

PSALM 77 The Consoling Memory of God's Redemptive Works!

12/31/22 – Sat Morn Prayer - P. Twente, 714 425-9221; ptwente@gmail.com www.ptwente.com

O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST *Isaac Watts – 1708 (1:51) Festival Choir and Hosanna Chorus*

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure; Sufficient is Thine arm alone, And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood, Or earth received her frame, From everlasting Thou art God, To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight Are like an evening gone; Short as the watch that ends the night Before the rising sun.

Psalm 77 - This Psalm has much sadness in it, but we may be sure it will end well, for it begins with prayer, and prayer never has an ill issue. Asaph did not run to man but to the Lord, and to Him he went, not with studied, stilted words, but with a cry, the natural, unaffected, unfeigned expression of pain. He used his voice also, for though vocal utterance is not necessary to the life of prayer, it often seems forced upon us by the energy of our desires. Sometimes the soul feels compelled to use the voice, for thus it finds a freer vent for its agony. It is a comfort to hear the alarm-bell ringing when the house is invaded by thieves. He returned to his pleading. If not answered at once, he cried again. He needed an answer. He expected one. He was eager to have it soon, therefore he cried again and again, and with his voice too, for the sound helped his earnestness. Importunity prevailed. The gate opened to the steady knock. It shall be so with us in our hour of trial, the God of grace will hear us in due season.

PSALM 77 - In the Day of Trouble I Seek the Lord— To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

Psa 77:1 I cried out to God with my voice—To God with my voice; And He gave ear to me.

- God answers prayer. This is the basic affirmation of the psalm. We know that this is true, that the basic thrust or incentive to pray is the fact that God answers prayer. It does follow that there are many prayers that go up to bring nothing down. When God doesn't answer prayer, our first reaction is to blame God for not answering prayer rather than looking at our prayer or at ourselves we have a tendency to immediately blame God.
- He affirms that I did call and He gave ear. God does hear the prayers of His people and God answers the prayers of His people, that's the chief thrust for praying.
- When Jesus was in the garden, surely He expressed it when He said, "Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless not what I will but Thy will be done." Any prayer that is offered to God that doesn't have that -"Nevertheless not my will, thy will be done isn't really true prayer." You don't understand the real purpose of prayer. It's not to get your will done; it's to get God's will done.

Psa 77:2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; My soul refused to be comforted.

- That is, I sought the Lord and there was no answer to my cry, to my prayer. It was as though God did not answer the prayer. The problem continued. We've all had that experience haven't we? Where we brought an issue to God in prayer and it seemed like nothing happened, the problem persisted.
- Sometimes God delays the answers to our prayers so that when He gives, He might give more than what we were ever anticipating or desiring! Think of Hannah in the Old Testament, who had a curse, from a cultural standpoint in that she was barren. It was grounds for legal divorce; no one would have questioned Elkanah had he said to beat it woman. If a woman could not bear a son or a child for her husband, that was legal grounds for divorce. It was a curse to not be able to bear children.
- No doubt she had prayed and prayed and prayed for God to give her a son. Yet God didn't answer, the delay of the answer. She and her husband were going to Shiloh to worship God for at that time the tabernacle was at Shiloh. While she was there she was in agony of spirit. Of course on the way there she was depressed. She was down and her husband said, "What's the matter? Cheer up." She would be saying, "How can I be happy when I don't have a child? Give me a child or I'm going to die." He got upset! Do you think I'm God, what can I do? God knows we've tried.

- She was in such bitterness of spirit that as she was lying there in the temple area she couldn't utter the prayer aloud anymore. It was the agony of the heart. Eli the priest came by and said, "Hey woman get rid of alcohol it's going to ruin you. She said, "I've not been drinking sir. My heart is grieved before God. I've been asking God to give me a son!" But, she had done one more thing, she said, "God if You would just give me a son I will give him back to You all the days of his life." That's what God was wanting.
- Israel was in a desperate state. Eli the priest was corrupted. God needed a deliverer for the people and there was none. So God needed a man and to get a man he had to get the woman first! What He did was shut up her womb. She prayed and sought God and nothing happened until finally she prayed, "God if You'll just give me a son I'll give him back to You! Now she's in line with the purpose of God.
- God is just looking for people who are in line with His purpose. "The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect. Now her heart is perfect towards the Lord. The priest said, "Go your way, God has heard your prayer." Samuel was born. That one that God raised up to be a prophet and a judge to the Nation of Israel that brought them out of their spiritual morass, leading led them into a worship and an acknowledgement again of God as the Lord over the nation. God again delayed the answer that He might give more! That is often the case.
- The psalmist cried unto God in his trouble but there was no relief. It continued. The problem did not cease until he went into a depression. My soul refused to be comforted. The thought of God became bitter. When I would think about God it would only trouble me because I don't understand God. That often is troubling because I desire to understand what God is doing in my life. But God said, "My ways are not your ways saith the Lord. For My ways are beyond your finding out." I am thankful that God is not limited to my ways.
- God has a completely different way to work out a problem. Suddenly He answers, and wow, that wasn't as complex as I thought it was. How could God think of that? Why didn't I think of that? That was so simple. What a simple solution. Lay the need before the Lord and leave it at that.

