

# **“Who Will Shew Us Any Good?”**

## **Psalm 4**

(I could not verify the accuracy of this illustration, but I have no reason to believe it didn't take place.)

When the Wasp, one of America's great naval vessels in World War II, caught fire and began to sink, the sailors were ordered to abandon ship and swim away from the vessel immediately. They jumped overboard, but instead of trusting their well-tested life jackets for safety many clung to the sides of the ship. When the vessel plunged beneath the surface, these sailors were sucked down with it.

We as Christians make similar blunders in our relationship with Jesus. We tend to forget His instructions. Then when trials come, instead of relying on His promises we cling to false securities as those frightened sailors did. Or we look at our frightening circumstances and push the panic button.

As this illustration points out, and as this psalm will bring out, in what (or whom) are we putting our trust? Something, or Someone, who has been proven, or are we going to try and go it alone?

This life has too many problems to try and get along without God, and His help. There is too much the enemy can do to keep us from the “good” that God has planned for us. If we try to go through life as a Christian without the help of our Lord, we will falter.

The psalmist here (David, as is stated in the introduction to this psalm) is pointing out that there were many that were saying to him (perhaps his friends that were with him when he was on the run either from Saul or from Absalom, connecting this

psalm with the previous one; or those that were oppressed by the “sons of men” in verse two) that they were running out of hope. They had tried to live right and follow the righteous path but there didn’t seem to be “any good” from it. The Holy Spirit is found moving David to write a simple psalm demonstrating in whom that hope, that help, that good, will be found; what to do to attain it; and what it will produce.

## **I. THE PERSON WHO CAN HELP – VS. 1**

### **“GOD OF MY RIGHTEOUSNESS”**

***A. This is the only time in Scripture that this title is used for God.***

***B. Spurgeon wrote on this title: “It means, Thou art the author, the witness, the maintainer, the judge, and the rewarder of my righteousness...”***

***C. The Psalmist recognizes that this God of his righteousness has proven Himself to be there when needed before, and He is calling on Him to repeat that pattern again – seen in the text: “thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.”***

1. The word for “enlarged” – רָחַב – means to make room, gain living space or territory. As it relates to prayer, “it is used of giving a person space, relief in a time of danger” (Zodhiates).
2. God will “enlarge” our capacity to deal with trials and troubles as needed. He does this when we are in “distress” – same Hebrew

word as the word “trouble” in Psalm 3:1 (meaning to be closed in, to be in a tight spot).

### 2 Corinthians 12:7–10

<sup>7</sup> And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

<sup>8</sup> For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

<sup>9</sup> And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

<sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Spurgeon once said, “Prayer pulls the rope down below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give only an occasional jerk at the rope. But he who communicates with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might.”

## II. THE PATH TO TAKE FOR THE HELP – VS. 2-5

***A. The Psalmist begins an address to the “sons of men” that were plaguing him (vs. 2). These were not just ordinary men but is a term referring to “the aristocratic party” (K&D), most likely those nobles that were with Absalom.***

***Regardless of who these "sons of men" were, the term is speaking of those that had power and prestige over others that had the intent of doing the children of God harm, or at the very least, leading them away from the God they served.***

***B. The "path" that needs to be taken to find the help, or the good, that man is so desperate for is seen in the negative in verse two, and in the positive steps needed in vs. 3-5.***

1. Vs. 2a – Be careful not to let pride rule us (seen in building ourselves up by bringing shame on others – spreading lies about them; pointing out their flaws just to make ourselves look good; etc.).

a) "How long will you turn my glory into shame" – speaking of the enemies of David, most likely. As David did, we face attacks by the enemies of the cross of Christ simply for following the God of our righteousness.

b) "[W]icked men do as much as in them lies to turn the glory of the saints into shame, by aspersing their character, taking away their good name and reputation among men; by reproaching and reviling them, and speaking all manner of evil of them; and by persecuting them in the most violent manner... (Gill)

2. Vs. 2b – Along with pride comes a love for vanity and seeking fame through "leasing" – using falsehood to advance a cause. If we intend to find the help, the good, that we will need, or help others find it, we are

certainly going to have to hate vanity and hate the mindset of getting ahead at any cost (leasing).

3. Vs. 3 – Positively speaking, we need to know that we have been set apart (פלה – to be different from the world) unto God – this is the definition of holiness. The promise to the condition of being set apart for the Lord's use is that our prayers will be answered.

1 Peter 2:9

<sup>9</sup> But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

4. Vs. 4 – This verse goes back to verse two and the “sons of men,” and takes up the address to them. What is said to them is of equal value for us if we are going to benefit from the good that God is waiting to do for us.
- a) “Stand in awe” – of who God is and what He can do, knowing what He's done in the past.
  - b) “And sin not” – if we keep ever before us who God is and stand in awe of Him, we are going to be far less likely to sin.
  - c) “Commune with your heart upon your bed, and be still (דָּמָם – literally, to be dumb, or silent – hold your peace and be still).” The word for “commune” (אָמַר) is one that means to speak. “Speak with your own heart while alone in bed” – this goes back

to the “stand in awe” command. A very good place to contemplate, to meditate on who God is is when in you are alone with your thoughts, and that is easiest to do when you go to bed.

#### Psalm 63:6

<sup>6</sup> When I remember thee upon my bed,  
and meditate on thee in the night  
watches.

5. Vs. 5 – The enemies of the psalmist (the “sons of men”) were counseled to “sin not,” as we today, as God’s children, are given the same command. Once that principle is understood and followed, then there is the ability to follow this command – “offer the sacrifices of righteousness...”

Matthew Henry says this of that phrase: The sacrifices of righteousness are “good works, all the fruits of the reigning love of God and our neighbour, and all the instances of a religious conversation, which are better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices.”

#### Hebrews 13:15–16

<sup>15</sup> By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

<sup>16</sup> But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The final part of this path is simple trust in the LORD. We won’t be very inclined to do that if we aren’t following the other steps first.

Psalm 37:3

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Psalm 62:8

<sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Isaiah 26:3

<sup>3</sup> Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

### III. THE PRODUCT THE HELP SUPPLIES – VS. 6-7

**A. Vs. 6 – “LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us” – one of the benefits of the Lord’s help is His presence.**

Psalm 89:15

<sup>15</sup> Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

Psalm 119:135

<sup>135</sup> Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.

**B. Vs. 7 – “Gladness in my heart” – the other benefit is this one – more gladness from His presence than all the success of the world.**

Proverbs 15:16

<sup>16</sup> Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

Proverbs 16:8

<sup>8</sup> Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

Romans 8:18

<sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

#### **IV. THE PEACE THAT THE HELP BRINGS – VS. 8**

Simply put, it's a peace that is so sweet that we can sleep safely and soundly at night, with nothing on our mind to cause us to be fearful or anxious.

Philippians 4:6

<sup>6</sup> Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

**Conclusion:** God wants to help His children – we must be willing to follow Him and His word if we are going to benefit fully from the goodness He provides.

Several years ago a submarine was being tested and had to remain submerged for many hours. When it returned to the harbor, the captain was asked, "How did the terrible storm last night affect you?" The officer looked at him in surprise and exclaimed, "Storm? We didn't even know there was one!" The sub had been so far beneath the surface that it had reached the area known to sailors as "the cushion of the sea." Although the ocean may be whipped into huge waves by high winds, the waters below are never stirred.

The Christian's mind will be protected against the distracting waves of worry if it is resting completely in the good providence



of God. There, sheltered by His grace and encouraged by His Holy Spirit, the believer can find the perfect tranquility that only Christ can provide.