

Psalm 102

by Henry Law

Henry Law's sermon on Psalm 102 emphasizes the importance of urgent prayer and the unchanging nature of God's love amidst suffering and despair.

Scripture: Psalm 102:1-25

Topics: "Persistent Prayer", "Gods Unchanging Love"

Description

Henry Law preaches about the extreme anguish of the soul trembling under God's displeasure, pouring out complaints and finding hope only in God's unchanging love. The sermon emphasizes the importance of persistent prayer, drawing near to God in times of distress, and seeking His immediate response. Images from nature vividly depict the misery of the afflicted, who is mocked by enemies and finds no comfort in natural sustenance. Despite the suffering, the sermon encourages trust in God's enduring nature and promises, highlighting His eternal presence and unchangeable attributes.

Transcript

The soul trembling under God's displeasure is in extreme anguish. Its misery pours out a multitude of complaints. Various images lend their aid. Hope is found only in God and His unchanging love.

1-2. "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto You. Hide not Your face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline Your ear unto me; in the day when I call answer me speedily."

An inviting hand is always beckoning us to the mercy-seat. Its gates are widely open. Tender compassion calls us. Abundant promises insure success. We may draw near boldly and plead the all-atoning blood. Especially in times of distress we are encouraged to utter the desires of our hearts. We may use holy violence, and wrestle with our God. We may refuse to give Him rest until responses come. It is not presumption to be urgent for immediate answers, and to pray that God would speedily cause His smile to dissipate our trouble.

3-5. "For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin."

Prayer should be more importunate when sorrows press with overwhelming weight. The effects of such distress are soon apparent. The strength of the frame quickly declines. It vanishes like the curling smoke,

which rises to evaporate in air. The bones grow feeble, and crumble to decay as fuel on the burning hearth. Mourning withers all energy. The grass when cut soon becomes dry and sapless, in like manner the smitten heart loses all freshness. The appetite declines. There is no desire for food, no relish for the customary sustenance. Misery finds vent in moans and sighs, so that the flesh is wasted, and the form moves as a living skeleton.

6-7. "I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop."

Images from nature aid the portrait of this misery. The afflicted shuns all companionship. He retires as the lonely pelican, seeking the solitude of the wilderness, or, as the owl, hiding in the recesses of the desert. Alone he utters wails to heaven, as a solitary sparrow moping on the summits of the house.

8-11. "My enemies reproach me all the day; and those who are mad against me have sworn against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of Your indignation and Your wrath; for You have lifted me up, and cast me down. My days are like a shadow that declines; and I am withered like grass."

Misery is enhanced by the cruel mockery of the ungodly. No compassion melts their hearts. They rather rejoice to aggravate the sufferer's woe. No comfort is found in natural refreshment. Bread is rejected, as unpalatable ashes, and tears are mingled with the cup. Again we hear that the days are as a fleeting shadow, and as the withered grass. The cause of this misery is the withdrawal of God's presence. The mercies once so dear are hidden in displeasure.

12. "But You, O Lord, shall endure forever, and Your remembrance unto all generations."

But let the fear never intrude that there is variableness with God. He is unchangeable in all His attributes. There may be change in outward manifestations, but He ever lives, the eternal and immutable One. Let this thought be cherished constantly. Let it be as a companion ever walking by our side. Let our delighted gaze dwell on the eternal oneness of our God. His power and love endure forever. All generations shall give this testimony.

13-14. "You shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, is come. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof."

Apparently the scene now changes. A sorrowing individual disappears. An afflicted people becomes prominent. It is a sound conclusion, that the Psalmist was thus inspired, when signs announced Israel's near deliverance from distress. Her children had long wept under oppression's heavy hand; but now the set time of sorrow reached its close, and the set time of deliverance dawned. It is a blessed truth, that God works all things after the counsel of His own will. When He decrees the rescue, the tyrant's hand can no more fetter. Ardent longings had arisen that the temple should again be built. God who has power to move all hearts now awakened this desire. We know, also, that Israel's sons shall be recalled from their long dispersion. When we see growing anxiety to hasten their return, we trust that this awakening is heaven-born, and indicates that the set time is drawing near.

15-16. "So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory."

The return of Israel, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the rising again of God's temple were grand events; and attracted worldwide attention. It was seen that the Lord's power was put forth to accomplish restoration. Heathen nations acknowledged God's hand, and viewed with awe His majesty. So again when Israel's glory is revived, it shall be admiration through the world.

17-22. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. For He has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven the Lord beheld the earth. To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those who are appointed to death. To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem. When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord."

At the appointed time, redoubled cries for aid were heard. Mercy spread rapid wings. Again the time draws near when the groanings of the dispersed shall grow more deep. Heaven will open wide to help, and God's praises shall again resound throughout Jerusalem.

23-24. "He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; Your years are throughout all generations."

This deliverance is wholly the Lord's work. Man's innate strength is as cradled infancy. The feeble pilgrim totters if not upheld. Appeal is made unto God. His never-failing power pervades all time. To trust in self is to lean on emptiness. To trust in the Lord is sure support. As He was in the beginning, so will He be forevermore.

25-28. "Of old You have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They shall perish, but You shall endure; yes, all of them shall grow old like a garment; as a vesture You shall change them, and they shall be changed. But You are the same, and Your years shall have no end. The children of Your servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before You."

Bright and glorious is this conclusion. The Spirit teaches that this splendid picture exhibits the blessed Jesus. In the beginning the heavens and the earth were His work. When the consummation is complete, the scaffold shall be taken down, and this framework shall be laid aside as a decayed vest. But to Him no age shall come. Throughout eternity His redeemed shall praise Him and magnify His glorious name. Let us now learn the happy art. Let us go forth in lowly contemplation of dissolving nature, and hasten the day when Jesus shall appear arrayed in never-ending glory, and admired in all those who believe.

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