

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

# CAN GOD FURNISH A TABLE IN THE WILDERNESS PSALMS 78

Text: Psalms 78:19

## **Psalm 78:19**

<sup>19</sup> Yea, they spake against God; they said, **Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?**

Introduction:

There is a common element that unites all peoples of the world. There is one thing that every person in this room has in common: we all have needs!

What are we to do when needs arise? The natural reaction is for us to worry, but we know from the Bible that this is not God's will for our lives.

## ***Philippians 4:6***

*<sup>6</sup> Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

How is it that we can go through life being careful or not worrying over things?

The answer is simple but yet profound.

It is an answer given to us from the Lord.

**Mark 11:22**

<sup>22</sup> *And Jesus answering saith unto them, **Have faith in God.***

However most of us discover when our needs arise our doubts arise as well.

We find in our text a question.

The idea behind this question no doubt has been consider by most if not all of us in this room.

The enemy whispers to our hearts, "Can God really meet your needs?" If we aren't careful, we might find ourselves wondering the same thing!

Let's consider this question in the light of God's Word.

# 1. THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE (VS. 20, 41)

## ***Psalm 78:19***

*<sup>19</sup> Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*

## ***Psalm 78:41***

*<sup>41</sup> Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.*

As we read these verses we see that these people were:

### A. Faithless

Here was a people who called themselves by God's name. Here was a people who should have trusted the Lord without reservation. Yet, they seemed oblivious to the provisions and power of God in their midst.

Not only were these people "Faithless" but also these people were:

### B. Forgetful

## ***Psalm 78:7-16***

*<sup>7</sup> That they might set their hope in God, **and not forget the works of God**, but keep his commandments: <sup>8</sup> And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious*

generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God. <sup>9</sup> The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. <sup>10</sup> They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; <sup>11</sup> And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them. <sup>12</sup> Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. <sup>13</sup> He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. <sup>14</sup> In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. <sup>15</sup> He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. <sup>16</sup> He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

### **Psalm 78:20-29**

<sup>20</sup> Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? <sup>21</sup> Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; <sup>22</sup> Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: <sup>23</sup> Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, <sup>24</sup> And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. <sup>25</sup> Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full. <sup>26</sup> He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. <sup>27</sup> He rained flesh

*also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: <sup>28</sup> And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. <sup>29</sup> So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;*

### ***Psalm 78:42-55***

*<sup>42</sup> They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. <sup>43</sup> How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: <sup>44</sup> And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. <sup>45</sup> He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. <sup>46</sup> He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. <sup>47</sup> He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. <sup>48</sup> He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. <sup>49</sup> He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. <sup>50</sup> He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; <sup>51</sup> And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham: <sup>52</sup> But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. <sup>53</sup> And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. <sup>54</sup> And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased. <sup>55</sup> He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an*

*inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*

***Psalm 78:65-72***

*<sup>65</sup> Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. <sup>66</sup> And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. <sup>67</sup> Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: <sup>68</sup> But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. <sup>69</sup> And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever. <sup>70</sup> He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: <sup>71</sup> From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. <sup>72</sup> So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*

They seemed unable to remember all the great miracles that God had performed on their behalf.

How He had delivered them from Egypt by the plagues.

How He had parted the Red Sea.

How He made the waters of Mara pure.

How He had put their enemies on the run.

How He had proven Himself to be God and to be all powerful time and again.

They were forgetful of the mighty power of God they had witnessed in their lives.

How many times has God come through for you?

How many times has He moved mountains, parted the waters in your life?

How many times has He lifted the veil of affliction and suffering in your life and allowed the light of His glory to brighten the day for you?

How many times has He spoken peace to your storm?

How many times has He met the need, done the impossible, and proven Himself to be God for you?

How many times have we forgotten all about what He did yesterday when the trial of today pops up?

We need to take a look back and remember all the things God has done for us.

If God did it then, we can be sure that He will do it now!

We need to take inventory and remember the Lord's power when the next storm begins to blow in our lives.

Not only were these people “Faithless” and “Forgetful” but also these people were:

### C. Foolish

By asking "Can God?" they proved their ignorance of His power and of His Person.

