

"Raise Me Up"

Psalm 41

When we began our study of the book of Psalms almost a year ago now, I made some preliminary observations that I would like to present again as a refresher as we come to the end of what is known as the First Book of Psalms.

The book of Psalms is divided into five separate books as they were historically assembled (most likely by Ezra the scribe). The reason for this is unknown, although many believe it was to emulate the five books of Moses (the Torah). The divisions are book one: 1-41; book two: 42-72; book three: 73-89; book four: 90-106; and book five: 107-150. They are not divided by authorship or chronology so, outside of some very speculative rendering, the simple answer for purpose of the divisions is that of methodical reading, coupled with the methodical reading of the Torah.

Each of the five books ends with a doxology of praise to God that gives a clear indication of the division. The fifth book lacks this doxology, but then the whole of the Psalm is that of praise so it wouldn't need to be added.

Psalm 41:13

¹³ Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Psalm 72:19

¹⁹ And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen.

Psalm 89:52

⁵² Blessed *be* the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

Psalm 106:48

⁴⁸ Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the

LORD.

Psalm 150:6

⁶ Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

The first two Psalms are “usually considered to be a prologue to the Book of Psalms as a whole and not part of the collection that constitutes the first book of Psalms (Alter).

As we come to this psalm, we find some familiar terms for the Lord and the psalmist plea for mercy and help in time of need. We also find truths for believers today that are just as valid and necessary as they were 3,000 years ago when the psalm was first penned.

As is the case with many of the psalms, the occasion is unknown. Much speculation has been given as to the occasion, but none can be definitively stated. Considering the Messianic portion found primarily in verse nine (9) - “Yea, mine own familiar friend...” - if I were to choose an occasion, I would put this during Absalom’s rebellion (2 Sam. 15-17) when Ahithophel, David’s trusted counselor, betrays him by siding with Absalom during the rebellion. Ahithophel later dies by suicide (he hung himself - 2 Sam. 17:23), just as Judas Iscariot does after betraying Jesus, which is why John 13:18 quotes this verse as a prophecy of that betrayal.

David’s request in asking for God’s mercy is that He “raise him up” so that he could see victory after the attack by his enemies and betrayal by his friend. Although this is a real-life experience for which David was seeking deliverance and justification for his Divine appointment (“requite them”), it’s also pointing forward to the resurrection of Christ, where Jesus would be “raised up” to bring justification for His Divinity and to show forgiveness and mercy to those that condemned and crucified Him.

When we study this psalm, we will view it in relation to

David, not just as a Messianic Psalm, and we will see how he struggled with his weaknesses as he demonstrated the mercy of God to others in his compassion.

I. THE BLESSINGS ON THE COMPASSIONATE – VS. 1-3

The first three verses use Hebrew parallelism in a unique way.

A. Verse 1 is synthetic parallelism – the second line builds and expands on the first.

Line one: “Blessed is he that considereth the poor.”

Line two: “The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.”

1. The compassionate person is **blessed**.

The word “considereth” (מַשְׁכִּיל) in this context is to be seen as one being compassionate, considering the plight of the poor and acting upon that emotion, not just recognizing it and giving lip service to it without doing anything about it.

James 2:15-16

¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

- The “poor” (דל) in this context isn’t just speaking of those economically needy but it also symbolizes the weak, oppressed, or afflicted.
- Interestingly, David is seen as both the one who considers the poor and finds himself as one of them, experiencing a seeming role

reversal of sorts.

2. The LORD will **deliver** that person.

B. Verse 2 consists of three lines of synthetic parallelism, showing progressive and rising thought.

"The LORD will preserve him" - **Divine care** - protection and life from the Lord.

"And keep him alive" - **public blessing** - others recognize God's favor.

"And thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies" - **deliverance** from enemy power.

C. Verse 3 is synonymous parallelism, the second line restating and supporting the first.

"The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing"

"Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness"

1. "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed" is synonymous with "Thou will make all his bed."

2. "Of languishing" is synonymous with "in his sickness."

The picture is that the Lord will bless the psalmist even when he is sick because of his care and compassion for others.

II. THE BURDENS ON THE CHASTENED - VS. 4-9

Verse 1 sets a general principle (although there will be exceptions to the rule); God blesses and delivers the person who considers the poor - acts wisely toward the weak or pays attention to the helpless.

