

Psalm 77

by Henry Law

In Psalm 77, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking God in times of sorrow and remembering His past faithfulness to overcome doubts and fears.

Scripture: Psalm 77:1-19

Topics: "Suffering And Faith", "Prayer And Meditation"

Description

Henry Law preaches about finding relief in drawing near to God and meditating on His wondrous works amidst a train of sorrows, emphasizing the importance of converting sufferings into prayers and gates of heaven. The Psalmist's journey from deep distress to renewed faith serves as a model for turning darkness into light by seeking after God in times of trouble and meditating on His past faithfulness.

Transcript

A train of sorrows moves along this page. Relief is found in drawing near to God, and meditating on His wondrous works. We may have the same sufferings. May we find the same rescue!

1. "I cried to God with my voice, even to God with my voice; and He gave ear to me."

Before the Psalmist delineates his grievous state, he openly avows the action of his soul, and the remedy obtained. His voice was uplifted in earnest and repeated cries to God. He sowed good seed, and reaped success. Happy would be our case, if we converted sufferings into prayers, and made them gates of heaven. Let this be our resolve. It will turn darkness into light.

2-4. "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my soul ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. You hold my eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak."

The days of the godly are often thus darkened. Troubles are needed, and therefore will be sent. But they excite the soul to seek after God. We have not a long road to travel. He always is by our side.

The Psalmist's present trouble seemed to be exceedingly heavy. The spiritual pain gave anguish like wounds festering in the night. There was no relief. The usual methods of consolation failed. His case seemed to be hopeless. Even the thought of God brought not its usual joy. Doubts cast a veil over His ready smiles. No sleep gave soothing ease. Utterance refused to be the outlet of distress. He watched in silence; and in mute anguish mourned.

5-6. "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with my own heart; and my spirit made diligent search."

In meditation he pondered the records of God's ancient dealings. The annals abounded in evidence that God's love had never failed. They displayed His arm always mighty to deliver. He next reviewed his own eventful story. He remembered times of lively joy, when the night heard his songs of praise. It is well that the same periods be treasured in our minds. Past pleasures should revive. He sought, also, the cause of his discomfort. He probed the recesses of his heart. He used all efforts to discover what leaks admitted these waters of bitterness.

7-9. "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?"

Wave upon wave of doubts and fears break over the mind. Apprehensions in terrific forms appear like specters. God's dark frown of anger seems to look down. Smiles are obscured by unbroken gloom. The gate of favor no longer opens. He trembles lest he should be cast off forever, and mercy no longer give solace. He plaintively inquires, "Will lovingkindness no longer cheer me?"

He had feasted on the rich meal of precious promises; these promises no longer brought support. Can it be that he is forever excluded from this heritage of God's people? Grace is God's delight. Can He forget this exercise of His goodness? Has anger so barred the door that tender mercies can have no passage? Thus he questioned; and the questions seemed to imply that such doubts must be groundless temptations.

10. "And I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

Faith, though it had been downcast, revives. The Psalmist sees that all this disconsolation sprang from his own weakness. Spiritual power had failed. The real cause was not in the wavering love of God, but in decline of holy trust. He confesses, This is my own infirmity. He sees the remedy. He looks back to God's dealings in the long history of His Church. Ages have passed; but ages have brought no diminution in God's power. His right hand, which had wrought such wonders, is His right hand still, and never can grow weak.

11-12. "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate also of all Your work, and talk of Your doings."

Reviving faith returns to God, and drooping doubts are cast aside. It flies on renovated wings to contemplate God's wonder-working hand. It enters the precious treasury full of past records. Here it finds renewal of assurance. Happy meditation traverses the path impressed by heavenly footsteps. Thus refreshed, it opens the mouth in edifying conversation. Those who fear the Lord will speak often one to another. The words of their mouths, as well as the meditation of their hearts, will be acceptable in His sight. To God also thanksgivings ascend. The knowledge of His glorious works is the fruitful parent of adoration.

13. "Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?"

The footsteps of the Lord are clearly seen in the ordinances of His house. It is the school of heavenly lessons. There His Word reveals His character. There intelligence illumines devout worshipers. They

contemplate with open eyes God's majesty, and glory, and grace, and love. The thought cannot be repressed that His every attribute is infinite. Where is greatness like His greatness! What power can be compared to His! To know Him is to lie low at His feet in boundless adoration.

14-15. "You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the people. You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph."

His sublime works shine as the midday sun. His omnipotence appears as an impregnable shield and an all-conquering sword. His omnipotence is as strong now as in the days of old. His arm has been displayed in redeeming His chosen people from the furnace of affliction, and from the iron grasp of relentless foes. But this power most brightly shines in redeeming His own from the powers of darkness, and saving them from the chains of the arch-enemy of souls. In contemplation of this work the shout breaks forth, "Who is so great a God as our God!"

16-18. "The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also went abroad. The voice of Your thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook."

The waters of the sea opposed a barrier to the fleeing Israelites. Deep billows stopped an advance. But God appears; they tremble and retreat; they leave a dry passage. Throughout, also, the march in the wilderness, all nature seemed arrayed to provoke the opponents of God's people. A deluge poured down from above. The skies peeled with appalling sounds. The thunder and lightning fought on their behalf. So, also, by miracles warring on their side, the people were established in the land of Canaan.

19-20. "Your way is in the sea, and Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known. You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

The ways of the Lord are past finding out. It is our wisdom to trust His heart, when we have no skill to trace His hand. Who could have imagined the dividing of the waters of the sea! The like had never before been seen! Faith learns the happy lesson, that though God's dealings are inscrutable, no impossibilities can impede Him. The good Shepherd will be a faithful guardian of His flock. At His will He can raise up ministers to be their guide. As Moses and Aaron went before the rescued hosts, so appointed leaders shall watch over His people. Let none distrust who have this God for their God.

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