This same scene was played out many times during the course of Israel's wilderness wanderings, and after they arrived in Canaan.

One time that comes to mind is when the 12 spies were sent into Canaan.

While there, they encountered a race of people known as the Anakim.

They were giants.

When the 10 faithless spies saw the giants, they looked at them and then they looked at themselves and compared themselves to grasshoppers, Num. 13:33

**Numbers 13:33**

*<sup>33</sup> And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*

This same thing has followed the church to this very day.

We are guilty of the same comparison.

Some problem will arise in our lives, in the church, wherever it may be, and the first thing we say is "Can God?"

It may take other forms, but it is still the same.

Our doubts say "Can God?", when He already has many times before.

This was the condition of the people, and I am afraid, we often mirror this same kind of attitude in our lives today.

It does not have to be like that in our lives!

We can trust the Lord, and we can know that He will demonstrate His power in our lives.

Note not only "The Condition of the People" but also:

## 2. THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Note:

A. His Promises (vs. 5-7)

### ***Psalm 78:5-7***

*<sup>5</sup> For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: <sup>6</sup> That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: <sup>7</sup> That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:*

Israel had seen God keep His Word time and time again. He was always faithful to do what He promised to do for them.

God hasn't changed!

He is still a God who keeps His Word!

Everything God has promised, He will do!

There are some verses in the Bible that bear this out -  
Rom. 4:21; Heb. 6:18; Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2

**Romans 4:21**

*<sup>21</sup> And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

**Hebrews 6:18**

*<sup>18</sup> That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

**Numbers 23:19**

*<sup>19</sup> God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

**Titus 1:2**

*<sup>2</sup> In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

Note not only His promises but also:

B. His Performance (vs. 4, 12)

**Psalm 78:4**

*<sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

**Psalm 78:12**

<sup>12</sup> *Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers,  
in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.*

Throughout their history, Israel had enjoyed the presence and the power of Almighty God.

Time and again God had demonstrated His power in the midst of His people.

Imagine seeing Him part the Red Sea, drop manna from the heavens every day for 40 years.

Imagine seeing God defeat all your enemies.

Imagine the thrill of seeing His glory as He came down upon the Tabernacle.

Imagine the pillar of cloud and of fire. God had proven Himself time and again to His people.

Today the Lord is still meeting the needs of His people.

Look back over the years and remember the times the Lord has displayed His great power in your life.

Note not only His Promises and Performance but also:

## C. His Power (vs 4)

### ***Psalm 78:4***

*<sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

Throughout their history, God had proven that He was stronger than every obstacle they faced.

He was more powerful than Egypt, and the Amalekites.

He proved Himself to be greater than their thirst and their hunger.

He was able to overcome all they faced by His great power.

God is still all powerful.

The power of God has not, nor shall it ever falter.

We must remember that God is able to provide a table in the wilderness.

Note not only His Promises, Performance and Power but also:

## D. His Patience (vs.38)

### ***Psalm 78:38***

*<sup>38</sup> But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*

While God continued to show Himself strong on behalf of His people, Israel continually lacked the faith to trust the Lord as they should. However, the Bible tells us that "many a time" He turned His anger away from them. He was patient with them and lead them along in love and in grace.

Thankfully we serve a patient God!

How many times has He demonstrated that to you and me? There have been many times when we have failed to walk in faith in the Lord, but instead of throwing us away and taking a new people unto Himself, He continues to love us and work in our lives. We have a patient, loving Lord.

We can trust the Lord for everything in our lives. We have a God who has demonstrated His power, His grace, His love and His character many times over.

We note "The Condition of the People" and "The Character of God" but lastly:

### 3. THE CHALLENGE FOR TODAY (VS. 6-8)

#### ***Psalm 78:6-8***

*<sup>6</sup> That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: <sup>7</sup> That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: <sup>8</sup> And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.*

When we look at Israel's history and the way God proved Himself to them, we then consider how He has proven himself in our own lives and when we look at His power and His ability, what are we to do with that information?

These verses tell us in no uncertain terms what the Lord expects from us in relation to these truths. Allow me to share three challenges that face us.

