gift of God alone is eternal life in Christ Jesus. There is hope for none who mock Jesus and Jesus servants, for in him alone is their hope for eternal life. Acts 4:12. Let us proclaim truth in power.

2. Do not mock the enemy, or say disgraceful things of them, like they do of us. Instead pray for them that the Lord might bring them low and show them truth in power. Let them be brought to their knees that hate truth and so recognise their arrogance and on their knees find God. Let us pray for this.

Psalm 40:16

“Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.”

REFLECTION

David's prayer is sure and stable, and he is clear in his focus and his desires. He seeks the blessing of the Lord and he seeks his blessing upon all who seek the Lord and desire to serve and worship Him. Let the Lord rise up and bless his servants and let the servants of the Lord be glad in the Lord and praise his holy name before all the people. Isaiah 64:4-7, Hebrews 13:15.

Let all who love the salvation of the Lord say so continually, and let them rejoice in God's gracious salvation at all times. Let the Lord be magnified in our speech, our prayers, our praise and our witness to others in life and lips. Let us declare the importance of the Lord before all the people. Psalm 22:26, 35:27, 68:3, 105:3.

APPLICATION

1. O Let us give thanks to the Lord for his greatness towards us in all things. Let us praise his holy name for all his goodness towards us.

2. Let us praise his name and express our love to the Lord for his goodness towards us. Let his praise be continually on our lips and let no hour pass when we do not say in our heart and aloud, “The Lord be praised”.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

DELIVERANCE

Psalm 40:17

“But I [am] poor and needy; [yet] the Lord thinketh upon me: thou [art] my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.”

REFLECTION

Our depressed and poverty stricken state does not stop the Lord from delivering us, nor does our lack of resources limit the Lord's resources in any way at all. David recognises that spiritually he receives all assistance from the Lord alone and that there is nothing that is not of the Lord. Psalm 34:6, 69:33, 70:5. Isaiah 41:17.

Even though there is no good thing in us the Lord has an intelligent plan for our life and it is perfect. As part of that eternal plan the Lord has all we will ever need for our salvation and deliverance from all troubles. David's desire is that the Lord not delay, as he feels there is delay, but hasten to deliver and lift up David to find the path forward again. We can feel that the Lord is “delaying” and from our time based perspective we may argue this, but God's plan is from eternity and so the timing is perfect as are all the details.

We can speak this way to the Lord, just as David does, for he deals with us in loving kindness and understands our panic filled moments. The Lord knows we are dust! Psalm 103:10-18. He is not loitering or delaying deliverance, but is operating on the basis of his perfect timing and it will always be fulfilled in our life and work for our blessing and his eternal glory.

APPLICATION

1. Let us pour out our worries to the Lord, and remember his plan and praise Him for every detail, even the ones we have worries about. Let us take our limited thinking to the Lord and pour out our anxieties for he will deliver us and bring glory to us.
2. Our poverty stricken state does not stop blessing; only lack of praise and worship stops blessing pouring out as it can. Let us not hinder the Lord's work within and through us by lack of worship. Let us praise the Lord.

DOCTRINE**GOD – NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT****Notes**

Psalm 41

(To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.)

Abuse and Assurance – Encouragement As We Face Evil Men

Psalm 41:1

“Blessed [is] he that considers the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.”

REFLECTION

The way we treat the poor, vulnerable, and genuinely needy is a good measure of our spiritual status before the Lord. The Lord reinforced this message strongly as did the early church's leadership. Luke 4:18, 6:20, 14:13-21, Romans 15:26, Galatians 2:10, James 2:2-7, 14-18. Having stated this clear teaching, the concept of the “worthy poor” is at the heart of the biblical imperative to care for the poor and vulnerable. This biblical standard did not apply to care for criminals who have come on “hard times” but still have criminal lives, nor did it urge assistance to those simply too lazy to work for themselves and provide for their own family. 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12, 4:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-13, 1 Timothy 5:8.

