

Psalm 89:46-52 Part 6

Read Psalm 89:46-52

We begin this last portion of Psalm 89 where we left off last week. The psalmist concludes his confession of agony with four pleas. The first plea before the LORD is the long continuance apart from His blessing and is seen in asking **'How long, O LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever? Will Your wrath burn like fire?'** At the closing of worship on the LORD'S Day, we often hear that which is the very essence of what it is to be blessed read to us as a benediction. [Numbers 6:24-26 NASB] **24 The LORD bless you, and keep you; 25 The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; 26 The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.'** Remember the purpose of the benediction is that we close our time worshiping corporately by hearing a promise of the LORD GOD to carry or encourage each of us until we meet again. It is a reminder of who GOD is, that which He has done, and is doing through His Providence to save and keep His people. Juxtaposing the great promise of GOD of His blessing, which is to be kept, His Glorious face shining on His people, His Grace towards us, His countenance on us, and His peace - with that which the psalmist expresses here of seemingly being cast off displays why this is not just painful, but the most painful notion, idea, or experience for the believer. The very essence of blessing is Him – it is to have the presence of GOD. [Romans 15:13 NASB] **13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.** So, the opposite of blessing is for the believer to be without or seemingly without His presence which is our Peace and Hope. That is why this is the deepest grief a believer may know. I want to reiterate that we should not conclude that we are without our LORD's presence when we are in difficult trials. We must see difficulty in the light of His perfect purpose. For the believer, suffering is not that we be destroyed, but that we are disciplined, either in correction or refining us toward a deeper holiness and joy in Him.

The next plea before the LORD is the vanity of life expressed in two ways, one, the shortness of life and secondly, the certainty of death. The Word of GOD mercifully reminds us how short our time is and the deadly folly of that short span being wasted on that which is not eternal. In the Letter of James, the bond servant of GOD and the Lord Jesus Christ, reminds us of this very thing. [James 4: 14-15 NASB] **14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that**

appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also this or that.” You often hear the saints at Covenant of Peace say, “If the LORD wills” or “LORD willing”. This is not just something to say to sound religious, but a reminder that GOD is sovereign and we are in His Hands. It is a reminder of the shortness of life and that our time should be spent in pursuing the LORD and the things of GOD to His Glory. The Preacher reminds us of the futility of life apart from fearing GOD, that is loving GOD and taking joy in Him in the Book of Ecclesiastes. The Word of GOD shows us that where there is not the true fear of GOD by His Grace, all is vain and empty. [Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 NASB] **12 Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly. 13 But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.** Said another way in the closing words of Chapter 14 of the Epistle to the Romans, **“whatever is not from faith is sin.”** I want to borrow a quote from John Piper. *“All human ‘virtue’ is depraved if it is not from a heart of love to the heavenly Father - even if the behavior conforms to biblical norms.”* So, all we do is to be done as unto the LORD. It is to be done from a granted faith and love. All that we do is to be a display of GOD’s Glory.” Our Pastor has asked a seemingly strange question that has lead to me thinking a great deal about living to GOD’s Glory. His question is “how do I eat my oatmeal to the Glory of GOD”? It may sound strange, but this is the way we need to think, speak, and act. This is not a “pull yourself up by the bootstrap” mentality, but one that would have us by our LORD’s Mercy to look to Him in all things. The psalmist also reminds us in this plea, **“Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?”**, that death is universal and absolute for man. This again, reminds us of not only our shortness of time, but that there is a definitive end to us in our time in this world. Life is vain for those who do not serve Him or enjoy Him. There is but One that conquered death and the grave could not hold Him – our risen Lord.

The third plea is for the Lovingkindness and Mercy of GOD. It is not that GOD’s Lovingkindness has departed, but it seems as though that is the case. We know that it will not depart from us because He has promised not to fail us, nor leave or forsake us. [**Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and Hebrews 13:5**] GOD’s Mercy may seem to be lifted from us at times when we are in great difficulty, but may we repeat the pattern of the psalmist in our struggles by recalling and recounting the Truth of Who GOD is and the Truth of His Provision by praising Him. May we live upon the Truth - [Isaiah 54:10 NASB] **10 "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My**

lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken," Says the LORD who has compassion on you. The psalmist in his struggle was holding to the promises by recounting GOD's Covenant promise of His Lovingkindness not departing. It is good for us to go before the LORD and to reason with Him by way of His promises and begging Him to remember that He has sworn to bless His covenant people. It is also good for us to know that whatever GOD allows or decrees in our lives is the very best thing for His Glory and for us.

The fourth plea is one of asking GOD to remember the reproach of His people. Those who scoff at our LORD are the enemies of the LORD as well as ours. When our LORD is dishonored, it is the same to us. That is why we see the Scripture speak of His people in such a manner as strangers and aliens in this world. Neither Christ or His Church can please the world and that is the distinction. This is another reason we need each other – to come together in His Name, to worship Him, and to be built up, strengthened, and encouraged. We will undoubtedly be subjected to such scorn and possibly worse because we are His. Verse 51 refers to Christ in that **“they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed.”** So, in our struggles we must look to the one who bore the reproach of sinful man while on this earth and bore the wrath of the Father that we deserve so that we could receive eternal life.

May we be content as we see from the Apostle Paul in [2 Corinthians 12:10 NASB] **10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.** May we live by the Truth of what we are taught by the psalmist and the Prophet Isaiah. We can come before the LORD in honesty, without pretention, in faith and humility and express our hearts without fear. We know from the Word of GOD that His ways and thoughts are higher than ours. [Isaiah 55:9] We also know that He has condescended to us in a manner that we may **“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD.** - which is GOD commanding us to do what the psalmist does in this Psalm. May we be as the psalmist in that he ended this journey where he began – by praising the LORD GOD. [Psalm 89: 52 NASB] **52 Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and amen.** By His Mercy and Grace, when we do not understand His Provision, we will not distrust Him, but run to Him.

Amen