

GOD'S COMFORTS IN OUR ANXIOUS THOUGHTS (Psa 94.19)

Read Psa 94. Writer unknown (David, Moses?), but testimony of a godly soul about his own thoughts, both despondent and encouraging, This prophet wrote God's Word; like all Scripture, this is right, authoritative.

SURVEY (Psalm 94)

The psalmist and the godly community were under attack by wicked men who seemed to have had the upper hand for quite a long time. They "speak hard things," "boast themselves" (v. 4), persecute (v. 5), murder the weakest (v. 6), make unrighteous laws to justify their sins (v. 20), and conspire together against the godly (v. 21). This is the situation.

Prayer to the Lord (vv. 1-7)

1. Call for divine vengeance (vv. 1-2)
2. Complaint about prolonged unrighteousness (3-4)
3. Characterization of their violence and rationalization (5-7)

Rebuke of the Wicked (vv. 8-11)

1. Call for stupid fools to be wise (8)
2. Proclamation of God's omniscience and holiness (9-10)
3. Futility of man's foolish thoughts (11)

Encouragement of the Righteous (vv. 12-15)

1. Your troubles are God's discipline of his beloved children (12)
2. Your troubles are only temporary according to Scripture (13)
3. Your troubles are no evidence of God's forsaking you (14)
4. Your troubles will finally end; your enemies shall be punished (15)

Testimony of God's Having Taken My Side (vv. 16-23)

1. Divine help, not human, has saved the day (16-18)
2. Divine comforts delight my soul (19)
3. Divine judgment will make things right (20-23)

His testimony (v. 19) is public: for thanksgiving (God's faithfulness), counsel (to be done), fellowship (to be shared). Pattern → distress & deliverance.

MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS (v. 19a), "in the multitude of my thoughts," etc.

Can you relate to this? Yes; it is common in this fallen world. This will seize your attention as if you had suffered a terrible malady with peculiar symptoms and heard someone else complaining of the same thing, etc.

My Thoughts Are Perturbed, → throw into confusion: disturb greatly in mind.

Although only "thoughts" here, the sense is "anxious thoughts" (NASB), "anxieties" (NKJV). "He means anxious and perplexing cares" (Calvin).

Like everyone else, Christians are disturbed individuals. We still suffer great anxieties, both over the common things of life (e.g., its necessities), and in special spiritual trials (as in this psalm → triumph of evil, suffering of godly). The "happy-clappy Christian mindset" is foreign to Scripture.

Are you upset? It does not mean you are not a Christian. Are you very troubled inside? You still may be a very mature, godly Christian. To tell you candidly, I prepared this message in just such a state this week.

My Thoughts Are Present

He feels anxious as he writes these lyrics. He is singing the Worried Man Blues ("it takes a worried man to sing a worried song"). Present tense of the delight does not mean there is no anxiety now. "IN the multitude of my thoughts within me," etc. Authentic Christian experience involves inner turmoil—much anxiety and great comfort at the same time. The gospel treasure is in clay pots (2 Cor 4.7-12). Even Jesus was greatly troubled, esp. on the cross. He sings this very psalm. Do you think that the church's sufferings now are no concern to him?

My Thoughts Are Private

"Within me" conveys "the intimacy or closeness of this grief." LXX: "in my very heart" not something everyone could see and therefore bemoan, but really known only to God, settled in him, impressed deeply upon his spirit (Thomas Horton, cited in Treasury of David). See Prov 14.10.

Little do we know what inner trials our fellow pew-sitters are suffering, so let us always treat one another kindly so we don't increase the burden.

My Thoughts Are Populous

A "multitude," an army sent to disturb me. It is not just one great fear but many little ones, like death by a thousand paper cuts. This soul malady defies a human cure; pills and psychotherapy are mere bandaids at best.

Thankfully, God is there to help and strengthen his people!

GOD'S COMFORTS TO ME (v. 19b), "thy comforts delight my soul."

All saints can relate to this too; may it provoke others to holy jealousy.

They Are True Comforts

"Consolations" (pl.), "con-sole" from Fr., "to soothe with;" Heb., "words which cause encouragement, implying hope" (DBL). Also in Job 21.2; Isa 40.1-2. A mother comforts her child (Isa 66.13), what mourners need (Gen 24.67).

They Come from God, "thy comforts," i.e., comforts from God → God-worthy My thoughts/thy comforts. Psychobabble thinks God's consolations are small (Job 15.11). Rich men give rich gifts; God's gifts are the greatest of all.

They Are More than Mere Relief, Even True Joy

We might expect him to say, "thy comforts relieved my soul," but he surprises us with "delight," "gladden." The word has a lightness about it, "have a feeling or attitude of taking pleasure in, having a fondness for" (DBL #9130). By God's grace we can be smiling sufferers. How?

Seek this comfort in God and Christ (1 Sam 30.6; Psa 23.4; 2 Cor 1.3-5) by godly music (1 Sam 16.23; singing together; a pastor's wife who has suffered much told me a certain CD has carried her through these last few years), by preaching (1 Cor 14.3), prayer (Phil 4.6-7), meditation (Psa 73.1-2, 16-17).