Care for the weak, vulnerable, and poor through no fault of their own, was a sign of a person who truly understood their own status before the Lord, for we were all spiritually poor and needed the Lord's grace. 2 Corinthians 8:2-9. The truly spiritual believer really considers the plight of the poor, and tries with intelligent concern to assist them in a useful and positive way. This doesn't mean necessarily giving money, but really thinking on the best way to assist them long term so that they are lifted up to self reliance, rather than simply made dependent upon charity for life.

As we do unto others, so the Lord will do unto us. If we do not show mercy then we have no claim upon the Lord to receive mercy. If we do not deliver the needy there is no “colour of right” on our behalf to ask the Lord for deliverance. James 2:13. We are encouraged to ask the Lord for deliverance from evil days, but only as we seek every opportunity to pray for and help others in their needs. The person who is most helped by the Lord is the one who is always the “helper” of others.

APPLICATION

1. Let us seek any way we can discover to assist others in their time of need. If there is a needy person let us assist them in any way we can, even if it's by prayer when we have no material goods to share with them.
2. Let us pour our heart out to the Lord for deliverance for ourselves, and prove our genuine heart by spending equal time at least in prayer for others deliverance from their own difficulties.

Psalm 41:2

“The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; [and] he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.”

REFLECTION

The absolute nature of the promise here must give us all encouragement and strength as we battle against doubt in difficult places in our life. The Lord will absolutely preserve and deliver us from evil in the places we walk within as long as those places are directed by the Lord. If the Lord has allowed us to enter a place in accordance with his will for our life, then he will provide for us on the journey, for it is his journey. Psalm 33:19, 91:3-7, Jeremiah 45:4-5.

God will build a hedge around his people and keep them from danger and pressures of all sorts. The Lord will keep us alive until the moment that is ordained for our death and our death is precious in his sight. Psalm 68:20, 116:15. We do not need to fear death, only not being obedient to the Lord's call upon us.

The promise then is of blessing upon the earth, and this is not to be restricted to material things, for the greatest of the Lord's men did not necessarily receive great material blessing, but they were certainly blessed in all spiritual ways. Ephesians 1:3. Do not be quick to join the so called “prosperity gospel” preachers on the basis of this text for the great prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel suffered greatly as a result of their faithfulness, and yet they were and are blessed eternally. All their enemies could do was bless them, and for Isaiah and Jeremiah that meant a martyr's crown. The murderer of Isaiah, King Manasseh, later found faith and possibly that was a result of Isaiah's witness unto death.

APPLICATION

1. Let us rest in the power and provision of the Lord for us. The Lord's love is around us and within us, and his power is over us. We are safe in the beloved, in life and in our death. There is only eternal blessing for us, for by blessing us the Lord our God brings glory to the Lord Jesus, and that is the very heart of our being.
2. The very will of our enemies will bring praise to the Lord our God. The enemy is powerless to make any impression upon us other than glory to the Lord, for the Lord's hand is over us in all things. Let us commit our way to the Lord and advance with confidence into the battlefield today for it is all about his glory and our blessedness, and no matter the pressures of the moment they are not worthy to be considered.

Psalm 41:3

“The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.”

REFLECTION

When we suffer in the Lord's work there are precious promises like these ones to claim and enjoy. This verse is very precious to me and I rejoice in it more than twenty six years after being flattened in an accident in the Armed Forces. I was gassed by an idiot fellow officer who let off two smoke bombs to liven up a training exercise. They were the wrong type for use in confined spaces and caused damage to my lungs and I was unable to work for three years, and was not expected to recover fully by my specialist physician. The Lord lifted me up in response to the believing prayers of the elders of my church at the time. James 5:13-15.

Over the terrible three years of my “languishing” I was in a terrible state and not expected to recover, and yet the Lord strengthened me, encouraged me, and stabilised my faith in him until the day I was prayed for and recovered. During that time I wrote the Diploma of Theology Course and was taught things about God's love and power that could not be learned in any other way than on a bed of terminal suffering. The Lord “made”, or transformed my bed and my life as a result of those years of suffering, and has done the same again over the last eleven years of incredible financial pressures.

