

Evening Sermon – October 18, 2020

“Memories, History” Psalm 77

I. *Asaph’s cry, prayer is about the pains of now –*

¹ I cried out to God with my voice—To God with my voice; And He gave ear to me. 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. ³ I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah Psalm 77:1–3 (NKJV)

1. *The word “cried” and repeated phrase “to God with my voice” tell us Asaph is praying with great emotion – Psalm 77:1*
2. *God gave ear to Asaph – Verse 1 (last clause).—At the second knock, the door of grace flew open: the Lord heard me.—John Collings.*
3. *This prayer is stirred up and fired by the heat of trouble – Psalm 77:2*
 - A. *The pain kept Asaph from sleeping, insomnia kept him praying without ceasing - My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing – Psalm 77:2 B*
 - B. *Our natural tendency when our brother or sister is in trouble or crying to comfort - My soul refused to be comforted. Psalm 77:2 C*

Verse 2.—“In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.” Days of trouble must be days of prayer; in days of inward trouble, especially when God seems to have withdrawn from us, we must seek him, and seek till we find him. In the day of his trouble he did not seek for the diversions of business or recreation, to shake off his trouble that way, but he sought God, and His favor and grace. Those that are under trouble of mind, must not think to drink it away, or laugh it away, but pray it away.—Matthew Henry.

4. *Memory of better times was what troubled Asaph, times of miracles, times of God’s might – Psalm 77:3*

II. *Asaph’s cry is about the best days being gone –*

⁴ You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. ⁵ I have considered the days of old, The years of ancient times. ⁶ I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, And my spirit makes diligent search. ⁷ Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? ⁸ Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed forevermore? ⁹ Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah Psalm 77:4–9 (NKJV)

1. *Asaph is sleepless and speechless - :4*
2. *He is an unhappy nostalgic historian – :5*

“Those were the days my friend, we thought they’d never end, we’d sing and dance forever and a day! We lived the life we choose, we’d fight and never lose ... for we were young and sure to have our way!”
3. *He is singing, meditating, at night – :6*
4. *He emphasizes FOREVER:*
 - A. *Cast off - :7*
 - B. *Mercy ceased - :8*
 - C. *Promise failed – :8 B*
5. *He questions God’s mind (forgotten) and heart (to be gracious) - :9*
6. *He sees only God’s anger - :9B*

III. *Asaph’s memory though is good and includes what He knows to be truth about God –*

1. *Despite the present pain, Asaph is determined to remember - ¹⁰ And I said, “This is my anguish; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.” Psalm 77:10*
 - A. *My anguish / literally MY infirmity, my problem --- Its me, its me, is me O LORD ...*
 - B. *At this point in the Psalm Asaph is realizing it is His fault, NOT God’s His misinterpretation of the world, not God’s mismanagement of it!*

C. *He saw only God's anger :9; but God's anger is righteous / justice!*

2. *Determined memory, and study of and meditation on History, leads to a right understanding, and praise of God*

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

"Memory is a fit handmaid for faith. When faith has its seven years of famine, memory like Joseph in Egypt opens her granaries."

CH Spurgeon

Moses' life was not all miracles and merriment, yes there was the joy of Exodus 15, but chapter 16 starts with the people complaining, 'we ate better in Egypt as slaves ...'

3. *Note Asaph starts meditating on 'all God's work' not just missed miracles -*

¹² **I will also meditate on all Your work, Psalm 77:12B**

If he meditated enough on all God's work, he would have remembered God's people were slaves in Egypt for a long time before they were freed from Egypt. For many years, even before the Exodus, the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea, there were no miracles in sight, the ancestors Asaph envied also went through hard times!

¹⁴ **In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him. Ecclesiastes 7:14 (NKJV)**

4. *Asaph's occupation included evangelism, and also teaching - And talk of Your deeds. Psalm 77:12 C*

A full heart, due to godly meditation, will surely overflow to the benefit of others -

⁵ **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Psalm 23:5 (NKJV)**

With God's Word and God Himself, we also have a feast, delicious things to share -

⁸ **Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Psalm 34:8 (NKJV)**

5. There was a place to meet God, even in the worst times -

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

6. *God is wonderful in His power to save, and He has not lost that power!*

¹⁴ **You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples. ¹⁵ You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah Psalm 77:14-15 (NKJV)**

IV. *Asaph rejoices in History, knowing God can still save and will -*

¹⁶ **The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were afraid The depths also trembled. ¹⁷ The clouds poured out water; The skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about. ¹⁸ The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook. ¹⁹ Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, And Your footsteps were not known. ²⁰ You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron. Psalm 77:16-20 (NKJV)**

1. *Waters can be scary things, but they are afraid of God, so are all our trials - :16*
2. *Storms are the same, scary, but God controls them - :17-18*
3. *God's path is through the waters, through the danger, through difficult times - :19*
4. *The Miracle had slavery, hardship and seeming danger as its background - :20*

Thou source of every blessing,
Chase my sorrows, cheer my heart,
Till in heaven, Thy smiles possessing,
Life, and joy, and peace impart.

—James Smith.

Arnold Brevick