

PSALM 4

1 (To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David.) Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

Note first, this is another Psalm of David. He states as fact that his God has enlarged him. In another Psalm, David says **(h)e brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.** (Psalm 18:19). Before this enlargement can occur, the God of David's righteousness must hear his call. And before that can happen, David must call. **Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.** (Jeremiah 33:3). We are obliged to call on Almighty God, early and often; great things happen.

But back to this enlargement David pines for. The idea includes at least this: God makes room for his people; no matter what all is going on in the universe, there's room for deliverance from straits and troubles. There's plenty of space for that work to be done. When David had been pressed and confined in earlier times, often involving being pursued by Saul, and David saw no avenue of escape, God intervened and gave him room. *Past favor is a ground of hope for the future.* (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown). Great line; love it; live it!

2 O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.*

Most believe this "sons of men" phrase suggests David is primarily addressing men of high degree, such as princes, potentates and rulers. That may be, but considering that the greater includes the lesser, let's go with the language and recognize all of mankind is here addressed. **Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: Both low and high, rich and poor, together.** (Psalm 49:1,

2). In any event, **(s)urely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.** (Psalm 62:9).

The message to this audience is “how long shall my glory be for a shame?” How many years; how many decades; how many centuries will you jeer and scoff at Christ and his people? How long will you reproach his gospel and his ministers? How long will you deny the sonship of Christ, mocking him and spitting on him and crucifying him afresh? There is, after all, an end to all this!

And while we’re at it, how long will you love vanity and seek after a lifestyle of lying. Is your mouth moving? If so, you’re lying! **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.** (John 8:44). *You are yourselves vain, and desire and pursue vain things, and you love to be and do so. You set your hearts upon that which will prove, at last, vanity and a lie. They that love the world and seek the things that are beneath, that please themselves with the delights of sense, and choose for their portion the wealth of this world, love vanity, and seek lies, for these things will deceive and so ruin them. How long will you do this?* (Benson).

3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

The Lord’s people are “set apart”; they are distinguished and honored by God’s merciful action. They are severed from the rest of mankind. **And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell[.]** (Exodus 8:22). The same concept appears in Exodus 11:7: **But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.**

The classical New Testament passage that addresses this concept is found at 1 Peter 2:9: **But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you**

out of darkness into his marvelous light. This status the people of God possess is due in no part to them; it is all a gift from a gracious God. David here is presented as a sample of that distinguished standing; through no inherent worth of his own, he was chosen and advanced to be the king of Israel. So we read from Dr. Gill: *[w]hich may be understood of David himself, an holy good man; a man after God's own heart; whom the Lord chose, and in a marvellous manner separated from the rest of his brethren; took him from the sheepfold, and set him upon the throne of Israel, for the glory of his great name; and therefore the attempts of his enemies against him would be without success[.]* But the concept holds true for all of God's jewels who, by their divine election, are set apart and separated from the rest.

The verse closes with the reminder that the cries of such people will be heard by God who will preserve them from danger and deliver them out of the hands of all their enemies.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

Looking at the context, the meaning seems to be this: Are you trembling from anger because of my special status with God? Are you displeased that God has preferred me, an obscure and worthless person, and of a mean family, before so many noble and mighty men? These are rhetorical queries. Yes, you are angry and displeased. But, "sin not" – that is, don't indulge that rage by murmuring against God but suppress and mortify that unadvised and sinful passion, lest it break out to your destruction.

Here is the wise course: In the silent night, while on your bed, away from the day's noises and challenges of distracting cares and business, calmly and deeply consider what God has done with this great work of salvation. Be still; compose your tumultuous mind and hold down your disorderly affections and passions. **Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil.** (Ephesians 4:26, 27).

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

The only sacrifices acceptable to God are those from persons who are sincere and acting with an honest mind, with faith. Without that, sacrifices are of no esteem with God, and are unprofitable. This is true both in Old and New Testament times. From the Old Testament, we read in Joshua 24:14 for example: **Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.**

And turning to the New Testament, we see these samples, first from the gospels: **God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.** (John 4:24). And then from the epistles: **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** (1 Corinthians 5:8). **For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.** (2 Corinthians 1:12).

An additional thought conveyed here is that one should offer for sacrifice *things righteously gotten, for the Lord hates robbery for burnt offering* (Gill), citing Isaiah 61:8 – **For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.**

Put “your trust in the Lord” is a bedrock principle for any true Christian; it is the subject of countless verses and hymns. Don’t rely on your strength or the power and influence of any human, all of which is transitory at best. Benson, though, offers thoughts that take this passage a bit farther: *Dr. Horne, who thinks this Psalm looks forward to gospel days, interprets this verse in the following manner: “The Jews are no longer to offer the shadowy sacrifices of their law, since He who is the substance of them all is come into the world. The Gentiles are no more to offer their idolatrous sacrifices, since their idols have fallen before the cross. But returning sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, are to offer the same sacrifices of evangelical righteousness; not putting their trust in them, but in the Lord Jesus,*

through whose Spirit they are enabled to offer, and through whose blood their offerings are acceptable unto God.”