APPLICATION

1. God is in the transformation business, and he transforms our lives and our destiny by his loving care for us. Even in the worst situations we may claim this transforming power, for the very difficulty may yet prove to be the Lord's advanced training for special service.
2. In every situation let us see what God is doing rather than what we fear is happening. In each place let us seek the Lord's blessing and guidance, for problems may lead to the greatest opportunities in this life.

Psalm 41:4

“I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.”

REFLECTION

In the midst of our expectation that God is doing something amazing there is often still the fear of consequences if we get it wrong at any point. We can even doubt the Lord on a bad day. I reflect on this on this particular day as I write these words. It is a terribly overcast late autumn day that is depressingly dull and threatening, and yet as I listen to good Christian music and tap away at the computer these depressing feelings lift in the worship and praise to the Lord. Isaiah 61:3.

As he feels despair at times, just like us all in the midst of pressure situations, David appeals for mercy from the Lord. It is good to cry out to the Lord and appeal for mercy, for in our cry we are reminded that this is indeed the nature of the Lord, and it is his joy and delight to give mercy to his loved ones.

“Heal my soul Lord”. In this prayer we have words I recognise as my own through the years of recovery from my injuries, for it was not just my lungs and body that was damaged but my heart, my soul itself. As we face suffering the hardest things to heal are the depressions and grief deep within, for only after the body heals do they slowly drift up to the surface, and they then must be skimmed off and dealt with at the throne of grace or they will sink us back into despair and suicidal thought.

In what ways had David sinned against the Lord? Do not just jump to the conclusion that this is yet another reference to Bathsheba and Uriah. I suspect it is a reference to the deeper and harder sins to deal with before they destroy us, the sins of doubt, despair, and lack of faith. Romans 14:23. We must deal with lack of faith as seriously as we deal with the temptation to adultery, murder, lying, and theft, for in God's sight it is the silent killer of our witness and power.

APPLICATION

1. Let us declare war upon doubt and fear, and replace both by worship, praise and focus upon service. Let the garments of praise help us put off the spirit of heaviness that will otherwise overwhelm us.
2. Let us recognise that after great pressure there is the need for deep and powerful healing of our shattered soul. We may be strong in spirit but injured deep within, and so be in need of healing from the Lord. Let us ensure we open our heart to receive all the Lord has for us by way of healing.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS****Psalm 41:5**

“Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?”

REFLECTION

The scripts of the enemy do not change over the centuries do they? Those who speak evil of us today still ask the same pointed questions and make the same snide remarks. There are some who delight in the Lord and in the blessing of the Lord’s servants, and there are others who cannot but wait for us to die. These people are so malice filled that they seek our death, and even more they seek the destruction of our reputation and even the wiping away of every memory of us.

I reflected upon this verse a few hours back as I watched a TV program on archaeology. One of the great things about a rescue dig is finding a body in situ and being able to carefully excavate it, preserve it, and relocate it with dignity before the bulldozers destroy the site, but also exciting is to discover who they were and what they died of at times, and from the state of their bones, how they lived and when.

At times the person discovered was famous in their day, but they are now forgotten, and only the chance discovery of an archaeologists trowel uncovers their story again before they disappear from history again. Man is fragile and his reputation is even more so, and yet evil men try to destroy the reputation of great and good men, but the Lord preserve our blessedness forever. We are truly blessed and blessed forever in Christ Jesus.

APPLICATION

1. Eyes off the words and deeds of evil men, and focus upon the Lord alone, for His power alone keeps, guards, guides, and will lead us through to eternal victory and blessing.
2. Do not be upset by those who seek to destroy you, for they will be judged by the Lord and dealt with by Him eternally. Leave your case in the Lord’s hands, for he does such a better job than us in preserving our reputation forever and destroying the enemies of truth.

Psalm 41:6-7

“And if he come to see [me], he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; [when] he goeth abroad, he telleth [it]. All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.”

