

April 21

Scriptures: Read Psalms 11-14

Key Verse: “But I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in “Your salvation.”
(Psalm 13:5)

Overview

In Psalm 11, David tells of a time when he found himself in the midst of severe adversity. Some well-meaning friends gave him advice, but he knew better than to listen to them. Their advice was that he take the easy way out and flee to the mountains where he would be safe, since there are many places to hide (11:1b). David, however, chose the way of faith rather than expedience. He knew he should not run from his problems, for that showed a lack of faith in God to see him through. Running away would also displease God, for in such a way David would have failed the test of faith (11:5a). Righteousness and faith are like a foundation, and if it is destroyed, David asks, “What can the righteous do?” He had already given the answer: “In the Lord I put my trust” (11:1a).

Adversity that tests one’s faith can be expected in the life of a believer, but God is in control of every situation. It is our job to trust in Him and thus build our faith. God is a watchful King, having all authority and power. He sees all that mankind does, and He is active in the affairs of man. For those who are righteous, He graciously works in their lives to increase their faith, but the wrath of God is the portion for the wicked (11:5-6).

Once again, in Psalm 12, David is distressed; this time it is because of the lack of godly men around him and the corruption of his society. He has noticed that the people “speak idly everyone with his neighbor” (12:2), which is unprofitable talk, such as gossip, lying, and flattery. It has been said that flattery is merely treachery in disguise. It is spoken by one with “a double heart” (12:2), namely a hypocrite — one who believes one thing in his heart but speaks another with his mouth. God will not tolerate a person like this, and it is vain for them to think they can get away with such perverse talk (12:3-4). In sharp contrast, we read that “the words of the Lord are pure words”; they have been purified to perfection (seven times), and the believer should meditate upon them (see Phil. 4:8-9). God’s Word is the word of truth which will last forever, and no perverse generation, from the time of David until today, has been able to destroy it. The truth of the gospel message has reached to every generation, for God has preserved His Word in the Holy Bible.

Again in Psalm 13, the psalmist begins with a distressful situation, but after contemplating God’s goodness, he ends on a note of triumph. The historical situation behind this psalm was likely when David was in a long period of exile and hiding as a fugitive from Saul, who sought to kill him. David knew that God had chosen him to be king, but while wearily running and hiding amongst the caves in the wilderness, he began to feel that God had forgotten him. Four times in his prayer he asked God, “how long?” Obviously, David was getting impatient. He prayed, “enlighten my eyes” (13:3), and in this context it is a prayer for added strength to keep on going and not give up, lest his enemy find and kill him. It appears in the ending of the Psalm that God answered his prayer. David did receive new-found strength which came by remembering God’s

mercy and goodness. When he considered all the ways God had blessed him, he realized that he had no reason to complain, and because he trusted in the Lord, he could be assured of salvation, which in turn put a joyful song in his heart.

The words of the psalmist in Psalm 14 teach of the universal depravity of man (cf. Eph. 2:1-3; Ps. 51:5). The best example for man's depravity is the fool ("ignorant") who believes there is no God (a practical atheist). Since he believes he will not have to account for his actions, he does whatever he pleases and follows no moral code. He is utterly corrupt and perverse (14:1). Notice how the Bible does not try to prove the existence of God nor does it speculate, for His existence is a reality and the truth.

After surveying the whole world, there would not be one person found whom God could call morally good (14:2; cf. Romans 3:9-12). This has been the case ever since the fall of man. The psalmist longed "that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion" to bring back the captivity of His people, or in other words bring restoration (14:7). This longing was realized in the coming of Jesus the Messiah. His redemption brings restoration and gladness to the people of God.

Prayer

We magnify Your holy name, oh Lord, as we consider all You've done for us. Your eternal plan of salvation through Jesus has allowed a depraved race to once again have access into Your holy presence and have that fellowship with You for which every human inherently longs.