

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adults Sunday School

PSALM 13 – TRUSTING IN GOD’S PERFECT TIMING

I. INTRODUCTION

To the Chief Musician. Worship is a time that God's people come together and praise Him for who He is. It is an important time for a believer to meet with God in public worship. He must come with heart prepared and mind all ready to worship the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. Everything else must be put aside. Nothing can be more important than worshipping the Creator of heaven and earth. It is equally important for those who are serving the Lord, especially in the worship service such as the chairman, musicians, the PA, the ushers or greeters so that their ministry will be a blessing and not a stumbling block to the worshippers present.

Therefore it is important for the chief musician here to prepare those who are handling the instruments, including those who are leading in songs well so that there will not be any mistake that could be vital to affect the sanctity of worship and cause the whole service to be unfruitful. All those who are involved in service must always pray and prepare their heart well so that their service will be found joyful and acceptable before God.

A Psalm of David. David's life is full of ups and downs, both before and after he became the king of Israel. It is not known on what occasion this psalm was written. If it is before he became king, then his adversary is likely to be king Saul who out of jealousy, made him a fugitive on the run. If it is after he became king, it is highly possible that his own son Absalom, with his wicked plan, trying to usurp his father's throne by force. In any way, David suffered and had to run for his dear life. However it is at such times, it was recorded for us the intimacy in David's relationship with God that warmed and encouraged our heart. Will God deliver him? The progression of David's cry, prayer and eventually lead to trust in God enable us to identify with him in his situation. May God be pleased to draw near to us as we draw ourselves near to Him in each difficulty.

II. THE CRY

Verse 1, “How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?”

Time seems to be always the factor in many situations. When we are going through troubles, the duration of it seems to be very long, even though in actual reality it is short. I believe the reason is because the patience we have is running out. It is as if it has been so long that this trouble is here and does not seem to go away. And the psalmist, is like any of us, that his patience is now stretched to the limit. And it is at such desperation that he cried out, “How long?” We noted a total of 4 times in verses 1 and 2 that David cried “How long...?” There are 4 aspects to this impatience. First two in this verse, and the other two in the next verse.

Wilt Thou forget me?

When we are going through the troubles, it seems like we are going through alone, all by ourselves. We feel God is not with us anymore. And here the psalmist laments that God seems to have forgotten him. When all is well, we do not seem to feel that God has forgotten me. I guess the reason is because we do not really need Him when we are well and good. But it is when we need Him that we felt that He must be there for us no matter what happened.

But the question is: Will God really forget us? Of course not! But what the psalmist is going through is the struggle which he faced internally. Surely he knew that God is with him, but because he felt he had arrived at the dead end already. And there is still no help in sight, and so he had no other way but to cry out for the Lord to remember him.

Wilt Thou hide Thy face?

This is a metaphor to describe the favour of God. God hiding His face means that His favour is turned away. It is as good as saying that God's favour is turned away from the psalmist. And this affects the psalmist very much. For God to hide His face, oftentimes it is due to the sin of His people. God wanted them to realize that as His children, they should have nothing to do with sin anymore. It is a way to describe the life of a Christian that must be kept pure and holy before God and this world. Does this mean the psalmist is acknowledging that he has sinned that now all that he is facing is the result of his transgression? I believe not. If so, the psalmist would have confessed his sins to God already. Over here it is not an issue of sin but of trust in God's perfect timing to deliver the psalmist out of his difficult situation.

Verse 2, “How long shall I take counsel in my soul, *having* sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?”

Shall I continue to sorrow?

Troubles can indeed cause us to wallow in despair and great sorrow. And such feeling will not go away until the trouble is removed. The psalmist experienced sorrow day by day. And it is trying for him to want to see the light at the end of the dark tunnel. He could hardly see the light. He was “suffocated” in his own tears. There is no way out!

Shall my enemy prevail?

Internally the psalmist felt lost. Externally he felt overwhelmed by the oppression. The enemies are getting stronger against him. And they are winning and he is losing. Will the enemy have the final laugh?

What the psalmist had cried out in these 2 verses are real. And these words described exactly what he is going through with all these questions that he kept pouring before the Lord. He did not put up a false front to show that he is strong. He does not need to do that. Before the Lord, he knew he has to be himself, as weak as he really is. Like the psalmist, let us also come honestly before God with all our pain and struggles. Once that is done with the outpouring of our cry, and there is no holding back, because we sincerely acknowledged that we truly need God, and none other than Him can truly help us.