REFLECTION

The politicians of this world are interesting in their ability to lie, cheat, pretend and play act to get favours that they quickly forget. My wife has been asked to assist as chair of a political group. She was asked by two Christian political leaders and we prayerfully considered their request and she went ahead with joint prayer for the Lord to lift up this as an opportunity to bring blessing to the Lord. Esther 4:14.

She has just attended a national convention for the political party and seen at first hand the dissembling of some of the pagan, and sadly even so called “Christian” politicians, as they jockey for power behind the scenes, and sometimes on the stage itself. She has a sense of total relaxation in the midst of all this, for we both can see that the Lord has lifted her up and we seek the Lord’s blessing and purposes, but watching others she has been staggered at the lengths people go in their fake play acting and in their malice towards those they perceive as threats to their success.

At least the people at the party Convention are not trying to kill each other, but in other countries they do and for the church leadership this is a big issue. Our senior pastor has just returned from Papua New Guinea and they are having their election, where local politicians are threatening churches and their pastors, that if they do not support the local politician they will attack the church and the pastor's house. In many places in our world they face the very pressure David did and must go to prayer and seek the Lord's face and the Lord's special protection.

APPLICATION

1. Let us not be concerned about the presence of evil, for if we stand for truth the enemy will stand against us in the malice of Satan himself. Go to prayer and keep advancing against the enemy.
2. Seek the Lord's protection against evil men and continue your advance into the battlefield of the Lord's call upon your life. If he has called you to fight in a certain place, then focus upon the field and advance into it with prayer for protection, and with your armour on and shield of faith held above your head.

Psalm 41:8

“An evil disease, [say they], cleaveth fast unto him: and [now] that he lieth he shall rise up no more.”

REFLECTION

It is always a surprise when people wish that we were dead or would die of some disease that is going around. It is staggering to believers who seek the best for others and apply the agape love of the Lord into their daily life and prayerfulness, when others seek their death by disease and when we are sick wish us dead. Nasty people abound in the devil's world and we must be ready for such hatred. John 15:18ff.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be side tracked or surprised by the evil of evil men, for that is their nature after all. Keep your eyes upon the Lord alone and seek his paths to walk within. Cast your cares upon the Lord and commit your enemies to the Lord's judgment.

Psalm 41:9

“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up [his] heel against me.”

REFLECTION

We are not ever so wounded as by our closest friends, for they are the ones who get closest to us and so can give the deeper wound. We are often not ready for malice from those who pretend are our friends. Psalm 55:12-14, 20-22. This passage is so close to the betrayal of our Lord by Judas that we see it as prophecy, and it clearly is. John 13:12-30. The Lord clearly believed this to be prophetic and John quotes it as such, but see also its application in David's life and even your own if you are serving the Lord at a high level. Many never know this level of betrayal only because they are not working at a level where Satan would bother to send any betrayer to ambush them....

APPLICATION

1. When you are betrayed, do not lose faith in the Lord, rather deepen your trust and rest in his protection and pray for it. Rejoice that you are clearly working in such a place and in such a manner that the enemy thought it worthwhile to attack with this amount of vigour.
2. Betrayal is awful, but the consequences of slowing down or being distracted from your service by the hurt of it are worse. Do not be distracted by the betrayal of old friends, just pass them over to the Lord and recognise they are lost to you as friends, but the Lord will replace them with better ones. Keep looking to the Lord for your strength and your encouragement not to men who fail and fall.

DOCTRINE

SIN – ABOMINATION SINS TO THE LORD

Psalm 41:10

“But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.”

REFLECTION

The little word “but” often introduces excuses and problems, but here it introduces glory. Though men fail us and betray our trust we can focus upon the Lord and keep advancing forward as long as we are looking to the Lord alone for our strength and direction. Once again David asks for mercy, and in that we are in good company when we join him in this.

Let us always remember that mercy is the currency of heaven and that God delights in giving mercy and grace to all who ask. Psalm 57:1, 109:21. David seeks to be lifted up to a place of power and divine service again so that he can see the victory of the Lord over the enemies of truth. He wishes to “requite” them, giving them full compensation for all they have done, paying their wages in full for the evil they have done. At times the Lord will allow us to repay evil but often judgment is the Lord’s sovereign work. Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:28-29.