Psa 77:3 I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah

- Yes I have at that. Have you ever complained to God? Do you know what that is about?
- It now became a spiritual problem. Often times these things can turn into real spiritual problems in your life. That endeavor by man with this finite mind to understand the infinite God. I am running up against all of these impenetrable walls. I can't understand what God is doing and I can't understand this infinite God. I can't understand the ways of the infinite God because we are looking at the situation from a different perspective.
- I am looking at it from my temporal material perspective of how it's going to affect me now and God is looking at it from the eternal perspective of how it's going to affect me eternally. Because we are looking at the issues from a different perspective, I cannot understand the eternal perspective of God, the eternal plan that God is working out. I am so interested in my temporary comfort, temporary convenience because I'm living in this day to day world and I want things to work out now because I'm not going to be here long. Let's get things going, God. You may have eternity but I don't.

Psa 77:4 You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

- He began to lose sleep. His eyes in the night are wide open looking at the ceiling.
- Getting to the place where you can't even talk about the issues anymore.

Psa 77:5 I have considered the days of old, The years of ancient times.

- Now he is beginning to reflect on the past of what God has revealed of himself to the fathers.

Psa 77:6 I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, And my spirit makes diligent search.

- This is the turn-around point. He had lapsed into the depths of despair. His spirit is troubled and overwhelmed. He can't sleep and he can't even talk about it. Coming to the bottom, things begin to change. He began to ask a series of questions concerning God in which he took it to the absurd, reducing it to the absurd.

Psa 77:7 Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more?

- Of course we know He won't. Has God ended His favors? Has He quit working? Has God abandoned His creation? Sometimes we are prone to think that aren't we when we look around and see the conditions that are going on.

Psa 77:8 Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed forevermore?

- Will He never again be merciful? Are the promises of God something that you can't trust anymore? Has God failed to keep His word? "Heaven and earth will pass away" Jesus said, "but My words will never pass away." Has He changed His nature?

Psa 77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah

- All of these are sort of rhetorical type of questions that immediately call for a "No, of course not. No, that's foolish. That's stupid to think that."

- In our most difficult times, which we all will have, we should be careful not to personalize them, unnecessarily blaming ourselves. Lord, what I have done, to deserve this? It must mean that God is against me! He doesn't love me, like He did when everything was going smoothly! It must mean that God is through with me, taking these absolutely wild stabs in the dark, trying to figure out things with very severe limitations of our mind, in what we know! Thinking the very worst that it is all us. Then, even worse, we keep trying to figure it out, all on our own, apart from prayer! Remember (**Pro 3:5-6**) **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; [6] In all your ways acknowledge Him** (including prayer), **And He shall direct your paths!**
- Now the solution in the rest of this **Psalm, verses 10-20!** God does not lack the power to bring us out, but He is up to doing something better for us, because of His love for us, receiving even more glory in our lives!

Psa 77:10 And I said, "This is my anguish; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

- It isn't God's problem, this is my problem. The problem isn't on God's side of the wall; the problem is on my side of the wall.

Psa 77:11 I will remember the works of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

- I will remember the past. There is where the scripture comes in, as I read of God's faithfulness to His word, to His people. I read of the work of God among His people, the delivering hand of God when it seemed like there was no hope at all.

Psa 77:12 I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds.

- As He turns around, rather than looking at God in a negative light, He is beginning to look at God in a positive light.
- **Talk of Your deeds.** There is something powerful, something wonderful, in the Psalms about expressing faith and praise in testimony to the goodness and the power of God, out loud! Our "new man" needs to speak up, drowning out the "old man Adam," which doesn't have a spiritual bone in the body. I remember who You are! I give You praise! Sometimes we don't have anyone to counsel us! We have to be our own counselor, speaking it out to Him! It works! It is powerful!

Psa 77:13 Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; Who is so great a God as our God?

Psa 77:14 You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples.

Psa 77:15 You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph (whole nation of Israel, being delivered in the Exodus from slavery in Egypt). **Selah**

- He turns things around and he sees the power of God, the glory of God and the works of God! He sees God in a positive light. Be careful when you start looking at God in a negative light. That's a trick of the enemy to take you to the bottom. "I don't think God really cares about me. I don't think God is interested in me at all. I don't think God loves me anymore. I think that God's forsaken me." You are looking at God in this negative light and man, talk about despair, that'll take you to the bottom. We need to look at God in a positive light. Surely there is no God as great as our God. He does such marvelous things. He has manifested His strength to His people.
- He begins to talk of the waters. That is the waters of the Red Sea when the children of Israel had come and they seemed to be trapped, there was no way out. The Egyptians were behind them, the sea in front of them and the hills of Pi Hahiroth beside them. They are in this valley. They were trapped!

Psa 77:16 The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were afraid; The depths also trembled.

- He speaks of this now in a very poetic beautiful way.

