

A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCE

(Sermon Summary)

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Sunday evening: 7th August 2022

Reading: Psalm 71:14-24

In the Psalms, the Psalmist is not crying out to an unknown God. He is crying out to one with whom he has an established relationship. His trust in the Lord comes out of his already established relationship and the trust that has built up through time. God is known to him and the interaction he has had with Him gives him hope for the future. As we have already seen, David wrote this in his old age.

1. Fears and duties in old age.

David expresses a fear that he will be cast off (v9) and forsaken (v18). Old age is a time of increased weakness, slowness, vulnerability, and frailty. The mind gets slower, and we might find ourselves on our own more and more. We might have lost loved ones, family members and friends. Sometimes, as in David's case, we might be alienated from some of our children. We begin to fear that the Lord might remove Himself from us as well and leave us even more on our own. We are aware of our need and vulnerability, and the fear that the Lord might abandon us can be a real and potent one. Our minds can play tricks on us, and our thinking is not as clear as it once was, and we are liable to weakness of judgment.

We are right to be concerned about our relationship with the Lord and not to take it for granted. We should express our appreciation to the Lord more often and realize that we would be nowhere without Him. Yet in all, we are to be reminded that the Lord is with us and will not abandon us. He will remain faithful and supportive (v17). David had been taught this and seen much of it through his life (v20). God had done great things for him (v19) so that David had a lifetime of experience to reflect upon. He had experienced the righteousness and uprightness of God. He had known the Lord's faithfulness and how He had stayed true to His promise. He knew God to be very high (v19) and had experienced that personally.

His duty in old age was to relate this experience to the young (v18). He was to speak of the Lord's power and strength in bringing him through life. This was so as to encourage those who had less experience of the Lord's work in their lives. They too should trust Him and then would make the same discoveries about Him.

2. A resolve to praise.

David expresses again and again his resolve to praise God. (v14, v15, v16, v22, v23 and v24). His praise will involve speaking (v15, v16 and v24) and singing (v14, vv22-23). It is a distinctive aspect of sung praise that it involves the whole being. It is a deeper expression of the soul.

What is to be expressed? One thing to be sung about are the attributes of God. David sings about the uprightness and righteousness of God (v15, v19 and v24). All His dealings are marked by uprightness. God is loyal, true to His promise and full of integrity. This had been David's experience of His dealings with him and with the people. In this regard, the Lord is unlike any other (v19).

Another aspect of the Lord's character that David sings about is the faithfulness of the Lord (v22; See also Psalm 89:2; 92:2; and 145:7). Once again, we see that the Lord always keeps His promises to His people. He keeps His covenant promises and so is unlike any other.

He is also to be praised for the salvation that He brings (v15). He has redeemed His people (v23), rescuing them from slavery and bringing them back from imprisonment. He revives (v20) and comforts (v21). He acts beyond anything that obliges Him to act like this. We remember who He is and the difference that has made to us, and so we praise Him. The more we know about Him, the more we praise Him (v14). The greater our experience of Him, the more we will praise Him. Our rejoicing is heartfelt (v23) and is a reflection of the truth in us.

3. An expectation of justice.

Our experience of His forgiveness reminds us that there will be justice. It is not a personal experience private to us about the justice of God and the need for repentance that we received at conversion. It arises out of the very character and reality of God. If we saw our need of salvation, then there is a definite need for people to be saved from their sins, otherwise they will perish under His wrath. If we saw that judgment was something real, then other people need to see it too. Otherwise, they will be confounded, ashamed and confused (v13, v24 and Psalm 70: 2-3). If there is no judgment, then why did God send His Son to die on the cross? If we will not receive the offer of forgiveness through the blood of Christ, then we must expect justice to come.

The cross is a sign of God's curse on sin. It is a sign of His judgment of sin. If we will not believe in what the Lord has given us through His Son dying on the cross, then there is only an expectation of judgment to come. If the cross is not believed and received, then there will be shame and confusion for those who have not believed.