

Series: Psalm
Title: Turn Us Again
Text: Ps 80: 1-19
Date: Aug 15, 2021
Place: SGBC, NJ

Psalm 80: 1: «To the chief Musician upon Shoshannimeduth, A Psalm of Asaph.» Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, shine forth. **2:** Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come *and* save us. **3:** Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. **4:** O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? **5:** Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure. **6:** Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves. **7:** Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. **8:** Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. **9:** Thou preparedst *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. **10:** The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars. **11:** She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. **12:** Why hast thou *then* broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? **13:** The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. **14:** Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; **15:** And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest strong for thyself. **16:** *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. **17:** Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself. **18:** So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. **19:** Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

Most of the Psalms are prayers: prayer for help, prayer for God to save us—“*Turn us again, o God, and cause thy face to shine and we shall be saved.*”

Joel 2:32: And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered. That is God’s word. But if we call on him it is because the LORD first called us. If we call on him it is because the LORD promised there is a “remnant whom the LORD shall call.”

Our prayer is “*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*” Have you called on the Lord to save you? Are you calling on him? Only sheep call and we only call because the LORD first calls his sheep. But those the Lord first calls, call on him!

We call on him because Christ is our great Shepherd. His people are his sheep. He leads his elect like a flock. So the cry of the sheep is “*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*”

Remember the mercy seat over the ark between the cherubims? Christ is not only our Shepherd but he is also our Mercy-seat that dwellest between the cherubim. God hears us because Christ is the mercy seat. Christ has made propitiation. He covered our sin, put away our sin, by his precious blood. He ever dwells between the cherubims in whom we find mercy. In Christ God will and shall meet with his people.

Christ is our Strength. We cry, “*Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.*” The Psalmist is a sinner saved by grace. But he was in great need. It appeared to him that God was asleep. God never sleeps nor slumbers. It appeared to the Psalmist that God was angry against the prayers of his people. Indeed, God is angry with the wicked every day. But God is not angry with his people because he poured out his anger on Christ our Substitute. Christ saved us from the wrath to come. But when God chastens us it appears to us like God is angry.

In our text, God had taken the hedge down from around his vineyard. We need God to hedge us about. I need God to hedge me about. How about you? We need to be “kept by the power of God” continually unto that day. Paul needed to be kept. He said, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded he is able TO KEEP that which I have committed TO HIM against that day.” If need be God will permit us to see our weakness as he did Job, Peter, Paul, David. He does it to wake us up! He does it to make us cry unto him!

God keeps his child crying in faith to him. And this will be our cry. Notice three times, the Psalmists makes a similar plea. And notice the increasing urgency and increasing glory to God

In verse 3 he cries, “*Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*” Then in verse 7 he cries, “*Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*” Then in verse 19 he cries, “*Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*”

Subject: Turn Us Again

Proposition: It is only by God turning us again that we cry to him to turn us again—we thank God that our gracious Lord keeps turning us again so that we cry to him in faith. Those God makes cry unto him he saves. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered!”

TURN US AGAIN

The Psalmist cries, “*TURN us.*” The true sinner knows the source and strength who turns us is God. He did not say, “I have strong faith. I am strong in my will. I am strong in my ability. So I will turn myself.” God gets the glory! The Psalmist would not pray turn us if we could turn ourselves or others.

In our sinful flesh the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. Christ is the strength of his people. Even the ability to pray for God to turn us is by God first turning us. Any sinner who cries “turn us” does so because God has already turned him.

Isaiah 65:24: And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Also, notice he cries “*Turn US.*” Prayer to God is not selfish. The cry of brethren is for God to turn “us.” The Lord taught us to pray, “OUR Father”, “forgive US.” We pray for one another.

Luke 11: 1: And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. 2: And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, OUR Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3: Give US day by day our daily bread. 4: And forgive US OUR sins; for WE also forgive every one that is indebted to US. And lead US not into temptation; but deliver US from evil.

The Pharisee prayed about the publican, excluding himself as the sinner. Christ teaches his child to include self as the sinner. “Forgive US OUR sins...And lead US not into temptation; but deliver US from evil.” God turned Job’s captivity when he prayed for his friends (Job 42: 10).

Notice, the next word. How thankful we are for this next word, “Turn us AGAIN!” Aren’t you thankful God does not turn you only once! When God first brings a sinner to Christ, we were dead in sins. God turned us from ourselves to trust Christ alone. He gave us faith. But every believer yet has this terrible sin-nature. Our only strength is Christ. We pray to be turned “again!” We ask God, “Stir up **THEY STRENGTH**, O LORD, come and save us.” We need to continually be “turned again.”

