

Psalm 69

by Henry Law

The sermon is a reflection on Psalm 69, highlighting Jesus' suffering, God's lovingkindness and tender mercies, and the inheritance of God's servants.

Scripture: Psalm 69:1-34

Topics: "Suffering Of Christ", "Prayer In Affliction"

Description

Henry Law preaches on the intense misery experienced by the Psalmist, portraying a drowning man overwhelmed by deep waters, reflecting the sufferings of Jesus on earth. Jesus, burdened by the sins of His people, cried out to God for salvation, enduring reproach and alienation from His own family. Despite facing mockery and persecution, Jesus remained faithful, seeking God's mercy and salvation. The Psalmist's prayers in affliction are a reminder of the importance of seeking God's face in times of trouble, trusting in His lovingkindness and tender mercies.

Transcript

The Psalmist is involved in intensity of misery. The severest troubles in every form assail him. The downfall of his enemies is foreshadowed, and the conclusion of the hymn is praise.

1-2. "Save me, O God; for the waters have come in to my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters where the floods overflow me."

The picture is exhibited of a drowning man. He sinks in overwhelming waters. There is no standing for his feet. There is no rescue for him from immediate ruin and a watery grave. In this scene of misery we see the man over whom the waves of affliction pitilessly break.

But the picture mainly represents the blessed Jesus. What sorrow ever was like His sorrow when He trod earth's path in human guise! Satan assailed Him with his utmost fury. No rest, no respite was permitted. This arch foe, also, stirred up ungodly men to wound Him with all the darts of malice and of rage. Jesus well knew that 'earth' could bring no help. He looked above, and prayed; "Save me, O God."

3. "I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried; my eyes fail while I wait for my God."

Incessant supplications tested His powers of utterance. He ceased not to pour forth cries. He looked above for support. He watched for replies until His failing eyes were dim.

4-5. "Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; those who would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty; then I restored that which I took not away. O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You."

Jesus appeals to God that all this enmity, proceeding from such a host of mighty foes, was utterly without a cause. The persecution was wrongful malice. He did no wrong. His work was to render good for evil. He here allows that, though guiltless in Himself, He stood before God as laden with all the follies and all the sins of His people. He received the burden transferred by God to Him, and acknowledged His imputed guilt.

6-8. "Let not those who wait on You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those who seek You be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children."

A new petition is preferred. Its intensity is seen by the strong expressions in which God is invoked; as the Lord God of hosts, clothed with universal power; as the God of Israel, loving His people with everlasting love. The petition is that the righteous who wait on God and seek His face should never be disheartened or cast down by sight of the troubles which were so multiplied. He deeply felt that reproaches were heaped upon Him; but feeling that they arose from His faithfulness to God, He drew encouragement from them in His approaches to the mercy-seat. Reproaches for the cause of God are highest honor. God's smile will more than compensate for all the sneers of man. But it is a grievous trial when those who are brought up in the same home, and are most closely joined by ties of blood, stand apart and evidence their alienation. Jesus knew this trial. His own brethren believed not on Him. The children brought up in His reputed father's house did not uphold Him.

9-12. "For the zeal of your house has eaten me up; and the reproaches of those who reproached You have fallen upon me. When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards."

Intensity of zeal for true religion often occasions the derision of the wicked. The disciples remembered this word when they witnessed Christ's indignation in the polluted Temple. How keenly, also, were Christ's feelings moved when He heard His Father's name blasphemed. No pious conduct could check the impious sneer. Every kind of insult met Him. Even those who sat in the seats of justice refrained not their lips from slander, and the very drunkards made Him the jest of their insulting songs. How keen must have been the sufferings of the Lamb of God. Let us do not forget that they were all endured for us.

13. "But as for me, my prayer is unto You, O Lord, in an acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy hear me, in the truth of Your salvation."

We draw sweet profit from affliction's cup when prayer is quickened by it, and trouble has no depths from which the face of God may not be seen. Therefore prayer is plied in the assurance that acceptance will not be denied. The time is always acceptable. Answers are always ready when supplications plead the name of Jesus. "He ever lives to make intercession for us." God's mercy, also, and His covenant engagements, are prevailing pleas. Mercy ceases to be mercy, truth fails, if faithful prayer should not be heard.

14-15. "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from those who hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me."

Troubles are again compared to deep and overwhelming water-floods, but God's helping hand is able to extricate from all the mire and all the depths; and prayer wrestles that this hand would help.

16. "Hear me, O Lord; for Your lovingkindness is good; turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies."

Love is here seen as the source and origin of all God's gracious dealings. He loves, therefore He withholds nothing that is good; He loves, therefore He crowns us with lovingkindness. He has revealed His name as Love. On that name we may rest all our supplications.

His name, also, is Merciful. He is rich in mercy. His mercy reaches unto the heavens. His mercy endures forever. His mercies exceed all number; and as is their number, so is their tenderness. They will never fail, who pray to be dealt with according to the multitude of God's tender mercies.