6 *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

The meaning of the opening of this verse is this: Who will show us good? Where is happiness to be found? In what does it consist? How is it to be obtained? What will contribute to it? The answer is not from fame, honor, wealth, sensual pleasure, literature, or diverse social enjoyments.

The verse carries the answer. The Lord must lift up the light of his countenance upon you for true and eternal happiness. This phrase appears often in Scripture and is expressive of friendship and favor. **The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.** (Numbers 6:24-26). **For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.** (Psalm 44:3).

If you abide in the friendship and favor of the eternal God, the maker of all things seen and unseen, the guarantor of your happiness both now and forever, you have been shown true goodness. You want good; here's good! **For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.** (Philippians 3:20, 21). God is going to change the humiliation and degradation of our fleshly bodies to be conformed to the body of His glory.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (1 John 3:2, 3). You want good ~ that's good! You want happiness -

that's happiness! We shall be like him, and we dare not limit or in any way restrict that precious promise. We shall be like him spiritually, physically, mentally and morally, and more. We get a flavor of what our bodies will be like from the transfiguration story, found in Matthew 17:

1And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

4Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (Emphasis added)

“It is good for us to be here” well expresses the contentment and joy of those who wait on the Lord and will forever be with the Lord. How can you improve on that?

7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.

In a word, Christ in the heart is better than corn in the barn or wine in the vat. If our savior makes you happy, that is genuine happiness, and surpasses what worldly persons have in the time of a plentiful harvest, which is a time of great rejoicing. **And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grapes, and made merry, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech.** (Judges 9:27). **Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.** (Isaiah 9:3).

This is compare and contrast time. Again, I say, happiness, joy and gladness in Christ is better than the best of temporal good times. The mirth of carnal and worldly people is only a flash, a shadow. **There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.** (Proverbs 14:12, 13).

8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Laying down in peace suggests a tranquility of mind, resting securely on the promises of God and his wise and gracious providence. Such relaxation, calm, quiet and serenity comes not from our own wisdom or physical strength, nor the aid of friends or cohorts, but only from God our father. For, as the text says, thou Lord ONLY makes us dwell in safety.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep - The word "both" here means "at the same time;" that is, I will alike be in peace, and I will lie down and will sleep; I will have a mind at peace (or, in tranquility) when I lie down, and will sleep calmly. This is said in view of his confidence in God, and of his belief that God would preserve him. He had put his trust in him; he had sought his happiness in him, and now he felt assured that he had nothing to fear, and, at peace with God, he would lie down and compose himself to rest. (Barnes).

We get an idea of that tremendous peace from Simeon's reaction once he had, at long last, laid eyes on the baby Jesus: **Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation[.]** (Luke 2:28-30). May we be blessed with such a peace!

Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. (Acts 28:31).

The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The Redeemer's Return / Arthur Pink

Some fifty to sixty years after his ascension to the right hand of God, Christ sent his angel to the beloved John on the Isle of Patmos saying “Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22:20). * * * [Objectors say] that the Lord Jesus here made a mistake. He declared that he was coming quickly and more than (nineteen) centuries have passed since then and yet he has not returned!

The explanation of this supposed difficulty is very simple. When the Lord Jesus said, “Surely I come quickly,” he spoke from Heaven, and Heaven’s measurement of time is very different than earth’s. Never once while he was here upon earth did the Savior say or even hint that he would return “quickly.” On the contrary he gave plain intimation that after his departure a lengthy interval would have to pass ere he came back again. In the Parable of the Nobleman he spoke of himself as one taking a journey into “a far country” (Luke 19:12). On another occasion he represented an evil servant saying, during the time of his absence, “My Lord delayeth his coming” (Matthew 24:48). While in the Parable of the Talents he openly declared that “After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them” (Matthew 25:19). What we would here press upon the attention of our readers is that each of these utterances were made by our Lord during the time when he was still upon earth and therefore they must be considered from earth’s viewpoint, but when the Lord Jesus said “Surely I come quickly” he spoke from Heaven and concerning heaven’s measurement of time we need to bear in mind that word “Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. 3:8). In the light of the last quoted Scripture it is easy to understand Revelation 22:20 - if our Lord returns before the present century terminates he will have been away but two days!

“Surely I come quickly.” These are the words of our ascended Lord. This is his promise sent from the very Throne of Heaven. This is his final word to his people before they hear his “shout” [1 Thessalonians 4:16] calling them to be with himself. This, then, is the warrant, the ground, the authorization of our Hope.