

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

IN MY DISTRESS I CRIED UNTO
THE LORD
PSALMS 120

Text: Psalms 120:1

Ps 120:1

Psalm 120:1

¹ In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

Introduction:

The summary of the translators was this was a prayer prayed by David against Doeg.

You might remember Doeg. He was an Edomite who was the chief herdsman for King Saul.

Doeg saw that Ahimelech, the priest at Nob had given aid to David, then who had a price on his head issued by Saul.

Doeg reported this to Saul, then carried out Saul's order to kill Ahimelech and the other priest at Nob in retaliation.

However Doeg went even further and murdered everyone in Nob.

In this chapter David is pouring out his heart to the Lord.

David had been grievously maligned and driven to bitterness by the false charges of his persecutors, and here is his appeal to the Great Arbiter of right and wrong.

Note

Sermon Content:

1. THE DISTRESS THAT WAS PERSONAL (VS. 1)

Psalm 120:1

¹ In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

Slander often results in distress of the most horrific kind.

Those who have felt the edge of a cruel tongue understand that it is sharper than a sword.

We could possibly defend ourselves with the strokes of a weapon, but we have no shield or defense against a liar's tongue.

It is in this distress we should not hesitate to cry unto the Lord.

Quote:

Silence to man and prayers to God are the best cure for the evil slanderer.

In this prayer we see:

A. Desperation – “I Cried”

The word “distress” means: a tight spot that produces anguish or tribulation

We see that his distress resulted in “Desperation” but not also:

B. Direction – “To the Lord”

Psalm 120:1

¹ *In my distress I cried **unto the LORD**, and he heard me.*

His crying to the Lord was the wisest course that he could follow.

There is very little use to talk about slanderous words to other people, for the more we stir in it the more it spreads.

Cries to man is weak, cries to God is our strength.

Throughout the psalms we see this principle repeated.

Psalm 18:6

⁶ ***In my distress I called upon the LORD***, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

Psalm 30:8

⁸ *I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.*

Psalm 50:15

¹⁵ And ***call upon me in the day of trouble***: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

His crying to the Lord was wise and it is wise for us to follow this pattern.

Note not only his distress and direction but also his:

C. Declaration – “And He Heard Me”

Psalm 120:1

¹ *In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.*

Understand God hears those who pray in faith according to His will.

Psalm 34:15

¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

Psalm 34:17-18

¹⁷ The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Note not only his distress, direction, and declaration but also his:

D. Desire

Psalm 120:2-4

² Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. ³ What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

⁴ Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

His desire was for the Lord to deliver him from the lips of lies, and to take vengeance upon them.

His desire was for swift, sure, and sharp judgment.

Their words were like arrows and he desired for their punishment to match their cruelty.

Not only did he desire for their punishment to be sharp like their words but also to be comparable to coals of juniper, which ignite quickly and are fierce in their blaze, and long in their burning.

Remember what we read of all liars:

Revelation 21:8

*⁸ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, **and all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

All liars shall have their portion in the Lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Their worm dies not and their fire is never quenched.

Though the coals of the Juniper retain their heat for a long time, Hell burns forever.

We have considered the Distress That Was Personal note secondly:

2. THE DANGER THAT WAS POWERFUL

Psalm 120:5-7

⁵ Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! ⁶ My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. ⁷ I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.

Note:

A. His Dwelling – “Sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar

The psalmist didn't feel at home in his place of dwelling.

Remember:

This world is not our home. We are pilgrims and strangers passing through this world.

Note not only his dwelling but also:

B. His Danger – “With him that hateth peace”

He was surrounded by those that hated peace.

Quote:

A peace maker is a blessing, but a peace hater is a curse.

Matthew 5:9

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

To lodge with such that hate peace for a night is dangerous, but to dwell with them is horrible.

At this point in the psalmist life he was enduring and not enjoying his life.

But again even in the midst of trying company, he demonstrated admirable behavior.

We too should demonstrate such behavior even in trying times or in difficult days.

As long as we can without violating Biblical principles we should dwell at peace with those around us.

Close:

What are we to do when we are the victims or recipients of slander?

We should cry out to the Lord and not take matters into our own hands or take measures to make wrongs right.

Realize this world is not our home, we are just passing through.