

# **GOD – A RELIABLE FRIEND**

## **(Sermon Summary)**

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**Sunday Evening, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022**

### **Reading: Psalm 71:1-13**

David was in his old age when he wrote this Psalm (v9, v18). It is perhaps from the time when Absalom rebelled against him and sought to kill him. As we study it, we find some familiar themes.

#### **1. The enemies again.**

David is not given to paranoia. He genuinely does have enemies. David is a type of the true servant of God and so what he experiences and feels has an extra intensity about it. He refers to the wicked (v4), the unrighteous and cruel (v4), enemies (v10), adversaries (v13), murderers and those who lie in wait to harm him (v10, v24). He cries to God in whom he trusts (v1) and asks God to act to deliver him (v2, v4) and so that he can escape (v2) and be saved (v3).

David is ever in the midst of foes. His world is always the same which is why the Psalms cover similar ground at times. Not all Psalms are always reflecting on enemies, but this is the realism of the Bible. It is at times negative in the things that it has to say about the world we are in. The church has at times been too upbeat and failed to prepare people for the actual world they live in. It has offered false hopes of coming revivals which have not happened. This is not to make us depressive or to lack faith. It is a rational spiritual response to the world we live in and are surrounded by.

It is true that we have lived for the most part in a time of relative peace. We have been comfortable with a life of devotion to the Lord and the things that we are properly engaged in doing. But the truth is that this is not a comfortable world to be in. A lot of people are filled with anger and ridicule (v7) People are hoping that we will just die out. Organisations work together (v10) as they try to bring ruin on the church. They feel that we are without protection (v11) and are easy to pick off. They have plans for our harm (John 15:18; John 16:1-3; and John 16:33).

Behind it all are real and malignant spiritual powers (See Ephesians 2:2; Ephesians 6:10-12; and 1 Peter 5: 8-9). This spiritual enmity reproduces itself in different people and societies through human history.

## **2. God is a Friend to us.**

God is not about to rapture us out of this world or stop us having to go through the things that we are facing. We are to remain (John 17:14-16). But we have Him as a friend to us who is with us. In fact, He was there before we knew (v6; Jeremiah 1:4-5). We were not always Christians, but God was always there planning to make us Christians. He has been preserving, protecting, and prompting us. He has been moving events and circumstances on our behalf. He is a great help to us and a strong refuge (v3, v7). We can look back at how differently things turned out that looked so difficult. He gives us hope continuing on into the future. He is not some imaginary friend for social misfits and failures. We have actual experience of the difference He has made to us personally. We have found Him strong and stable, and He has made us stronger and more stable as a result. We have seen Him answer our prayers and enable us to prosper.

We have also on occasion seen the wicked exposed and seen into their hearts where they have no peace or happiness. We have seen the screaming and angry mobs of activists. Through the Lord's help we have been able to see the world for what it is with all its immorality, pride, idolatry, and debased mind. We have a safe space as did Abraham as he surveyed the ruin of Sodom from a safe distance (Genesis 9:28). We are able to feel great relief that we are not part of this system that will be judged. We have good hope which is a rational response to the strong position that we are in. We will not be put to shame (v1) for we are putting our faith in a real Person who really can help and make a difference. Through His help we find ourselves in the right place at the right time. We may feel small (v11) but we are not forsaken.