

Psalm 80

by Henry Law

The sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering God's mercies and seeking His aid in times of suffering, finding hope in Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 80:7

Topics: "Divine Deliverance", "Spiritual Restoration"

Description

Henry Law preaches about supplicants in deep misery seeking refuge at the mercy-seat, using a graphic allegory to depict the Church and urging believers to bear fruit as branches of the true Vine. The sermon emphasizes the importance of turning to the Shepherd of Israel in times of distress, seeking His strength and salvation. It highlights the need for repentance, restoration, and the shining of God's face upon His people for deliverance from afflictions and enemies.

Transcript

Suppliants in deep misery flee to the mercy-seat. A graphic allegory portrays the Church. May we bear fruit as lively branches of the true Vine!

1-2. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up Your strength, and come and save us."

In terms tender and urgent the heavenly Shepherd is implored to watch over His beloved flock. He is invoked, also, as the God whose presence sanctified the mercy-seat. When the tabernacle moved the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh brought up the rear, and so were the nearest to the cherubim overshadowing the Ark. Thus the symbol of His presence was adjacent to these tribes. Let us profit by this invocation. In our distresses--and they may be very many--let us think of the Good Shepherd, and remind Him of His tender love. Let us think of our God upon His mercy-seat, and beseech Him to manifest His strength.

3. "Turn us again, O God, and cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved."

The confession is implied that we drink the cup of sorrow because of our wanderings from God. The supplication sounds, that He would, in His full mercy, bring us back, and chase away our gloom by the shinings of His smile. If He vouchsafes to grant this mercy, perils and destruction flee away, and we stand

immovably on salvation's ground.

4-7. "O Lord God of Hosts, how long will You be angry against the prayer of Your people? You feed them with the bread of tears; and give them tears to drink in great measure. You make us a strife unto our neighbors; and our enemies laugh among themselves. Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved."

Penitential prayer had sued, but answers lingered. Fast-flowing tears bedewed the cheeks. Needful food was mingled with bitter tokens of affliction. In importunity God is besought no longer to delay His aid. Not only did a wounded conscience utter words of sorrow. The surrounding nations also marked their calamities, and heaped derision on the downcast people. The cry is renewed, Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved. If delay occurs, let it quicken our earnestness.

8-11. "You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the heathen, and planted it. You prepared room before it, and caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches to the river."

In the midst of suffering it is salutary to revisit times of joy and gladness. Israel recalls God's early favor. He brought His people like a tender plant from Egypt's soil. He removed the heathen, and planted it in earth's loveliest spot. Here it took root and sent forth luxuriant branches. Such mercies now were recalled by their mourning hearts. The contrast awakened a plaintive cry.

12-16. "Why have you then broken down her hedges, so that all those who pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood wastes it, and the wild beast of the field devours it. Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, and the branch that You made strong for Yourself. It is burnt with fire; it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of Your countenance."

The present desolation shows a terrible reverse. Protecting barriers are leveled. All passengers may pillage as they please. Wild animals may devour the fruits. Again prayer beseeches God to return and visit His ravaged vine. In remembrance of former mercies, let us pray that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Christ.

17-19. "Let Your hand be upon the Man of Your right hand, upon the Son of Man whom You made strong for Yourself. So will not we go back from You; quicken us, and we will call upon Your name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved."

Hope now brightens. The eye rests on Jesus. God is besought to uphold His beloved Son endued with all strength to save us. He will restore our souls. Quickened by His grace, prayers shall continue to wrestle with Him for renewed support. Repetition proves the earnestness of the soul.

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