

The Missionary Psalm -- Psalm 67

by A.B. Simpson

The sermon explores the themes of Psalm 67, emphasizing the spread of God's salvation and the knowledge of Jesus to all nations, and the role of the Church in making God's salvation known.

Scripture: Numbers 6:24

Topics: "Evangelism", "Missions"

Description

A.B. Simpson expounds on Psalm 67, illustrating its relevance across different dispensations. He emphasizes the need for God's mercy and blessings, which are foundational for personal and communal salvation. The sermon transitions to the Christian dispensation, highlighting the call to spread the Gospel to all nations, and the importance of recognizing God's plan for Israel and the world. Simpson encourages believers to embrace their role as trustees of the Gospel, urging them to actively participate in evangelism as they await Christ's return. He concludes with a call to action, reminding the congregation of the urgency and significance of their mission in these times.

Transcript

This beautiful Psalm covers all the ages and dispensations.

I. THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION

It begins with the Mosaic dispensation: "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us."

This is almost a repetition of the blessing of the high priest under the old dispensation. These were almost the very words that Aaron was to utter when he blessed the Hebrew congregation in the name of the Lord, and said: "The LORD bless you, and keep you: The LORD make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give the peace." This is the spirit of the Old Testament.

It is blessed and heavenly, but it does not reach beyond ourselves. It is our blessing rather than the blessing of others, and yet it is very precious and real; and, so far as it goes, it is our blessing still even under the new dispensation.

1. It begins with the divine mercy, the source of all our blessings, and especially of our salvation, the greatest of our mercies.

2. It speaks of our temporal blessings which form so large a part of the Old Testament promises: God's goodness to us in our natural life and our earthly needs.

3. It reaches its fullness in the third petition, "Cause his face to shine upon us. This leads up to the Lord's own personal presence with us, and the manifestation of Himself to us as He manifested Himself under the Old Testament in the Shekinah glory that shone in the Holy of Holies; and as He does in the New, through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts and the gracious manifestation of the presence of Christ in the consecrated spirit. This is all the most blessed and the most real, and all this is necessary before we can be prepared to go into the deeper and broader experiences of the Psalm. But this is all personal and does not reach beyond ourselves.

II. THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

The second prayer of this beautiful Psalm covers the Christian dispensation and the wider publication of the Gospel to the Gentiles and to all the world: "That Your way may be known upon the earth, Your saving health among all nations."

This is just as distinct a picture of the New Testament dispensation as the first verse is of the Old. This is the wider view of the Gospel for the whole human race. God's way just means His glorious way of salvation and His high and holy will respecting man. Properly speaking, Christ is Himself God's way. "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; and so it is a prayer for the knowledge of Jesus to be spread among all the nations.

The beautiful expression, "Your saving health," includes the idea not only of salvation, but of healing, too, or, more correctly, of that fullness of blessing which the old word 'health' so perfectly expressed. The Saxon 'hale' gives us the perfect meaning, and it just describes the wholeness and soundness and wholesomeness which the Gospel brings into all our life, making everything right and happy and enabling us to say, 'All is well.' This is the Gospel that men need, a Gospel that brings glad tidings for every human need, and saves us utterly and perfectly in every part of our being.

The Psalmist's prayer is that this may be known. We are not to save men, but we are to make God's salvation known. All that Christ's coming is waiting for is simply the proclamation of the Gospel among all nations. The world does not know this great salvation. Men will not accept it, but all should know it. This has been the business of the Church in the Christian ages. For this the Holy Ghost was given. This is our calling today. This is the meaning of Christian missions -- to make God's way known upon the earth, and His saving health among all nations. It is to this we are consecrating ourselves, and to this we dedicate ourselves anew this day.

After eighteen centuries there are still but a few million out of earth's heathen nations who know the Gospel. Perhaps one-half of the population of this globe has never heard the name of Jesus, and God is sending us forth simply to tell them. A human government could reach all the tribes of earth in a very short space of time, with any message of importance. But the King of kings has not found an army that could carry His commission beyond the borders of earth's unevangelized lands.

Oh, how we need to pray, "That Your way may be known upon the earth, 'Your saving health among all nations."

III. THE JEWISH PEOPLE

God's purpose for the Jewish people is here made known. "Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You." The "people" here mean God's chosen people Israel, as the "nations" mean the Gentiles.

