

BELOVED SISTERS AND BRETHREN

Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

This psalm is attributed to David of whose life we have much recorded.

That the expressions here are from a righteous man is obvious by the context that he is most anxious not to offend. He understands that this is not easy and pleads to God for help as he strives for perfection in the eyes of God. We know that he was tempted in his endeavours to escape from Saul who was intent on killing him and even had opportunity. Saul whilst pursuing David had taken rest in a cave. His men urged David to kill him saying that God had delivered his enemy into his hands –Sam 24/4- David cut off the skirt of his robe whilst he was asleep. But even after his heart smote him.

David discerned the right from wrong even though his men urged him to kill Saul and he resisted the temptation

Psa 141:3-4 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips, but especially in this case. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity.

There are other occasions in David's life when our study verse was relevant: his sin with Bathsheba where the prophet Nathan was sent to show him his sin. Nathan was indeed a righteous man and the way the truth was brought home to David gently, but the striking scenario made David angry at the man in the story and said he should restore fourfold; than Nathan said, "Thou art the man." Here was the strike from the righteous. His sin was enumerated and there were to be consequences for the rest of his life

The reproof did not feel like excellent oil upon his head at the time but it brought home the message. It was soothing and calming. It was as the oil of the lamp and it illumined his way before God. No doubt he learned humility from it

On behalf of God **Nathan** enumerates all that He has done for David and points out that it was God Himself who had delivered him out of the hands of Saul. On David's part it was that inner voice telling him that Saul was God's anointed. What a wonderful message that God, where our heart is right, forgives our ways and keeps our feet from falling.

We may also think of Abigail where she intervened to save David from avenging his wrath upon Nabal in 1Samuel 25. Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *pertained* unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good. And with that he spoke of his intention to kill Nabal and all his men who were innocent. So Abigail hasted and went with a present to David.

1Sa 25:23-25 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

Abigail continues and with all humility says that God Himself had prevented David from avenging himself and subsequently feeling guilt. Her words were indeed as gentle oil upon his head. Again the assurance of the hand of God with him

But what of v6 where there seems to be a switch to the nation of Israel and its enemies? Here are prophetic words and the Psalmist was indeed inspired as many Psalms show. Many of the Psalms express the

experiences and thoughts of the Greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus, and it is of great value to take this view:-

LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Psa. 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Jesus was to be that sacrifice and we know He often went apart to pray especially into a mountain. Thus being righteous His prayer rose to His Father as sweet smelling savour-incense.

Pro 6:20-22 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

Pro 15:3-5 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

Pro 19:25 Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

Pro 25:11-13 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear. As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

Pro 27:5-6 Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Next we see Paul as an example holding up The Truth:

Gal 2:11-14 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him;

insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Also he was confronted daily with the leaders of the people vs 8-10 and he foresaw the downfall and scattering of the people v7 and the prophetic telling of the time of the end when Israel will look on Him whom they pierced and mourn

But what of v5 of Psalm 141 for we never read of Jesus' need for reproof and He had this testimony:

1Pe 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Jas 5:13-16 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Rev 3:14-19 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

And of Jesus we can truly say His prayer:

Ps141:3 *Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.*

His appeal here was directly to His Father in heaven

If we look back at His temptations in the mount: Matt 4 and Luke 4 we see every evil thought was repelled with “it is written”, thus for Him the righteous man was that side of Him that resisted evil, the conquering of sinful thoughts at their outset. This gave that self-satisfaction as of an excellent oil upon the head and the relief that victory brings.

In His short life upon the earth He was constantly tested by the Pharisees and Sadducees, the ruling classes in Israel which emerged about one hundred years before His birth, and, as Paul says, the Pharisees claimed Mosaic authority for their interpretation of Mosaic Law and the Sadducees believed there is no resurrection. It was against these false teachers that Jesus had to contend and who were always trying to catch Him in His words and the plea of verse 3 would have been His constant prayer. And Psalm 73 shows the trials that He endured and how He overcame.

Even Peter’s expression of personal care for Jesus had to be harshly rebuked so that His feet did not slip

With regard to Peter we know also that for a short time he went astray in the matter of circumcision in Gal 2 where Paul says he withstood him to his face. At that time others also went astray so Paul did a good work in bringing them back. These were difficult times when false brethren were brought in unawares. So we must always be vigilant to separate from such and no not so much as to eat at the Lord's Table with them.

Brotherly love to all in the Fellowship
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