

PSALM 41

THE PSALM OF THE POOR AND NEEDY

Jesus Christ, betrayed by Judas Iscariot, is evidently the great theme of this Psalm; but since all His people are represented in Him, these words are also suitable to them. Those who receive a vile recompense for their long exercising of kindness to others may read this song with much comfort, for they will see that it is – alas! – too common for even the best of the Lord’s children to be rewarded for their holy charity with cruelty and scorn. Especially when they have been sadly humbled by falling into sin, advantage is often taken of their low estate; their good deeds are then forgotten by the wicked ones of this world, and the vilest spite is then vented upon them.

But as we have said, Christ Himself is present here. In fact, He Himself – in the mouth of David – is speaking! With great feeling, He complains of the traitor Judas, who was from His innermost circle of friends; as well as of those cruel beast-like men – such as those who crucified Him – who vent their fury on the poor and helpless. He prays that His Father would judge His cause and set Him before His face (verse 12). He asks that He would comfort Him in His suffering and raise Him from the dead, so that – being exalted, through the death of the cross, to the right hand of God – He might be glorified with eternal life and victory.

The sons and daughters of the Lord may find great and unspeakable consolation in the fourth verse, where the Savior says, “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee!” He confesses Himself to be a sinner before His Father – even though He was without sin, and no guile was found in His mouth! Here, therefore, He stands as our Great High Priest! He made Himself the ultimate Sacrifice for sin – bearing and suffering for our transgressions, as if they were His own. He carried all the weight and guilt of them.

In the beginning of the Psalm, however, He comprehends the sum of the whole matter in a very powerful expression: “Blessed,” says He, “are they who

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

“To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.” This title has frequently occurred before. It serves to remind us of the value of the Psalm, since we see that it was committed to no ordinary songster; and it also informs us about the author, who has made his own experience the basis of a prophetic song – in which, One Who is far greater than David is set forth. How wide a range of experience David had! What power it gave him to edify future ages! And how full a foreshadowing of our Lord Jesus did he become! What was bitterness to him has proved to be a fountain of unfailing sweetness to many generations of the faithful.

In verses 1-3, David describes the mercies which are promised to those who consider the poor; and he uses this as a preface to his own personal plea for succor. In verses 4-9, he states his own case; he proceeds to prayer in verse 10; and he closes with thanksgiving in verses 11-13.



consider the poor and needy!” In other words, those persons are everlastingly blessed who are not offended at the once-weak, crucified, and condemned Christ. Such persons listen to and believe in the Gospel-message – even though the preaching of the cross is foolishness to the Gentiles and a stumbling-block to the Jews. Alas! To the people of the world, it is deemed to be

the greatest of all offences to preach, teach, or confess that the once-crucified and condemned Christ now sits as King Supreme, on the right hand of the Divine Majesty on high! Truly He is the Lord of all – both in this world, and also in that which is to come.

Lord Jesus, we acknowledge the lamentable fact that it was our sins that caused You to suffer so greatly; for You were entirely without sin, and no guile was found in Your mouth – and yet You undertook to become the ultimate Sacrifice for us. We also give thanks to You for Your promise of relief in times of trouble, to those who consider the poor. We ask You for grace to follow Your bright example, and to sympathize with all Your tried and afflicted children. Amen.