This is to be the closing incident of the New Testament dispensation, the restoration and salvation of Israel. This prayer is now being fulfilled. The spirit of grace and supplication is now being poured out upon the house of David, and they that pierced Him are beginning to look upon Him, and to return to their rejected Messiah. Many of the ancient people of God are returning to their old land, and, better still, many of them are turning to their Messiah. God speed the day when all the people shall praise the Lord, and God, even their own God, shall bless them!

IV. THE SECOND ADVENT

The personal coming of Christ and the blessing of the millennial earth and its redeemed nations are next referred to, in the words: "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. . . . Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

This is the picture of Christ's personal reign. It is He who shall judge the people righteously. It is He who shall govern the nations upon earth. It is this that is to make the nations rejoice and sing for joy. It is this that is to bring back more than Eden blessedness to the sin-cursed earth, until it shall yield its increase; and all the nations of the earth shall fear Him. God haste this glorious day for which creation is groaning and travailing in pain!

Oh, how different the picture now! Even those ancient Psalms forecast the awful vision as they cry, "Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

V. SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. God has revealed to us His plan for the world and the ages. This beautiful Psalm contains a very clear outline of the dispensations and purposes of God. He has not called us servants, but He has called us friends; for all things that He has heard of the Father He has made known unto us. He has taken us into His confidence, and we can intelligently cooperate with Him in carrying out His great purposes for the world which He has redeemed. This is a high honor and privilege.

Many persons are working in the dark. They do not understand God's idea for this age. They are expecting the world to be converted in the present dispensation, and they are disappointed because their hopes are not realized. This is not God's intent, but rather to gather out of all nations a people for His name, then restore His ancient people Israel, and come Himself to reign over the millennial earth, restoring it to righteousness and peace. Let us accept our great trust and be worthy of the high honor He has given us as coworkers with Himself.

2. God has given us a great trust for the world. This Gospel is not our own, but given us for dying men. We dare not use it for ourselves without peril. Suppose some wealthy man were to bequeath a great estate to the suffering poor of New York City, and leave us as trustees of the fund; and we, instead of using it according to His benevolent wishes, were to sit down and enjoy it ourselves, and squander it upon our families and our pleasures. Would we not be regarded as false to our trust, and cruel, selfish, unjust, and criminal? Christ has left us the purchase of His blood, not for enjoyment merely, but for the world's

salvation. Terrible indeed will be the account which they shall have to render who have used this trust for their own salvation and enjoyment, and left the world, for whom it was intended, to perish in ignorance and sin. We are trustees of the Gospel. Let us never forget this.

3. We live in a very solemn time. We are on the threshold of the age to come, and at the close of the Christian dispensation. Never were times so momentous or opportunities so extraordinary. We belong to that generation for which all the ages have been waiting, and all beings might well envy; the generation whose high calling it may be to welcome their returning King and herald around the world the tidings of His coming. We have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. God help us to redeem the time and be true to His high calling!

4. God Himself has gone out before us and is working mightily in His providence and grace for the evangelization of the world. His providence has shaken every heathen nation, and opened almost all the world to the Gospel. His Spirit has been marvelously poured out upon the heathen, and His hand is manifest in the remarkable history of modern missions as in nothing else since apostolic times. With such encouragements, surely, we may well go forth and expect His mighty blessing on our efforts to evangelize the world.

5. We are living in an age when God is using not the mighty and the learned, but the humblest instrumentalities to do His work. He is choosing a people out of a people. He is taking the things that are weak and foolish; the things that are not, to bring to naught the things that are. No one need, therefore, say, "I am unfit. There is nothing I can do." All we need is the baptism of His Spirit, the power of His presence, and He can use us mightily in our weakness and nothingness as witnesses to the name of Jesus. The victory of today is to be won by Gideon's little band, the three hundred, and not by the thirty thousand.

6. Finally, the pole star of our missionary effort is the Lord's personal coming. He is near at hand. It is this that stirs our hearts. It is this that makes every sacrifice and toil seem little. He is so near, and His recompense will make amends for all. Oh, let us go forth with this all-animating hope, and bring to pass the 67th Psalm in all the fullness of the Christian dispensation and the millennial glory!

"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; That Your way may be known upon earth, Your saving health among all nations. Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

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