I have had one example of this in my ministry, with a senior pastor of a church I served within as a staff member. This man was crooked, but there was no evidence of it that could be acted upon, so I left quietly having tried to assist and sort things out, but being blocked at every turn by his “henchmen”. After I left I spread no gossip, I simply headed into new ministry and focused upon the Lord’s path forward for me, but he seriously maligned my name every way he could. I left myself in the Lord’s hands and kept moving forward.

Seven years later two women, who this pastor had abused, approached me and gave the evidence of his abusive and disgraceful conduct that I had lacked while there. I formally took their evidence and with another pastor as witness we approached him and his board and he was closed down within a half hour meeting. The Lord allowed me to see this man be closed down, and to be used in the process, but mostly evil men are simply dealt with by the Lord directly and you hear of it later. Whatever occurs, relax, work with the Lord’s plan and don’t get distracted into fantasies of revenge or “getting even”. All such thoughts are irrelevant and wrong. Leave all such things in the Lord’s hands.

APPLICATION

1. Leave the enemy in the Lord’s hands for judgment. Let the Lord deal with all such men and be ready to be used, but not distracted by their judgment, for their bodies are simply to be advanced over the top of. Remember Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5:1-11.
2. Do not be distracted from the work of the Lord by any other person, be they critic or ardent fan, for the opinions of man upon your ministry are a complete irrelevance.

Psalm 41:11

“By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.”

REFLECTION

We know that we are favoured by the Lord when we see the enemy defeated around us by the sovereign hand of the Lord. Enemies will rise if we serve the Lord in power and with devotion to the truth of the Word of God. Watch them fall one by one as you walk with the Lord in obedience to the Word of God and rejoice in the Lord in all these things. David rejoiced in the bodies of the slain of the Lord around him and in ministry you will experience this if you are indeed powering out the Word in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Psalm 73:13-17.

APPLICATION

1. Trust the Lord to deal with the enemy and advance boldly towards the battles you are called to fight. You know you are on the right path when the enemy attacks and when the Lord defeats them before you. Trust the Lord and lean heavily on prayer for protection.

DOCTRINE**PEACE****CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER**

Psalm 41:12

“And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.”

REFLECTION

The Lord upholds us in his integrity and power. The Lord holds us fast as we rest upon the rock that is Christ. As we take our stand upon the Word of God we rest secure in his truth and we rest secure in his Spirit. It is the Lord who establishes us in his presence with rejoicing. It is a work of grace and mercy. Ephesians 2:1-9. In the Lord's great prayer before the Cross he prayed for this glory to be ours as his children and we know that his prayer is answered.

John 17:21-24

“21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

APPLICATION

1. The Lord holds us fast upon the rock. Rest firmly upon the rock that is Christ. Commit yourself again to the Lord's care today and draw your strength from Him alone.
2. The Lord is praying for you, and so join your prayers with his and rest in his power, plan and in fellowship with his person.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”. (Romans 8:38-39).

Psalm 41:13

“Blessed [be] the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.”

REFLECTION

Praise the Lord believer, praise the Lord at all times and in all ways, for he is worthy of your praise, and he upholds us as we pray and praise his holy name. His blessing of us is eternal and his mercy towards us is powerful and effective. There is nothing the Lord cannot do to keep and protect us, and there is nothing he will not do to bring us through to victory. Praise his name forever and ever.

Amen is the Hebrew word for the phrase, “so be it” – and it is certainly true”. The repeating of that word is the psalmist's way of reminding us that there are no doubts about the sentiments expressed in this psalm and in this book of the psalms. We rest upon the rock and the storms of hell cannot overwhelm it, or us as we take our stand upon the person, power and plan of Jesus.

APPLICATION

1. Rejoice in the rock of your salvation, for your salvation and eternal security is secure. Praise him in the highest for his mercy endures forever and we receive his glory forever and ever. Let the enemy find us always at prayer and in praise, and let them all fall under the hand of Almighty God.

DOCTRINE**ABIDING IN GOD**

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