

"1 I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad. 3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. 4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him. 9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him. 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 What man *is he that* desireth life, *and* loveth *many* days, that he may see good? 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry. 16 The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17 *The righteous* cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. 20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. 22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." (Ps 34:1-22)

Several things by way of introduction:

1. This Psalm was written by David after a wonderful deliverance. He had fled from Israel because Saul was seeking to kill him, because of jealousy. David fled to Gath, a city of the Philistines, the home of Goliath and his family. It was sad that he felt safer among the Philistines than among the people of God. The brothers of Goliath would have still been alive, for there were five sons of the giant that lived at Gath, all of whom would later be slain by David and his mighty men.
2. His presence was reported to Achish, the king of Gath, by those who remember the songs and dancing of the Israelites, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands. Achish sent to inquire, and David fled to the gates of the city, pretended to be mad, let his saliva run down on his beard, and scratched on the walls with his finger nails. His act was successful and Achish told his servants that he need not be concerned about a mad man.
3. These troubles of David, who was a just man before God, point to the sufferings of Christ on the Cross, for verse 20 is specifically quoted by John in John 20, that Christ was dead before the soldiers came to break the legs of the three crucified, and so the scripture was fulfilled, quoting Psalm 34 specifically.
4. Pointing to the crucifixion of Christ, David's troubles are therefore universalized and apply to all the people of God, for we also who believe must share in the cross of Christ and not be ashamed if we must suffer for Christ, as Php 1:29 "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake...." This also is evidence of election to eternal life.

Last week we saw that true worship involves the offering up of ourselves as living sacrifices unto God, for having purchased us by the blood of Christ, we are to present ourselves before the Lord, like the angels of Heaven who stand before the Lord, ready and willing to do whatsoever He commands us. We are not our own, we are bought with a price, even the blood of Christ, and it is because of this blood shed for us, that we are called to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy acceptable [a sweet savor] unto God, which is our reasonable [spiritual from the inner man] service.

This sermon today involves the attitude and the way in which this offering to God is to be made. What is the tone of the sacrifice, you might say. We are to offer ourselves up to God, but how are we to do that. Our text says, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Vs. 18. There are several things that need to be said. 1. The Contempt **OF** God for the Proud and Hard of Heart; 2. The Chastening **BY** God of the Proud and Hard of Heart; 3. The Cry **TO** God that He will hear from the Proud and Hard of Heart.

I. **The Contempt OF God for the Proud and Hard of Heart.**

- A. Verse 16: "The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

1. The response of God to a proud and hard face against the command of God is a hard face of God against you.
 2. What is the mark of the proud and hard heart: the doing of evil; resisting the word of the Lord. We are dull and hard against the Spirit of God: We grieve Him, by following our own way; We quench Him by offering reasons why we should not follow Him; and then we resist Him. Our hearts become hard and bitter.
 3. God actively resists the proud, according to James. He does not just observe. The hard clay He make harder and each resistance to the Spirit of God makes the next one even easier, until soon it is second nature to resist the word and work of God. Good becomes evil and evil becomes good. Rebellion becomes so natural that it appears to be normal.
- B. How does God resist the proud and how does He set his face against the proud and hard heart? By using evil against him.
1. "Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate." Vs. 21
 2. God uses evil external to the man: floods, fires, storm, evil men, ignorant men, many external things to overthrow the proud and hard in heart.
 3. God uses the evil internal in the hearts of men: The proud and hard in heart nurture the evil in their own souls and it festers and matures. No man can resist the evil in his own heart; he can only do the good by giving Himself up to Christ. As long as he keeps the reins of his own heart in his own hands, he will not be able to restrain the steeds of his own sins. That is the meaning of Galatians 6:9 "For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." The flesh is the old man, the man of Adam's corruption and knows nothing of the life of the Spirit.
 4. In due season we shall reap, if we faint not. "Pr 24:10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." People faint in the very time they need to be strong. The baby falls and cuts herself and blood flows, and mommy faints. That's not the time to faint. Maybe dad faints too, in a different way, "Why haven't you been watching the kid!" There is trouble in the state, and statesmen faint and abandon principle, when they should be strong. There is doctrinal error in the church, and people faint. There is sin in the church, and people faint. At the very time that strength and courage and faith is needed, the proud and hard in heart faint, because the flesh has no strength in spiritual things, however much it boasts and glories in itself.
 5. Evil destroys evil, not by natural order, but by the decree and will of God. He resists the proud but gives strength to the humble.
 6. There is no deception like that which comes from pride and a hard heart: When pushed by the commandment of God, it pushes back, thinking that it can succeed. "The pride of thy heart has deceived thee," the prophet Obadiah said to the Edomites. They had fortresses in Mt. Seir and thought they were safe; so the heart fortifies itself against the Lord. Jeremiah said almost the identical thing to the same people. You are deceived by the pride of your heart, and you have hardened yourself against the Lord. This is what Saul of Tarsus did, until he was humbled by the power of God. He was overcome by good, but evil would have destroyed him if not for the power and grace of God, for the abounding of faith can overcome the poverty of pride and unbelief.