In Romans 6, the Spirit of God moved Paul to declare that every believer is to count ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. Therefore, we are not to live in sin any longer. How can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein. We are to yield our members to righteousness, not to sin. But why did Paul instruct us to yield our members to God in righteousness rather than yielding to the lusts of our flesh? “*Because of the infirmity of your flesh*” (Rom 6: 19). Paul went on to say in Roman 7 that “when I would do good, EVIL is present with me.” Paul said his sin-nature brought him into captivity (Rom 7: 21-25). Only Christ delivers us. So we thank God for his grace to turn us AGAIN. We mean the words we sing:

Prone to wander Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love

That is why or prayer is found in Psalm 80: 17, “*Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.*” We ask God to see us in Christ. We ask God to look to Christ and behold us in him. We ask God to make us behold again that we are accepted in him. Verse 18, “*So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*”

Lamentations 5:21: Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; RENEW our days as of old.

Jeremiah 31: 18: I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself *thus*; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed *to the yoke*: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou *art* the LORD my God. 19: Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon *my* thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. 20: *Is* Ephraim my dear son? *is he* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

God is NOT willing to ever cast off his elect. It is his pure grace—consistent with justice. In fact, the righteous God must turn us again because of his justice. His own dear Son has bled and died and purged his people’s sins. His immutable love comes and makes us see our need. He turns us to him so that we cry “*Turn us again O God.*” Then he turns us again.

O LORD GOD OF HOSTS

Who is he to whom we cry? He is the “LORD GOD OF HOSTS.” He is the “LORD”—Jehovah—the existing one. He is “God”—Elohim.

He is “The LORD God”—the covenant God; he made the covenant, fulfilled the covenant, keeps the covenant and *Christ is the covenant!* By his precious blood he fulfilled God’s covenant for his people fully and he is the Covenant! Incarnate Deity bore the lash of justice. His side was pierced. He laid for three days in the grave—in darkness. Now he is risen the LORD God of hosts!

He is “The LORD God of hosts”—it means our God rules ALL! He rules the army of heaven and earth. Our LORD rules the angels, the moon, stars, and wind, and all men. He rules things great and small. He is Omnipotence “who made the seven stars and Orion.” He holds the waters in the hollow of his hand.

Isaiah 40: 15: Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. 16: And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

The inhabitants of the earth are grasshoppers. The nations are a drop in the bucket.

Isaiah 40: 28: Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. 29: He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. 30: Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

CAUSE THY FACE TO SHINE

Health is in his countenance. It is Christ’s face shining upon us that is the glory upon us that strengthens us, that washes us, that purges our conscious. The apostle Paul spoke of the ministration of death—the old covenant law—as having glory. But he said that the ministration of righteousness—Christ our Righteousness—is the glory that excelleth. Christ is that glory. He is that shining Light who shines in our hearts.

When in spiritual darkness the sinner is in bondage. The veil is on our hearts. That is so before the Spirit regenerates us. But it also true that believers can bring ourselves into bondage again by our sin. Or others can bring us into bondage with accusations so that we are turned to ourselves. Our peace in Christ becomes interrupted. It is as though the veil is on our hearts again. This was what the Psalmist was praying for—“turn us again...cause thy face to shine” again!

2 Corinthians 3: 16: Nevertheless when [the heart] is turned to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. 18: But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the GLORY of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Christ shines his face and there is Light in the heart in Spirit. The Light of Christ's countenance is the health of our countenance.

Psalm 42: 5: Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise HIM *for* the HELP of HIS COUNTENANCE.

Psalm 42: 11: Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise HIM, *who is* the HEALTH of MY COUNTENANCE, and MY GOD.

When the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings, being renewed in the heart to remember that Christ's righteousness is our perfect righteousness then all is well with our soul!

The sun's ray shines on you but it is still the sun's rays beaming down from the sun. So Christ's light shines in our heart—declaring we are righteous by his obedience. His countenance—the rays Christ shines in our heart is health to our countenance. He is the strength within us. It is the light of his countenance that is the health of our countenance. His atonement purges our conscious. He renews us to remember that in Christ we have forgiveness. For Christ's sake God is gracious and forgives our sins. So Christ is the strength of our souls!

AND WE SHALL BE SAVED

Immediately when Christ shines his face, we shall be saved. It may be long before Christ shines but once he shines it is no long process. When Christ shines, immediately, all is well with our soul. We shall be saved!

Sinner, God says “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. Whosoever calleth on him shall be delivered. His shining face brings life. When light shines in the room, immediately, darkness goes. So it is when Christ shines his face upon us. We shall be saved!

Amen!