

Psalm 44

by Henry Law

Henry Law's sermon on Psalm 44 explores the themes of suffering, faith, and God's unwavering mercy in the lives of believers.

Scripture: Psalm 44:4

Topics: "Faith In God", "Persevering Through Trials"

Description

Henry Law preaches about the Church facing deep trouble but finding strength in faith by remembering God's past mercies before lamenting present sufferings. Confidence in God is professed, and fervent prayers are offered. Believers are encouraged to reflect on God's faithfulness in the past, acknowledging that victory comes from God's power and favor, not their own strength. Despite trials and persecution, faith in God's mercy and deliverance should remain unwavering, leading to constant praise and trust in His protection.

Transcript

The Church is here exhibited as in the depths of grievous trouble. But faith reviews the mercies of past days before it bewails present sufferings. Confidence in God is then professed, and prayer pleads with fervent zeal.

1, 2, 3. "O God, we have heard it with our own ears--our ancestors have told us of all you did in other days, in days long ago: You drove out the pagan nations and gave all the land to our ancestors; you crushed their enemies, setting our ancestors free. They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strength that gave them victory. It was by your mighty power that they succeeded; it was because you favored them and smiled on them."

The study of God's dealings with His people sweetly quickens faith. What strength is gained by pondering the subjugation of the heathen tribes, the victorious march of Israel's hosts, and their grand triumphs over all foes! But, did this conquest arise from their own might? Their own sword was weak to conquer, their own arm was powerless to save. The might of Jehovah was their prowess, the favor of the Lord was their prevalence. The Lord fought for them, and they were invincible.

Individual believers should constantly review their Ebenezers. A marvelous work has been transacted in their souls. Mighty foes have fought against them. Weak has been their own strength; yet they have prevailed. It is the Lord who has upheld and strengthened them, and caused their enemies to flee. Grace

begins; grace carries on; grace will complete the work of deliverance and salvation.

4. "You are my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob."

The believer claims aid as a subject of the Lord of Hosts. You are my King; Your scepter is omnipotence. Your word goes forth with absolute power. Resistance is vain. Speak, then, one word, and victory ensues.

5. "Through You will we push down our enemies; through Your name will we tread them under who rise up against us."

Who can resist when God comes forth to help? He is a horn of salvation. Creatures thus armed are terrible in fight; so the believer advances to sure conquest. Striding onward in the name of the Lord, he tramples down opposing enemies. Thus aided he will bruise Satan under his feet shortly.

6, 7, 8. "I do not trust my bow; I do not count on my sword to save me. It is you who gives us victory over our enemies; it is you who humbles those who hate us. O God, we give glory to you all day long and constantly praise your name.

Interlude"

When the Holy Spirit reveals to us our own weakness, and nothingness, and sinfulness, all self-confidence is utterly destroyed; our best strength is feebleness. To trust in SELF is to lean on a rotten plank.

But still we are invincible, and utter confusion must overwhelm all adversaries. Let, then, every moment of each day testify our unwavering confidence, and our happy assurance that heavenly protection will never fail. Let praise on earth begin, even the praise which shall never end.

9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. "But You have cast off, and put us to shame; and go not forth with our armies. You make us to turn back from the enemy; and those who hate us spoil for themselves. You have given us like sheep appointed for food; and have scattered us among the heathen. You sell Your people for nothing, and do not increase Your wealth by their price. You make us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to those who are round about us. You make us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people."

In varied and most graphic terms the sufferings of the godly are here depicted. Trouble is a needful path. The discipline corrects many budding evils, lops off the growths of pride, self-confidence, and self-righteousness, leads to the healthy valley of humiliation, and fits for the inheritance of the saints in light. Hence we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of heaven.

In the furnace of these trials the mourner is prone to write bitter things against himself, and to draw fears of God's desertion. But let patience have its perfect work; our fathers in the faith have trodden this path before us. Observe the great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. These are those who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Good Lord, purge us, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow.

15, 16. "My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face has covered me, for the voice of him that reproaches and blasphemes; by reason of the enemy and avenger."

Enmity is placed between the diverse children of light and darkness. The ungodly vent their hate in torrents of reproach. These shafts inflict most grievous wounds. The downcast look, the heaving breast, bear testimony to the inward pain.

17, 18, 19. "All this has happened despite our loyalty to you. We have not violated your covenant. Our hearts have not deserted you. We have not strayed from your path. Yet you have crushed us in the desert. You have covered us with darkness and death."

Faith may be sorely tried, but still its constancy remains. The tree yet lives, though wintry blasts disrobe it. In all distress the mind adheres to God. The pledged allegiance is not broken; and the vows of love and service are most diligently kept. The heart continues its covenanted affections, and the feet turn not from the narrow way of life. There is no faltering even in the extremity of misery. The seed of the old serpent will not relax in cruelty and venom, and death in many shapes may threaten, yet Christian principles will triumph. Prison-cells have sounded with the voice of trust, and martyrs at the stake have smiled amid their agonies.

20, 21. "If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out? for He knows the secrets of the heart."

The heart is kept steadfast, when persecution is most hot, by the reflection that God's eye watches each movement. "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" is a sure check when tempted to seek help from other than our God. "You, God, see me" is a thought which braces the loins and brings needful strength.

22. "Yes, for Your sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter."

Persecution and oppression are the heritage of the Lord's followers in every age. Those who hate the Lord will not have kindlier feelings towards His devoted flock. Since the day when righteous Abel fell by his brother's hand, the same persecuting spirit has not ceased its cruel work. Alas! what scenes of malignant enmity has this earth witnessed; what cries of misery have ascended from the tortured in gloomy dungeons and in open martyrdom! If the same opportunities were given today, the same cruelties would be re-enacted.

Paul, writing by the Spirit's guidance, warns that the portrait which this verse exhibits will represent the persecuted flock until the end of time. But encouragement is added. Vain the sword, the stake, the prison, and all the train of multitudinous barbarities. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." The inward joy exceeds all outward pain. While the flesh quivers, the spirit sings, None but Jesus." A chariot of agony conveys the happy sufferers to fullness of joy and pleasures at God's right hand forevermore.

23, 24, 25, 26. "Awake, why do You sleep, O Lord? arise, cast us not off forever. Why do You hide Your face, and forget our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaves to the earth. Arise for our help, and redeem us, for Your mercies' sake."

The reality of the misery is not denied. Appearances seem to justify the apprehension that God's eye no longer rests on the oppressed. But still faith lives, and grows bolder in wrestling importunity. It will not let God go. Its cries are redoubled for early support. No merit is pleaded--no, all unworthiness is allowed. Deliverance is implored, but only on the ground that God is rich in mercy. In the lowest depths faith looks

up to God, as the Father of all mercies, as delighting in mercy, whose mercy endures forever, and the cry ascends, "Send help according to the multitude of Your tender mercies." Happy are those who boldly urge the prevailing plea, "Redeem us for Your mercies' sake."

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