17-18. "And hide not Your face from Your servant; for I am in trouble; hear me speedily. Draw near to my soul, and redeem it; deliver me, because of my enemies."

When troubles darken around, it is faith's province to seek the light of God's countenance. If clouds should veil God's smile, trouble would indeed oppress. Faith knows this well, and is earnest for speedy help. If answers have long delay, then affliction is affliction indeed. But faith will follow God with cries, that He would in mercy draw near. It pleads; 'The enemy is near; come quickly to my help.' Such pleading will prevail. For sure is the promise, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."

19. "You have known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor; my adversaries are all before You."

The believer's heart is comforted by the knowledge that his God is ever by his side. A voice is ever ringing in his ear, "Do not fear not, for I am with you." God's eye surveys his path. His ear receives his every breathing. He marks his every circumstance. All the malevolence of adversaries is clearly known. Therefore help in every hour of need may surely be expected.

20-21. "Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My food; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."

But still reproaches inflict painful wounds. Jesus drank this cup. His holy nature would peculiarly feel the painful touch of hellish malice. In our afflictions, also, the sympathy of friends gives sweet relief. This was denied to Jesus. In His deepest woe no human arm was stretched to help Him. The Spirit here takes us distinctly to the Cross. We see the fulfillment of this cruel mockery when, to the parched lips of Jesus, they extended a sponge filled with vinegar, and put it to His mouth. What misery was ever like His misery! But His sufferings were vicarious, and by His stripes we are healed.

22-24. "Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let Your wrathful anger take hold of them."

The Spirit proceeds to predict the terrible vengeance which must fall upon Christ's foes. The believer reads the terrible decree, and meekly bows his head. He humbly acquiesces in the Lord's predicted wrath. He knows that God is love, and that in love He will do all things well.

Let us turn from the appalling picture, blessing from our hearts our gracious Lord, who saves His people from all the penalties of sin; and, waiting for His return from heaven, "whom God raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

25. "Let their habitation be desolate, and let no one dwell in their tents."

Judas stands as a dreadful monument of the fulfillment of this verse. In his miserable case we learn how surely the predicted wrath will come. There may be respite, but respite is not a full pardon. What God has righteously announced He will most righteously perform. What Truth has uttered shall be truly done. Let the ungodly take warning. The unrighteous shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are the sinner's inevitable doom.

26. "For they persecute Him whom You have smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom You have wounded."

The main feature of their sin is effort to destroy the cause of Christ. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He was smitten by the hand of justice for our iniquities; He was wounded for our transgressions; but the malice and hostility of man added great burdens to His crushed spirit. The persecution of Jesus extends to the persecution of all His members. The arresting voice checks Paul in his infuriate career; "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

27-28. "Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."

It is their miserable case that they are permitted to go on from sin to sin, and thus to fill up the measure of their iniquity. The decree has gone forth, "They are joined to idols; let them alone." No melting word softens their obdurate hearts; no converting grace turns them from the downward path. They never reach the happy land, in which all are clad in the beauties of God's righteousness. Their names cannot be found in the book of the living or in the catalogue of the righteous.

29-30. "But I am poor and sorrowful; let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving."

Jesus confesses that He stands among men despised and rejected--a very worm, and no man; but He well knew that He would be delivered from the oppressive burden of vicarious suffering, and raised to salvation's highest throne. He looked onward from the day, when His lips uttered humble and mournful prayer, to the day of triumphant gladness, when thanksgiving will be the endless song.

31-32. "This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock which has horns and hoofs. The humble shall see this, and be glad; and your heart shall live that seeks God. For the Lord hears the poor, and despises not His prisoners."

How condescending is the heart of God! The praises of His people are His chosen abode. While formal service without sincerity and warmth finds no acceptance, the voice of thanksgiving fills heaven with grateful fragrance. The humble followers of the Lamb mark such acceptance, and profit by such

experience. They see how Jesus was upheld; they see how favor smiles upon His grateful followers; and they rejoice in the joy of their fathers in the faith. Happy are those who seek God, who make His word and will their constant study, and who in their every step follow hard after Him! They shall not be disappointed. Spiritual life shall now uplift them; eternal life shall soon be their glorious crown. For this earnestly have they prayed even in the prison-house of this poor flesh. Their prayer has not been in vain. The Lord has heard them. Their desires have obtained success.

34-36. "Let the heaven and earth praise Him, the seas, and every thing that moves therein; for God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah; that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of His servants shall inherit it; and those who love His name shall dwell therein."

In prospect of God's saving mercies to His people, all the universe and every creature that has life is exhorted to abound in praise. But what praise can reach the glories of the prospect? Prosperity shall be granted to the earthly Zion; but such security was but a dim outline of the glories of the New Jerusalem. There the chosen seed shall dwell forever. There those who love His name shall have unending bliss. Their praises shall be vast as eternity, for every moment will give fresh cause for praise.

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