

WEAK PEOPLE BUT A GREAT GOD

(Sermon Summary)

Sunday Evening, 24th July 2022

Chris Hand

Reading: Psalm 70.

This short Psalm is a Psalm of David. As so often, he is surrounded by enemies who seek his life (v2) and who treat him with arrogance and contempt (v3). David prays (vv2-3) to see his enemies unsettled and troubled. He prays that the Lord's people will rejoice (v4). In this respect this Psalm very much parallels Psalm 40: 13-17.

1. Self reflection.

In verse 5, as in Psalm 40: 16-17, he reflects on his neediness. Despite the great knowledge that he has of God he still feels a great need. This is his assessment of himself. It is an assessment of what we amount to viewed from the perspective of what we have by way of native resources. Sometimes we are reluctant to look inside ourselves for fear of what we will find. We are often afraid that we are not real Christians. There is often an inner struggle taking place in the depths of our soul to gain assurance.

We are made weak because sin still dwells in us. It is a master of disguises and can actually hide under the guise of being a virtue. Romans 7: 14-20 is the stark and sobering estimate of what we are, compared to the law of God, in our own nature, even as Christians. But Romans 8:2 takes us to the help of the Spirit, whose help now is greater than was known by Old Testament saints. We are to remember what we are (Psalm 103: 13-14). This is not to be the thought we hold all the time about ourselves but has always to be seen in the context of grace. But we need to keep in touch with this reality and not sail along or be too busy to ponder what we are. At times we realize that we are 'running on empty' and have picked up bad habits and ways of thinking without knowing it fully. Sometimes, as in Revelation 3: 17-18, there is an inner monologue taking place that we have not caught up with but which the Lord exposes in us.

So when our inner spiritual dearth is uncovered, we are able to reckon on it and pray accordingly. We might have been very busy but we have missed out what was

happening in our hearts. Perhaps we have been too self-reliant. We have been using our own resources to 'get through' but we can do this no more as we are shown our inner neediness.

2. Urgent prayer.

Awareness of our inner lack should then lead us on to urgent prayer (v1). We need help. We need deliverance. In fact, becoming more aware of ourselves, we become more aware of others, and vice versa. We are aware of enemies (Seen Psalm 71: 4, 10 and 13). We understand how much we are opposed and recognize that same opposition within our own hearts. We see the same issues and problems in others as are in our own souls. We need God to work in ourselves as well as in other people. We need Him to deliver us or else we will burn out or lapse into depression. We feel the life within ebbing away and cry out urgently for help. We desire for others who oppose the Lord that they will realize the shame that awaits them and for them to back from their arrogant 'Aha'. We wish for people to use the windows of opportunity the Lord graciously gives to people, to learn and repent. We care deeply that people are not listening to the truth of the gospel, they are missing the best that they can ever have, and that it will have eternal consequences.

3. A prayer for spiritual joy.

In verse 4, David prays out of his confidence in the Lord that people would be encouraged in the Lord and that the cause of His kingdom would prosper.

Rejoicing is something that is vital but is often missing from our lives. We speak about it but do not experience it. It comes when we see the evidences of God's mercy and His powerful interventions. This is very satisfying to the soul. Out of this arises singing which is itself a sign of confidence in the Lord.

By singing we are saying that He is worth singing about. Our singing also encourages others. It is a sign of life. It shows that there are people who are alive and that faith in God is alive. Our singing is also a desire that the Lord should be honoured, obeyed and loved. We are communicating that we want Him to count more than our small lives, our comforts and our earthly hopes