

Last month we began looking at **Psalm 4** verses 1-3 with David dealing with some sort of persecution, pain or illness and crying out to the Lord. In verse 1 we see David bringing home the urgency of the need to pray in difficult times. Then in verses 2-3 what's really important in difficult times especially when it's inspired by the enemy...is to recognise that these things come as God allows them. Now let's delve into verses 4-8:

Verses 4-5 - David took time to encourage his friends.

What do we do when emotions start to get out of control? Well David gave us some key pieces of advice in understanding how to deal with difficult circumstances that put enormous pressure on us.

1. David said that we are to worship the Lord and stand in awe of Him, v4.
2. We are to walk with God, don't let sin have dominion over us.
3. David encourages us to wait on God and to prayerfully search our own hearts and to take inventory of anything that might be in our lives that needs to be dealt with.
4. We are to be still and be honest with God and ourselves that we have sinned.
5. We are to consecrate ourselves to the Lord, v5. The idea here of offering the sacrifices of righteousness is really another way of saying Lord we want you to set us apart that we may be used for your glory and honour.
6. We are to commit ourselves to the Lord as David says at the end of v5 to put our trust in the Lord.

PRAISE the Lord for:

- His continued protection and care of the Challenge building and facilities.
- The continued open door we have into various countries around the world
- Funding secured to allow us to produce the x4 Philippines edition of the paper each year

PSALM 4

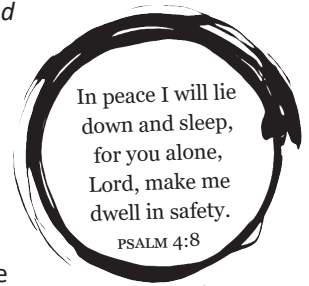
- 1 Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- 2 How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?
- 3 Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.
- 4 Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.
- 5 Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the Lord.
- 6 Many, Lord, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?"
Let the light of your face shine on us.
- 7 Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound.
- 8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Now the important thing in doing all of this is to avoid the situation where we exhibit what we call an unrighteous anger, where we really express anger in a way that's not God-honouring. I could mention plenty of examples where so called normal people become filled with rage and anger and the outcome of that is the innocent are either injured or worst case scenario killed. That is exactly what God wants us to avoid when we are dealing with difficult and pressured times.

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OVER**

Verses 6-8 - *We should praise the Lord, v6-8.* I know that is such an easy thing to say especially when we are wilting under the weight of continual discouragement. I think anybody who is worth their salt and really means business with the Lord will know times of discouragement; I know I certainly do. But how should we respond when we fall down and become despondent about things? I think the psalmist says it so well; v7 *'You have put gladness in my heart more than in the season that their grain and wine increased'*. So this is all about praising God and as a result joy and gladness are the outcome. And I think this is why Nehemiah says in his chapter 8v10 that *'the joy of the Lord is our strength.'* Keeping a close walk with the Lord is critical in dealing with times where we are under extreme testing and pressure and upset.

But also we need to praise God not only for His joy and gladness but we need to praise God for His peace. In v7 it says; *'I will both lie down in peace and sleep.'* I know when I get a little stressed or under pressure one of the first areas that seem to suffer is the idea of peaceful sleep. It seems that our minds become this movie screen on our bedroom wall and we are unable to gain much-needed peace of mind and heart. The word peace here means not only the absence of conflict but rather the adequacy that we need for life, that confidence and fullness that comes from the



Lord to live life in the way that He would have us to do so. And then we do need to praise God for His rest because when sleep comes it is such a blessing and encouragement to wake up the next morning refreshed and renewed in the Lord. That's why he says in Psalm 3; *'I lay down and slept for the Lord sustained me.'*

And then last but not least we need to praise God for His safety, care and protection. I know that when we go to Africa each year on an Impact mission trip it is so comforting to know that the Lord's people around the world are praying for our safety, care and protection. My mind pictures this sense of the mission team being surrounded by the loving sustaining arms of the Lord as we go into a squatter camp or a prison or into a refugee housing area and doing so with confidence because we are in the ever secure everlasting arms of the everlasting One.

{ CARL CARMODY
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PRAYER needed for:

- For an increase in the distribution, effectiveness and impact of the paper throughout Australia
- Latest edition of Challenge going into various countries - Australia, South Africa, Kenya and USA. Pray each paper will be a vital seed speaking to many
- The various prison editions we produce (USA, South Africa, Malawi) as we seek ongoing finances to grow and sustain these editions
- The ongoing funding for the running of the Perth office, for personal support, for the supply of the challenge paper globally and for the project funding in these countries.

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