In verses 4-9, David identifies himself as that weak or

needy one.

A. He's afflicted physically - as we've seen before, he attributes this to the Lord's chastening for sin - vs. 4.

1. "I said" - connects with the previous verse, showing David is the one sick in bed.
2. "LORD...I have sinned against thee" - he acknowledges that his sin isn't against anyone but the Lord.

This is true of our sin today. You don't sin against another person - every sin we commit is against the holiness of God and is a betrayal of the price He paid for our sins.

3. "Heal my soul" - רפא נפשי - not just heal his body but **the whole being**, inward and outward. The idea of the Hebrew here isn't speaking of an immaterial soul but to the whole inner life: heart, emotions, desire, self. It can include **emotional turmoil, guilt from sin, spiritual brokenness, moral failure, and even physical life itself.**

B. He's surrounded by enemies that wish him dead - vs. 5-8.

1. These verses speak for themselves. We may think those we consider our friends (speaking of the unbelieving ones) will always have our best interest at heart, and they may, but the fact that they are under the bondage of sin and Satan, they, as Judas Iscariot did to Jesus, **can turn on us** in our time of distress, and that betrayal of friendship **can hurt far worse** than the pain of the suffering we are enduring.

2. As verse 8 points out, his enemies were rejoicing that he was sick, they thought unto death, and they used the phrase, "he shall rise up no more." As pointed out earlier, using **verse 10 as a prophecy of the resurrection**, we can see **verse 8 as a prophecy of the death and burial** of the Messiah.

C. He's betrayed by a close friend - vs. 9.

As stated already, this verse is clearly Messianic because it is quoted in the Gospels by Jesus, making the connection to Himself. There is content throughout this psalm that can be applied to the suffering and betrayal of Christ, but it is not all applicable to Him. This is true of most of the Messianic Psalms - something we saw last week in our study of Psalm 40.

John 13:13-18

¹³ Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. ¹⁷ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. ¹⁸ I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

John 13:21

²¹ When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

III. THE BETTERMENT OF THE CONFIDENT - vs. 10-12

He was confident that the Lord would make his situation better than it was before.

- A. **"But thou, O LORD" - the psalmist confidence was in the Lord that, in His mercy, He would in fact raise him up to be victorious over his enemies.**

To "requite" his enemies, David isn't seeking personal revenge as we would understand the word in English. It reflects **the honor-shame culture** of the ancient Near East and a longing for God **to restore order and righteousness**. He is asking for restoration so that he can deal justly with his enemies.

- B. **Vs. 11 - This confidence was demonstrated in his faith that God would deliver him. The enemy spoken of in verses 4-9 did not triumph over him in seeing him die.**
- C. **Vs. 12 - the reason David had confidence that the Lord would make his situation better is because of his own integrity.**

What a tremendous truth this is!! If believers lived their lives in integrity - **at work, in business, at home, with extended family, at church** - it will go a long way in showing to the world the love of God.

The term used here for "integrity" (תם) has been seen in three previous psalms: Psalm 7:8; 25:21; 26:1. It appears 16 times in the Hebrew Old Testament and its use will teach us that, when applied to our lives, will make us a positive influence on those around us.

1. **Anchor it** - hold on to it - Job 2:3, 9; 27:5.
2. **Analyze it** - make sure it holds up under scrutiny - Job 31:5-6; Psalm 7:8.
3. **It makes us attack-proof** - it will keep us safe when the enemy attacks - Ps. 25:19-22.

4. **Apply it** – our public life must be lived by it – Psalm 26:1, 11; 78:70-72; Prov. 11:3; 19:1; 20:7.
5. **Adhere to it** – we must depend upon God to help us live a life of integrity – vs. 12.

Conclusion: How compassionate are we toward those in need? That's a very fundamental basic question we need to keep in the forefront of our thoughts – from both the Old and New Testaments.

How do we view ourselves when we are chastened by the Lord? The goal, according to Scripture, is to restore fellowship with the Lord. The burden of that chastening, however, can and often does come in varied forms depending on how we respond.

As we put our confidence (trust) in the Lord, we will see our situation getting better, especially in our response to the chastening of the Lord.

Verse 13 is the benediction for the First Book of Psalms – a doxology, if you would, recognizing the greatness of the God of Israel.