## A. Have Confidence In God (Trust)

### **Mark 11:22**

*<sup>22</sup> And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.*

### **Psalm 62:8**

*<sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.*

### **John 14:1**

*<sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

These verses teach us that we are to trust Him for all our needs and in every situation.

When the world wrings its hands in despair and doubt and asks the question "Can God?" we, who believe the Bible should stand forth and cry out, "God Can!"

When the world looks at declining morality, escalating violence, economic trouble, decrease in the popularity of the church, increasing evil and ask the question, "Can God!" we must be ready with the answer, "God Can!"

Note:

- Daniel in the Lion's Den

Darius spends the night wondering if God can, Daniel enjoys the Lord's peace and rests well knowing that God could.

- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

Nebuchadnezzar stood with a smirk on his face as he sentenced the 3 Hebrews boys and asked, "Can God!" Those boys came out of the furnace shouting loudly, "God Can!"

- The Widow of Zarephath

She stood watching as the prophet ate the last of the meal and wondered, "Can God!" Three years later she was still eating while all around people starved and when she finished her meal, she could whisper, with all the assurance of her soul, "God Can!"

- The Disciples on the Ship

They were in the midst of the storm and thought that they were finished and their hearts were filled with this question, "Can God?" But, in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came walking on the waves, displaying all the power of the Godhead reminding the disciples, "God Can!"

We must have confidence in God but also we must:

### B. Call to Mind His Past Works (Remember)

Think of the times He has delivered you, when He saved you and the times He moved mountains in your life. Remember His power and all that He has done. Let His past works remind you that He is able, no matter what you face in life. God is able and He will come through for you, every time. Let the past be your reminder and learn to trust Him no matter what!

Illustration:

Old Uncle Oscar took his first airplane ride. Knowing that he had been somewhat apprehensive about it, his friends were eager to hear how it went. At the first opportunity, they asked him if he enjoyed the flight. "Well," commented Uncle Oscar, "it wasn't as bad as I thought it might be. But I'll tell you this. I never did put all my weight down!"

That's how some Christians take the promises of the Bible. They have no trouble believing what it says about the Lord Jesus Christ saving all who place their trust in Him. They know their sins have been forgiven and that heaven is their eternal home. But they fail to take the Lord at His word when it applies to other areas of their lives. They've never "put all their weight

down." As a result they are plagued by doubts, fears, and uncertainties.

We not only must have confidence in God and remember His past works but also we must:

### C. Carry Out His Commandments (Obedience)

Genuine faith in the Lord always manifests itself in obedience to the Lord and His Word. Remember, Faith come by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. When we get into His Word and allow it to lodge in our hearts, changing us, then we will learn to trust Him more and more.

Close:

I once took a flight and as I walked from the terminal to the jet I was subject to the law of gravity.

When I came to the steps leading up to the plane's entrance door I had to climb up the steps using my power to raise my body up each step.

On entering the plane, I sat down in my seat and relaxed.

When everything was ready the jet taxied to the runway, and after a receiving clearance to take off the plane began to move down the runway.

When it reached a certain speed it began to leave the surface and rose into the sky.

The force of gravity against which I had climbed in the plane was still seeking to pull the plane down to earth, but there was another law in operation, the law of aerodynamics.

Now I know nothing about the law of aerodynamics, and I didn't need to.

I was committed to the plane and I rose with the plane.

The triumph of the jet was my triumph.

Its speed was my speed.

All the possibilities of that jet were now mine because I was inside.

The same is true for the believer this evening.

We do not need to understand all the theology to benefit--all I need to do is commit ourselves spiritually to the Lord as I did physically to the jet.

Notice that it wasn't the quality of my faith that took me to my destination.

Remember:

I am as strong as that in which I put my faith.

If my faith is resting in Christ, then I am as strong as He is.

Notice, too, that I did not have to help the plane to fly to destination.

It did not require any urging or pushing from me--the power was in the plane.

Similarly, the Lord can triumph in my life without help from me.

There are many who fail to trust the Lord and fail to remember that God can.

As a result, they live their lives defeated and discouraged.

It doesn't have to be that way!

I say this evening that God can!

Will you bring you doubts, your fears and your questions and give them to the Lord?

Why? Because God can!