

Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart

Ps. Craig Mobey

If the degrees: Master of Impatience and Master of Procrastination existed, I guess I would pass those exams with distinctions!

What I am actually saying is that when I want something, I want it already and when I must do something, well ... you know where I am going with this.

The point I am making is about timing, particularly when people rise up against us, or there is a dangerous situation on hand. In both cases, we don't like it and we want it to end, now rather than later.

But how will we see God's goodness in all of it?

Scripture Reading: Psalm 27:7-14 (NIV)

⁷ Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.

⁸ My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.

⁹ Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.

¹⁰ Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.

¹¹ Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.

¹² Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.

¹³ I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

¹⁴ Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."

Introduction

This Psalm of David is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 declares the power of God and a certain hope that God will bring rescue and protection from all enemies. The second portion has a clear shift in character with the declaration "I believe."

This morning we are focussing on the second part.

A Brief Overview of the Verses

Seven

Danger seems to be returning and David has God's assurance that he has favour and help in his time of need. God is ready to help and protect.

Yet David still cried out to God in his moment of need. His troubles did not overshadow his "sight" of God, they did not stop him from calling out, rather, they stimulated him to call out to God.

This was not a silent call, but one that could be heard. In this sense, in his circumstances, the cry out to God was also a confession that God is ready and willing to come to his rescue.

We are challenged in that we know God, but what is our confession in our time of danger?

Eight

In short, David's heart is Godward in its focus. Not superficially, not only in speech but from the very core of his being. Standing out is that David could follow his heart because his heart, in his moment of trouble, was at the right place.

Immediately we are challenged: where is our heart at when trouble strikes? Can we trust it and follow it?

David was not only aware of the presence of God, but he actively sought it. David was writing Psalms, he was praying, he was worshipping, and he was reading Scripture. He went to great effort to keep his heart at the right place.

Remember, God gave us a new heart when we became His children (e.g., Ez. 36:26, Jer. 24:7, 2 Cor. 5:17).

Nine

People turn their face away from someone as a sign of displeasure. David is praying that in his moment of danger, that he can as a friend, approach God. The favour of God is sometimes expressed as "by "lifting the light of his countenance upon anyone," meaning

not turning His face away. The last thing you would need in your time of trouble is for God to turn away from you. He won't.

David also reminds God that God has in the past, always been with him. God has shown him mercy and treated him as a friend. David is mindful of who God has been, is, and will be. He calls God his Saviour. Often when we "remind" God, we are, through a powerful confession reminding ourselves of who God is and where He was in troubles past, is in our troubles present and will be in the troubles to come. We need to hear this, know this, and believe this.

God will never look away from you, His child. Let's read 1 Peter 3:12, "*For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*" Our righteousness is through Christ Jesus.

We have standing with God because of Jesus. In this verse, we are reminded of relationship with God, in times past, times now and the times that will be.

Abraham Lincoln said, "*We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses*" (Abraham Lincoln). What is your outlook on life in your moment of trouble?

Verse 10

It might happen that a parent will abandon their child. Perhaps it happened to you or someone close to you? Perhaps you have read about it.

David says that God's love is more certain and stronger than a parent's love.

Even if a person is an outcast, no matter how "low" a person has "dropped," no matter the size of someone's sin, God's love is beyond our measure.

Including the previous verses and this one, how would you describe your love for God?

Verse 11

David is in trouble and prays some wise words, "*Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path...*"

He is praying that he will be able to act wisely and right; he desires that God will teach him what he should do in his time of trouble.

There are other Scriptures that would pray differently in a time of trouble, but this prayer echoes Solomon's request to God. Let's recall 2 Chronicles 1:11-12a, "*God said to Solomon, 'Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, possessions or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you.'*"

Note both David and Solomon's hearts. Godly wisdom is knowing what to do next according to the will of God as contained in His Word.

Verse 12

There is here a strong contrast between the state of David's enemies' soul and David's. What his enemies want to do to him is seated in their souls. It is who they are! On the other hand, David in verse 8 wrote that his heart looks for God's face.

His enemies are after his life, they are making false accusations and are cruel.

Verse 13

David is confident. As we know, the opposite of confidence is distrust and doubt. He remains in a state of confidence, even though his danger has not passed.

Some commentaries go into a bit of detail about David's state of mind resulting because of his enemies wanting to destroy him. His enemies are many, they are mighty, and they are formidable.

David's only support was his faith in God. The enabler is that his heart was at the right place in that he knows God, who God is, and that God would never forsake him.

Our natural being, in response to an attack, would be to defend and summon enough resources to neutralize the attack. Yet here is David, he is confident in the Lord. He has God's favour.

David then says that he will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. God is a good God, and he will see this while he is still alive. In other words, David is saying, "*what would have become of me if it were not for God?*"

As I was preparing this message, I reflected, what would have become of me if it was not for the goodness of God?

I asked myself another question. And it's hard to answer. Let me ask you... *"in your time of trouble, during the anxiety attacks etc. just how confident are you in the goodness of God? To what extent are distrust and doubt present?"*

The answer reveals the state and Godward focus of your heart.

The more you know someone, the more you trust them. Confidence in the goodness of that person follows.

The same is true with God.

Yes, God still heals, God will deal with our troubles and enemies, but our number 1 priority has got to be seeking God; getting to know Him more and more, not because trouble may strike, but because this is how we live and grow in Him.

Verse 14 (Conclusion)

We are now at the place where I began this message by awarding myself 2 degrees, one in impatience and the other in procrastination.

If we are going to be confident in God, we must also have confidence in God's timing.

Impatience says, "now!" Procrastination says, *"I will put off some really important things until later."* Impatience and procrastination have an interesting relationship. Although they might seem, at face value, opposites, neither have a place in the life of a Christian.

What I am trying to say is that today's message has arrested me in my footsteps. I need to grow. I need to confess who God is in my life, not only in a time of trouble, but always. Confession of who God is and what He has done, trust in God and knowing God increase as I grow in Him.

I have some work to do, maybe you too?

But here is the conclusion of the matter and it answers the question, *"what shall I do while I wait to see God's goodness in action?"*

Verse 14, *"Wait for the LORD. Be strong and don't lose hope. Wait for the LORD."*

Usually, after a message such as this one, we may feel prompted by the Holy Spirit to recommit, and it is here that the “sinner’s prayer” might guide us along this path.

For some, if you pray this prayer for the first time, you are coming to salvation. For us who have come to salvation, may it remind us of some core truths of our salvation; may the Holy Spirit stir in you a desire to grow in God.

“God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I deserve the consequences of my sin. However, I am trusting in Jesus Christ as my Saviour.

I believe that His death and resurrection provided for my forgiveness.

I trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as my personal Lord and Saviour.

Thank you, Lord, for saving me and forgiving me!

Amen!”