

Exposition on Psalm 13

by St. Augustine

The sermon explores the longing for spiritual understanding, the need for counsel in adversity, and the call to hope in God's mercy to overcome the enemy of the soul.

Scripture: Psalm 12:1-6, Romans 10:4

Topics: "Spiritual Struggle", "Gods Mercy"

Description

St. Augustine delves into the psalm of David, reflecting on the longing for God's presence and guidance amidst trials and spiritual struggles. The psalmist questions God's apparent absence, seeking counsel and mercy to overcome adversity and the exaltation of enemies, whether spiritual or physical. Through prayer and hope in God's mercy, the psalmist finds strength to resist the devil's mockery and rejoice in the salvation and goodness provided by the Lord.

Transcript

Unto the end, a psalm of David.

1. For Christ is the end of the law to every one that believes. Romans 10:4 How long, O Lord, will You forget me unto the end? Psalm 12:1 that is, put me off as to spiritually understanding Christ, who is the Wisdom of God, and the true end of all the aim of the soul. How long will You turn away Your face from me? As God does not forget, so neither does He turn His face away: but Scripture speaks after our manner. Now God is said to turn away His face, when He does not give to the soul, which as yet has not the pure eye of the mind, the knowledge of Himself.

2. How long shall I place counsel in my soul? Psalm 12:2. There is no need of counsel but in adversity. Therefore How long shall I place counsel in my soul? is as if it were said, How long shall I be in adversity? Or at least it is an answer, so that the meaning is this, So long, O Lord, will You forget me to the end, and so long turn away Your face from me, until I shall place counsel in my own soul: so that except a man place counsel in his own soul to work mercy perfectly, God will not direct him to the end, nor give him that full knowledge of Himself, which is face to face. Sorrow in my heart through the day? How long shall I have, is understood. And through the day signifies continuance, so that day is taken for time: from which as each one longs to be free, he has sorrow in his heart, making entreaty to rise to things eternal, and not endure man's day.

3. How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? either the devil, or carnal habit.

4. Look on me, and hear me, O Lord my God Psalm 12:3. Look on me, refers to what was said, How long dost Thou turn away Your face from me. Hear, refers to what was said, How long will You forget me to the end? Lighten my eyes, that I sleep not in death. The eyes of the heart must be understood, that they be not closed by the pleasurable eclipse of sin.

5. Lest at any time mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him Psalm 12:4. The devil's mockery is to be feared. They that trouble me will exult, if I be moved; the devil and his angels; who exulted not over that righteous man, Job, when they troubled him; because he was not moved, that is, did not draw back from the steadfastness of his faith. Job 2:3

6. But I have hoped in Your mercy Psalm 12:5. Because this very thing, that a man be not moved, and that he abide fixed in the Lord, he should not attribute to self: lest when he glories that he has not been moved, he be moved by this very pride. My heart shall exult in Your salvation; in Christ, in the Wisdom of God. I will sing to the Lord who has given me good things; spiritual good things, not belonging to man's day. And I will chant to the name of the Lord most high Psalm 12:6; that is, I give thanks with joy, and in most due order employ my body, which is the song of the spiritual soul. But if any distinction is to be marked here, I will sing with the heart, I will chant with my works; to the Lord, that which He alone sees, but to the name of the Lord, that which is known among men, which is serviceable not for Him, but for us.

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