Once the cry is poured out, the psalmist felt much better, and he composed himself and turned his cry into a solemn prayer.

III. THE PRAYER

Verse 3, “Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;”

It seems like a 180 degrees' change. Now the psalmist is sober, calm and with great composure. And he sought the Lord in prayer, saying, Consider and hear me, O LORD my God. Indeed it is good to

pour out whatever is bottled inside us, all our frustrations and agony to the Lord who is more than glad to hear our cries.

The word “consider” means to pay attention. The psalmist is praying that the Lord will pay attention to him and what he wants to say. It is no more as a complaint but as a plea. The second word “hear” means to answer. This is the psalmist's way of seeking God for deliverance in a humble manner. He knew he did not deserve any good thing from God. What he can do is to appeal his cause before Him.

The word “lighten” means to give light. The psalmist hopes to understand God's purpose in all his trials and especially that he might understand His perfect timing in delivering him from them. He knew God will help him. However, he desired that he might have the spiritual insight into what he is going through. He wants to go through not in ignorance but with eyes opened with understanding.

“Lest I sleep the sleep of death” means the psalmist is describing how he does not wish to die before deliverance. It does not mean the psalmist is afraid of dying. He is more than glad to die for God. But he wanted to testify of God's higher purpose in all his suffering before he die. That's his innermost desire.

Verse 4, “Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.”

The worst that can happen is probably giving the enemy the last laugh. And the psalmist does not wish that to happen. As children of God, we desire the glory and honour be given to God and Him alone. And at the same time, we desire all to witness how God is glorified and exalted on high for His greatness and sovereignty. Even the enemies have to submit and acknowledge the fact that no matter how powerful they can be, they can never be more powerful than God. No matter how strong they can be against God's people, they will never be destroyed because God protects them by His divine power.

It must always be the right intent why we pray that our enemies will never prevail over us. It is not because our face and reputation are important. Forget about our face and reputation! It is God's name we are bearing that matters. We want to promote God's name and exalt Him all the time. Let this be our motive why we want our enemies to be defeated.

IV. **THE TRUST**

Verse 5, “But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.”

In the end, it is not what I do, but what the Lord will do and has done that matters. In this verse, the emphasis is not on the psalmist's trust but the mercy of the Lord. This trust would be absolutely meaningless if not for the mercy of God. Therefore the psalmist has no other way but to trust in God's mercy. The word “trust” means having confidence. Our confidence must always be in God and never in man. No matter how great and promising man can be, he will always be limited and prone to fail. But God is different. He will never fail and His promise to deliver will always be fulfilled.

This calls for celebration and that's why the psalmist's heart rejoice in the salvation which God gave him. He did not work for his salvation. It was worked for him and given to him by God. How can we not rejoice with this salvation God freely give us to enjoy? When our heart is overwhelmed with joy, the next thing we do is to sing out loud what God has done and we want the whole world to know.

Verse 6, “I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”

We do not sing to the world but to God. The only time we will sing to the world is when we minister to them by evangelising to them with words in song that testify Jesus being the Saviour of the world. You do not need to be a great singer in order to sing. We all can sing from our heart what God has done marvelous for us. We may sing out of tune or unprofessionally but it does not matter to God. God is looking at our heart right now. And we express our heart towards Him through singing. All can sing, though not all may make it to the church choir.

Truly the Lord has dealt bountifully with the psalmist. All that he had gone through, from the time he suffered in agony and pain within him, and from all the fiercest attacks by his enemies, God sustained him and assured him of His mercy. He endured through all these difficulties. And as he looked back, indeed God has not left him nor abandoned him. God is with him all this while. It is going through such a process, that the psalmist learnt to trust in God progressively.

V. CONCLUSION

A believer's life on earth is a journey of faith that must be centered upon Christ and Him alone. There may be times that you may feel you are alone. Do not be deceived. You are never alone. God is with you from the beginning and He will be with you all the way to the end.

Do not be afraid to pour out all your burden and sorrow before the Lord. Cry out to Him and He will hear you. You will be comforted and feel much more relieved after you cry out to God. And then, God's spirit will strengthen you to pray in a more sober manner. And as you pray, your confidence in Him increases. That builds up your trust in God even more.

God makes no mistakes. His timing is the best. He will not be early, neither will he be delayed. Everything put together beautifully in His time. Let us learn to trust in His perfect timing. Let us not give up easily but press on, for Jesus' sake! Amen.