

A Song of Ascents.

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side—
let Israel now say—

if it had not been the LORD who was on our side
when people rose up against us,

then they would have swallowed us up alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;

then the flood would have swept us away,
the torrent would have gone over us;

then over us would have gone
the raging waters.

Blessed be the LORD,
who has not given us as prey to their teeth!

We have escaped like a bird
from the snare of the fowlers;

the snare is broken,
and we have escaped!

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

Being a child of God does not mean you don't have enemies. It doesn't mean you will never suffer opposition, rejection, or pain. Consider God's own Son. He is lifted up, not on the shoulders of men and surrounded with shouts of praise. He is nailed to a cross. He is badgered with cries of mockery, told to save Himself, to prove that He is the Messiah by coming down from the cross. The chief priests, scribes, and elders blaspheme and fulfill the prophecy of their mockery by quoting Psalm 22: "**He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now, if He wants Him.**" And the Lord Jesus is not delivered, except unto death. He is forsaken even by His Father, that abandonment expressed the cry, "**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" Life itself is hated to the point of death and laid into a tomb.

Psalm 124 teaches us that people rise up against us. That anger is kindled against us. That there are floods and snares, literal or metaphorical. Add in here all the hatred and ire that is leveled against the church. The plotting and scheming to put God's Christians to shame. The traps which the devil lays to overtake us with fear. He pursues livelihood, wreaks havoc in the world, uses so many things to divert our eyes from the Lord and His care for us. There is great temptation in midst of this pandemic, to fear, love, and trust in all sorts of things other than the true God.

But what this Psalm also teaches is that though people rise up against us, the Lord is on our side. The Lord is our help when anger is kindled against us, when the flood would sweep us away, when the snare would catch us. God does not abandon His people. The Lord is on your side. He has not abandoned us, not left us to the mercy of our enemies. You are not subject to the hungry whims of the devil's fangs, nor to the plague that stalks and creeps about unseen, casting a city, nation, and world into panic and fear.

God has joined the human race, united His divine nature to human flesh and blood. In that body He suffered all the rejection that your sins merited. His blood was shed to win you life and favor with God. Your Helper is the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. If He has fashioned all things seen and unseen, if He has absolved you from His cross with His own blood, making atonement for all your sins, if He is your heavenly ally, on your side, pleading your cause, then will He not bring you through this life, through temptations and fear, through sickness and even the grave?

Apart from Him there is no comfort or hope. We look out a world that is terrified of death to the point of slamming all the brakes on life as we know it. We see so many caught in the clutches of fear and panic it is rather like a bird caught in a trap, flailing about to no avail. But your help is in the name of the Lord. The Lord is on your side. There is

nothing that comes upon you that is beyond His aid. There is nothing so powerful that He cannot work your own eternal good from it!

The suffering and dying of our Lord Jesus Christ shows all this to be true. Your salvation comes from His condemnation. Your righteousness comes from the injustice done to Him. Your eternal fellowship with God as your heavenly Father comes out of Jesus' suffering abandonment. It is why we call next Friday "Good." From that blessed sacrifice you see the extent to which the Lord is pledged to you. If He will accomplish such great things as forgiveness, life, and salvation from His own suffering of bitter anguish and death, you can rest assured that He is at work in this time of trial, to draw you closer to Himself, and thereby deliver you from panic and fear.

Because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, not just by His suffering and death, but His resurrection, death itself is rendered as these opponents listed in the psalm. It would swallow you up, catch you like a snare. But its belly is ripped open. The snare is broken. Death itself cannot hold you! The Lord is on your side. He has gone into death, been laid into the grave, and He has come out. And that we shall celebrate in short order as well!