

The book of Psalms is all about the **lament, praise, faith, and hope of God's people.**

David as always is able to speak very honestly and transparently about his tough and difficult times and I think we can learn a lot from how he deals with these situations in our own lives.

In **Psalm 4** David was obviously under great pressure of some kind and dealing with some sort of persecution, pain, illness, and he was crying out to the Lord. When David starts to talk about God's care and protection his instructions are first of all to look to the Lord.

Verse 1 - '*hear me when I call O God of my righteousness*'. David is really bringing home an urgency of the need to pray in difficult times as he cries out to the Lord. It is sad to say that often for us as the Lord's people, instead of turning to Him in prayer through difficult times, we choose to abandon God, the scripture and indeed the importance of praying. Instead of taking that approach we need to understand that God is a righteous God as David says and everything He does it right. In fact David goes on to say, '*you have relieved me in my distress*.' The literal translation is that God has given him room to move after he has been pressed-in and extremely limited in his movements. The other important thing to understand when we pray to God in difficult times, is to know that God will deal with whatever the circumstances are in a right way rather than allowing us to get focused on the wrong things and becoming rather bitter and beaten over the whole issue.

Another point is that when we pray in difficult times ... and hopefully that's not the only time we pray ... it gives us a bank of experience on which to call upon. So when we look to the Lord it's based on past deliverances. Recognising that in the past He has worked righteously and has relieved our distress means that we can have confidence that He will do

the same in our present situation. One writer declares that as Christians we are either coming out of a storm, in the middle of a storm, or we have a storm approaching. Whilst that may seem a somewhat pessimistic view the reality is that the Christian life is not easy, and there are times of testing and difficulties when things simply don't go right. Finally, in this opening verse we can see that praying in these difficult times stops us looking at ourselves. Often when things go wrong you will hear people saying something like; 'I don't know what I've done for this to happen to me.' That sort of expression really means that the person somehow or other feels that blessing in their life is determined by having some sort of tick list which guarantees them a blessing.

PRAISE the Lord for:

- A couple of large gifts sent to us for a new project we are looking to start in Nigeria as we continue to join the dots
- Our new South Australian rep Alison Henderson as she continues to make contact with various churches and organisations around that state
- A number of large orders made for the Easter edition from various churches

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OVER**

I think we forget that there are times when we can do the right thing and still it seems that all hell breaks loose. I wonder how you would feel if you were Job when within a matter of paragraphs he lost his family, his health and all of his possessions and it seemed almost his life. But Job was able to say that he came into the world with nothing and that he would leave the world with nothing. But in all of that he kept his focus on God and worshipped Him.

Verses 2-3 - What's really important when we are in a difficult time ... especially when it's inspired by the enemy ... is to recognise that these things come as God allows them. David realised that ignoring the problem wouldn't make it go away, or indeed solve it. So David first of all confronted the ringleaders of those who were oppressing him. There are times even in families where there are difficulties and struggles which need to be confronted. We can see this also in the Christian church where there are those who are not happy with the direction in which the church is going or the way in which the pastor is preaching, or what have you. And there may be other areas where people are just simply looking to make life difficult because you own the name of Jesus and want to count for Him, particularly in the work place for example.

So then David is not shy in communicating the error and the faults in what they are doing. You can't get it any clearer than what he says in v2 *'how long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?'* I know we live in an age where we are called to tiptoe through the tulips on lots of these issues but there are times when we need to confront the enemy and allow God to bring the victory as we do.

PRAYER needed for:

- The ongoing supply of testimonies and articles for the various editions of Challenge we produce around the world
- The Outback Patrol magazine as it goes out each month to many remote towns all over the nation; that both students and teachers will be drawn to Jesus Christ
- Upcoming trip to South Australia for Carl (working with Alison) May 17 – June 3 as we continue to see growth with Challenge distribution

David clarified God's remedy in v3 when he says; *'But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the Lord will hear when I call to Him.'*

That is a wonderful verse of encouragement to any of us who know and recognise that God is pleased to bless the praying saint. David not only clarified what was God's remedy in terms of dealing with the enemy but also took great comfort in knowing that God would hear him when he called.

Next month we will explore verses 4-8



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