II. The Chastening BY God of the Proud and Hard of Heart.

- A. Even the Lord Jesus had to endure suffering, and was perfected by it.
1. It is true that He did not have the pride that we are subjected to, but He had to learn obedience by the things that he suffered, as we saw in Hebrews 2, and he could not be the Author of our eternal salvation until he was subjected to those sufferings. He was tested to show that He had no imperfections, and therefore worthy to be our Savior.
 2. We are tested and tried for another purpose, to remove impurities and to humble our pride. David must be chastened in order to prepare him to be King of Israel. Saul of Tarsus had to spend three years in Arabia to prepare that proud Pharisee to be a preacher of the Gospel; Moses had to spend forty years to prepare him for his mission. Private ambition must be subjected to the will and purpose of God.
- B. In regard to this, let us look at the book of Lamentations 2:17-19. So much could be said, but just this: God had chastened Judah very harshly because they refused to walk in His ways and hardened their hearts against Him, and Jeremiah is Lamenting the chastening. The hard heart becomes harder—it is not repentance to shrug the shoulder and say, "That's the way it is," or "Allah wills." No, we are to weep with those that weep, and Jeremiah is weeping with those that weep. Jeremiah's heart is not hard, but very soft and sorrowful, moreso than those whose fault and sins had brought the destruction.
1. This book of lamentations was written by the most righteous among them, and his sorrow exceeded all those whose sins destroyed the city. The Pharisees and Scribes and Sadducees did not weep over Jerusalem. Jesus did, for His heart yearned for the city.
 2. Vs. 17: the Lord had done what He had promised to do: He had utterly overthrown the city, and all that was left was ruins and despair. 19-22 Horrible, Horrible, Horrible. The evil that God uses to chasten His people may be horrible indeed. How shall we endure it!!

3. Vs. 18: an exquisite figure of speech, addressing the wall of Jerusalem that lay shattered and scattered on the ground. The wall had run down like water, for the wall was not as hard as the hearts of the people. They hardened their hearts before God, and therefore hardened themselves against the priests, against the Temple, against one another.
4. Your say "Walls cannot weep," No, and neither could Judah weep before the Lord, but hardened themselves more and more. Jeremiah was shedding the tears and doing the mourning that Judah should have been doing.
5. The rocks themselves cried out to God, and ran down like water, weeping and repenting as Judah would not. Jesus would say later as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, that if the children were hushed, the stones would cry out. I wonder if He had this passage in mind, especially as He knew that even a greater devastation would soon come upon that miserable city. Like Jeremiah, He wept for those who could and would not weep for themselves. As He told the women who wept for Him: "But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." Luke 23:28-30

III. The Cry TO God that He will hear from the Proud and Hard of Heart. 17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

- A. God hears the cry of those whose proud and hard hearts are broken. You cannot break your own heart, and nobody else can break your hard heart: only God can humble you and reveal to you what I mean.
- B. Their hearts are broken because God is near to them. He has not forsaken them, even though they go through fire and storm. The heart, hard as stone, is broken, not because of the storms, but because of His tender mercy and grace.
- C. Their hearts are broken because the Spirit has shown to them Christ suffering on the cross for them, and they are humbled by His grace and mercy. Because they have learned what grace and mercy is, their hearts are softened toward Christ, before God, before their fellow, before the church and her officers, before one another. They forgive as they are forgiven, and cannot harden themselves, but weep for those who cannot weep for themselves.
- D. Their spirits become contrite: This means of the dust. The hard heart is not only broken, but ground to powder, to dust. Man is but dust anyway. In his pride and arrogance and hardness of heart, he forgets that he is dust.
 1. Ge 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:
 2. Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.
 3. Everything about man is dust and ashes, until He is quickened by faith in the promises. What is there in Man: his righteousness is dust before the Lord; his wisdom; his words; his religion and his works are scattered before the Lord and nothing will remain. Only his heart is hardened and his brow hard before the Lord as he sits in his pride.
 4. Until the Lord draws nigh: As Job put it after God drew near to him: "Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.
 5. The Apostle Paul put it this way: Romans 10:5-13
 "5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) [Oh the pride and arrogance]

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 ¶ For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Ro 10:5-13) [The call and cry of one who is fleeing for refuge, whose heart is broken and spirit is contrite, as dust crying to the Creator: have mercy upon me for the sake of your dear Son. Amen.

May God bless you. Amen and Amen