Psa 77:17 The clouds poured out water; The skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about.

Psa 77:18 The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook.

Psa 77:19 Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, And Your footsteps were not known.

Psa 77:20 You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

- You brought them through.

SUMMARY

- **Times of great despair!** It happens to all of us. We cry out with our voice to the Lord. No immediate answer. Often when our prayer aren't answered immediately, God has something better for us than that we are requesting.
- **We fall into despair and depression, taking matters into our own hands, not praying.** Personalizing the situation; coming up with all kinds of wild, untrue speculations, doubting God loves us and even is unable to do anything about it? We need to turn to Him, trusting Him (**Prov. 3:5-6**)

- **Remember all He has done for us. All the miracles**, like with Israel, Exodus from slavery, tremendous miracles. Just like He has done for us in the past, delivering us from the slavery of sin! Mediate on these.
- **As in the Psalms -Express out loud, faith and praise in testimony** to the goodness and the power of God There is something powerful, something wonderful about doing that!
- **We need to drown out our old**, Satan prompted, Adam nature, with our new nature in Christ!
- **Talking of His deeds, coming to the remembrance** – *Who is so great a God as our God?* Remember what He did for Israel! Remember what He has done for me!
- **Remember His promises for what He will do** in the future, throughout eternity! Eyes off of me and onto Him!

HOW GREAT THOU ART – Boberg, Stuart Hine, Shea (vs 1 3 4 4:04)

*Oh Lord my God when I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder Thy power throughout the universe displayed*

*Refrain: Then sings my soul my Savior God to Thee, How great thou art! How great Thou art! Then sings
my soul my Savior God to Thee! How great Thou art! How great Thou art!*

*And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing; Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin. (Refrain)*

*When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I
shall bow in humble adoration, And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art. (Refrain)*

**FOR OUR NATION'S LEADERS: PRAY FOR CALIFORNIA: PRAY FOR WORLD LEADERS: -
Pray for World Leaders, especially their salvation, including: Xi Jinping – China; Narendra
Modi- India; Joe Biden – USA; Joko Widodo - Indonesia; Jair Bolsonaro - Brazil; Arif Alvi -
Pakistan; Shehbaz Sharif - Nigeria; Hasina Wazed - Bangladesh; Vladimir Putin- Russia; Lopez
Obrador – Mexico; Benjamin Netanyahu – Israel; Olaf Scholtz – Germany; Rishi Sunak – U.K.;
Kim Jong-un – North Korea; Yoon Suk Yeol– South Korea.**

**PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH/PERSECUTED CHURCH; SCHOOLS; POLICE OFFICERS/MILITARY;
ISRAEL:**

The Story Behind 'How Great Thou Art'

In 1885, a young Swedish pastor, Karl Gustav Boberg, walking home from church when he was caught in a severe thunderstorm, and almost died! He then watched as the storm passed, the sun came out and shone on the waters of the bay, birds started singing in the trees. Inspired, he wrote a poem, naming it "O Store Gud" (O Mighty God), and submitted it to the local newspaper, which published it, becoming popular throughout Sweden. It soon spread to other parts of northern Europe. In 1907, a German Estonian, Manfred Von Glehn, a church planter, compiled a hymnbook of hymns in German, including "O Store Gud," translating it "Du Großer Gott." The hymn made its way into Russia. In 1927, Ivan Prochanov, a church planter, as well as a most prolific writer and publisher of Christian works. He was jailed and exiled several times, but he kept at his work, compiling a Russian-language Protestant hymnbook, "Songs of a Christian," which included "Du Großer Gott." In Russian, it became "Velykiy Bog," or "Great God," becoming very popular. In the Ukraine, it quickly caught on. In the late '20's, Stuart and Edith Hine, a British missionary couple, served in the Ukraine, Romania and Poland, heard this Russian hymn and started using it in their evangelistic services. Stuart Hine also started re-writing some of the verses and writing new verses, as events inspired him. The Hines inquired as to any Christians in the villages they visited. They found a couple, Dmitri and his wife Lyudmila, who knew how to read. When the Hines approached Dmitri's house, they heard a strange and wonderful sound of Dmitri's wife was reading from the gospel of John about the crucifixion of Christ to a houseful of guests, who were in the very act of repenting aloud. The Hines heard people calling out to God, saying how unbelievable it was that Christ would die for their own sins, and praising Him for His love and mercy. Hines wrote down the phrases, which became the third verse we know today: "**And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.**"

In 1939, at the outbreak of World War II, the Hines, returning to London, were amazed at the millions streaming into England from Easter Europe! One man to whom they were ministering had an amazing story, having been separated from his wife at the very end of the war. When separated, his wife was a Christian, but he was not, but he had since been converted. His deep desire was to find his wife so they could at last share their faith together. But he did not think he would ever see his wife on earth again, longing for the day when they would meet in heaven, and share Eternity there. These words again inspired Hine, becoming his fourth and final verse: "**When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation to take me home, what joy shall fill my heart. Then we shall bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, My God How Great Thou Art!**"