

Evening Sermon Outline – December 8, 2019

“The Martyr’s Prayer” Psalm 44

This Psalm is hard to place in Israel’s history, yet it is quoted by Paul in relation to Christ’s persecuted church –

³⁶ As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Romans 8:36 (NKJV)

Is a quoting of Psalm 44:22 –

²² Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Psalm 44:22 (NKJV)

Surely it did and does apply to Paul and the Roman Christians, and to many after them ... therefore it applies to many ages as a Martyr’s Prayer –

I. They remember, they have read in God’s Word, of God’s miracles, He performed for His people in the past –

¹ We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us, The deeds You did in their days, In days of old: ² You drove out the nations with Your hand, But them You planted; You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out. ³ For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them. Psalm 44:1–3 (NKJV)

1. God did miracles, Joshua fought and won the battle of Jericho, he through God’s power drove out many nations!
2. It was God’s favor, not Israel’s strength or righteousness that saved them!

II. They trusted in God’s sovereign power to save them as well –

⁴ You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob. ⁵ Through You we will push down our enemies; Through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us. ⁶ For I will not trust in my bow,

Nor shall my sword save me. ⁷ But You have saved us from our enemies, And have put to shame those who hated us. ⁸ In God we boast all day long, And praise Your name forever. Selah

1. God is their KING - :4
2. They expect to WIN - :4B
 - A. They are counting on Him trampling enemies - :5
 - B. They don’t trust their own weapons - :6
 - C. They trust and boast in God for salvation - :7-8

III. The great prayer for mercy –

1. It sees God in control of hardship -

⁹ But YOU have cast us off and put us to shame, And YOU do not go out with our armies. ¹⁰ YOU make us turn back from the enemy, And those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves. ¹¹ YOU have given us up like sheep intended for food, And have scattered us among the nations. ¹² YOU sell Your people for next to nothing, And are not enriched by selling them. ¹³ YOU make us a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and a derision to those all around us. ¹⁴ YOU make us a byword among the nations, A shaking of the head among the peoples. ⁵ My dishonor is continually before me, And the shame of my face has covered me, ¹⁶ Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, because of the enemy and the avenger. Psalm 44:9–16 (NKJV)

- A. Notice You, referring to God is repeated 7 times in 7 verses...
- B. This means they see God as in control of and causing their hardship, even though earthly enemies are involved!

2. This hardship they see as despite their faithfulness -

¹⁷ All this has come upon us; But we have not forgotten You, Nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant. ¹⁸ Our heart has not turned back, Nor have our steps departed from Your way; ¹⁹ But YOU have severely broken us in the place of jackals, And covered us with the shadow of death. ²⁰ If we had forgotten the name of our God, Or stretched out our hands to a foreign god, ²¹ Would not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart. Psalm 44:17-21 (NKJV)

- A. Note verse :17 ff they are not claiming sinlessness or perfect righteousness, but faithfulness!

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B. Sinless - Righteousness would have been wrong to claim –
As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. Romans 3:10-11 (NKJV)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

2. *These people are persecuted for righteousness sake, for Christ’s sake, for God’s sake -*

²² Yet for **Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.** ²³ Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Arise! Do not cast us off forever. ²⁴ Why do You hide Your face, **And forget our affliction and our oppression?** ²⁵ For our soul is bowed down to the dust; Our body clings to the ground. ²⁶ Arise for our help, **And redeem us for Your mercies’ sake.** Psalm 44:22–26 (NKJV)

A. Paul calls such people “more than conquerors...”
As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:36-39 (NKJV)

- *More than conquerors because death takes us right to Heaven!*
- *More than conquerors because nothing separates us from Christ’s LOVE*

B. Christ calls such people BLESSED –
“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:11-12 (NKJV)

- *Blessed means truly and eternally happy!*
- *We are called now to rejoice when we are persecuted!*

C. Christ’s early disciples did rejoice when persecuted –

⁴¹ **So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.** ⁴² And daily

in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. Acts 5:41–42 (NKJV)

D. We see similar things throughout church history –

“Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day, by God’s grace, light such a candle in England as I trust shall never be put out.” HUGH LATIMER, AS BOTH MEN WERE ABOUT TO BE BURNED AT THE STAKE!

Some two hundred years ago the saintly Madam Guyon, after ten years spent in a dungeon lying far below the surface of the ground, lit only by a candle at meal-times, wrote these words:

“A little bird I am, Shut from the fields of air;
Yet in my cage I sit and sing To Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be, *Because, my God, it pleases Thee.*
Nought have I else to do I sing the whole day long;
And He whom most I love to please, Doth listen to my song;
He caught and bound my wandering wing But still He bends to hear me sing.
My cage confines me round; Abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound, My heart’s at liberty,
My prison walls cannot control The flight, the freedom of the soul.
Ah! it is good to soar These bolts and bar above,
To Him *whose purpose I adore*, Whose Providence I love;
And in Thy mighty will to find The joy, the freedom of the mind.”

Madam Guyon (sometime in the 1700s) as quoted by AW Pink

E. The Book of Revelation talks of such blessedness –
Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.” Revelation 14:12-13 (NKJV)

Those who keep the commandments and the faith of Jesus; are the same as those who are Blessed and die in the Lord! These find the answer to their prayers in Christ’s cross -

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Galatians 6:14 see also Romans 5:1-5, Hebrews 12:1-2