

Psalm 71

by Henry Law

David expresses his unwavering confidence in God amidst afflictions, trusting in God's love, goodness, and deliverance.

Scripture: Psalm 71:1-22

Topics: "Trust In God", "Faith And Hope"

Description

Henry Law preaches about David's unwavering confidence in God despite increasing afflictions, emphasizing the importance of trusting, praying, and finding comfort in God. David expresses his trust in God's righteousness, deliverance, and strength, acknowledging God as his rock and fortress. He recounts God's faithfulness from his youth, praising Him for being his hope and refuge in times of trouble. David's hope and praise in God grow continually, as he acknowledges God's righteousness, salvation, and wondrous works throughout his life.

Transcript

Weighed down under the burden of his many years, harassed by ingratitude and cruelty, David warmly expresses his unwavering confidence in God. Increasing afflictions seem to fan trust into a brighter blaze. Faith pursues its usual flight to the high throne of grace. May we thus trust, thus pray, and thus be comforted!

1-3. "In You, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me, and save me. Be my strong habitation, where I may continually resort; You have given commandment to save me; for You are my rock and my fortress."

We trust in those of whose love we have undoubted assurance, and of whose gracious dealings we have had much experience. We believe that what has been will be, and that help in time past will continue help unto the end. With what power do these motives awaken trust in God! He has loved us with an everlasting love--a love so mighty and so true, that He gave Jesus to every suffering and every shame, that He might save us and bring us home to Him. Let past days speak. Let the volume of our lives be read. They are all records that His goodness and His mercy, and His providential care, and His sustaining power have never ceased to follow us. These motives urge us to put full trust in Him. Harder than the nether millstone would be our hearts if this trust faltered or decayed.

When we avow this trust in Him, we may firmly clasp the assurance that we shall never sink in shame. Enemies indeed may never cease their vile attacks, but we may appeal to God's faithfulness and truth that He will raise us high above their malice; that He will incline His ear unto us and save us. Faith well knows that it has a high fortress of deliverance in God--an immovable Rock, on which it may take its stand, an abiding dwelling, to which it may always resort. It knows that such refuge is provided in the covenant of grace, that the Father stipulated for full deliverance, and that the Son undertook fully to accomplish the whole work. It draws near, therefore, with the sustaining cry, "You have given commandment to save me."

4-6. "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked; out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth. By You have I been held up from the womb; You took me out of my mother's womb; My praise shall be continually of You."

In his petition he opens out his grievous trials. He was assailed by wicked and unrighteous and cruel men. They raised the hand of violence against him. They held back no efforts to destroy him. But he was far from hopeless. He knew that God had helped him in former extremities. His opening years had been years of trial and of persecution. In his earliest afflictions he had put all his trust in God, and he had found God to be an all-sufficient help. He looked back to days of infancy, and his earliest memories abounded in tokens of God's goodness. In his present trial, then, praise hastened to his lips, and all despondency vanished in thanksgiving.

7-9. "I am as a wonder unto many; but You are my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your honor all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails."

The trials and many afflictions of God's servants will often appear strange to the observer. It is a natural conclusion, that if God really befriended, He would drive troubles far away--that if He really loved, the bright shining of His smile would cause all to be bright and joyous around. Such taunt assailed our blessed Lord when He was uplifted on the accursed tree. But the believer knows that such dealings are not inconsistent with eternal love, nor in opposition to the terms of the everlasting covenant. Therefore, in his weakest moments he can appeal to God, "You are my strong refuge." He would give praise to God and ascribe honor to His name at every moment of his time, with every breath of his mouth. But he especially desired that old age might not find desertion. When strength fails and decrepitudes bring low, and energies can no more strive, and strength can no more show the brawny arm, false friends may turn aside with unconcern. Such are not the ways of God. Man's inability is His opportunity to display His power and His love. While God is God, let no believer fear.

10-13. "For my enemies speak against me; and those who lie in wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God has forsaken him; persecute and take him; for there is no one to deliver him. O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste for my help. Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let those who seek my hurt be covered with reproach and dishonor."

Afflictions come in gloomy guise; they cast dark mantles over the downcast sufferers. The wicked see this, and they vainly think that this depression is desertion. They plot together, and in their ignorance exult that God has forsaken them, that their fortress is laid low, that protection utterly has failed, and that the afflicted are now exposed an easy prey to persecuting rage.

But how different is the sufferer's estimate of his condition. He knows that the cup of anguish is mixed and presented by a Father's hand; his prayer becomes more urgent for speedy deliverance, and that confusion

may overwhelm the adversaries. It is no presumption; it is abounding faith to cry, "Do not be far from me; O my God, make haste for my help."

14-18. "But I will hope continually, and will yet praise You more and more. My mouth shall show forth Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only. O God, You have taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared Your wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have shown Your strength unto this generation, and Your power to everyone that is to come."

Afflictions fan the flame of hope; they bring more fuel so the fire will burn more brightly; they add more oil so the flame will not expire. If no trials came, there would be no expectation of relief; if relief were not given, the voice of praise would not so loudly sing.

The Psalmist knew that righteousness and salvation were laid up for him in the covenant of grace, and he resolves that his lips should never cease to give due praise. The mercies of his God exceeded his powers to comprehend, therefore the praises should exceed all powers to calculate. He utterly excluded the thought of power in himself. His every step should be in realizing apprehensions that Omnipotence upheld him. Therefore God's righteousness should be his only confidence and his only song. He could look back on many days, in all of which God's gracious dealings had been his instruction. His constant testimony had been that He whose name was Wonderful had done wonders in his behalf. In this persuasion he implored that God would still be with him in the decrepitudes of age, and help him still to testify that God's power and strength could never fail.

19-21. "Your righteousness also, O God, is very high, who have done great things; O God, who is like You? You, who have shown me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth. You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side."

Who can reach the summit of God's faithful dealings! In height they tower above the heaven of heavens. We mark, and can only humbly adore. O God, who is like You! Lips become mute when they presume to institute comparison. The joy of faith instantly super-abounds. Assurance comes that He who brings His people into great and sore troubles, and lays them in the lowest depths, shall quicken them again. Such resurrection often occurs in the experience of the afflicted, and is an emblem of the glorious change which shall be seen in the great day of the Lord, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

22-24. "I will also praise You with the psaltery, even Your truth, O my God; I will sing to You with the harp, O Holy One of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You; and my soul, which You have redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; for they are confounded, for they are brought to shame, who seek my hurt."

Resolves to give God thanks become more fervent. All the powers of lip and soul, all the energies of mind and body, all the instruments which are can furnish shall here find delighted exercise. The day will be too short to proclaim the mercies of entire deliverance. Ah! how sad the contrast! While believers thus sing, the adversaries are confounded and brought to shame.

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