

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

WE WEPT WHEN WE REMEMBERED PSALMS 137

Text: Psalms 137:1

Psalm 137:1

¹ By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

Introduction:

This psalm was what it was like to a child of God living in captivity.

What a sad thing it is when a believers are captives especially in Babylon.

Babylon means confusion. Babylon was a place of confusion, a place of mixed messages.

It's a place of:

- Vanity
- Vileness
- Vexation

Anytime a believer becomes a captive in Babylon you can count on them losing their song.

Note

Sermon Content:

1. THE SAD MISERY OF A CAPTURED CHRISTIAN (VS. 1)

What happens when a Christian is captured by the world, the flesh, and the devil?

Psalm 137:1

¹ By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

Understand:

When God saves you, He does not fix you where you cannot sin anymore, but He fixes you where you cannot sin and enjoy it anymore.

Understand God loves you too much to let you live in Babylon and still have joy in your heart.

Illustration:

I read this story some time ago:

"Once upon a time, there was a family of wayward members of a church. At one time, they were active members, but they had lost all interest and fallen away.

The deacons had talked to the father and his sons, Jim, John, and Sam, about their condition. The preacher had visited them, and many of the brethren had tried to get them back to the church; but all failed.

One day, when the boys were out in the pasture, a large rattlesnake bit John and he became very ill.

A physician was called, and after an examination, he pronounced John to be in critical condition. The doctor said, 'About all you can do now is pray.' and he went his way.

The father called the preacher, and told him of John's condition, and asked him to pray for John.

This was the preacher's prayer: 'O wise and righteous Father, we thank Thee that in Thy wisdom Thou hast sent this rattlesnake to bite John in order to bring him to his senses. He's not been inside the church house for years, and it is doubtful that, in all of this time, he felt the need of prayer.

Now, we trust this will be a valuable lesson to him and that it will lead him to genuine repentance.

And now, O Father, wilt Thou send another snake to bite Sam, and another to bite Jim, and a big one to bite the old man?

We've been doing everything we know for years to restore them but to no avail. It seemed that all of our combined efforts could not do what this one snake has done.

Thus, we conclude that the only thing left that will do this family any good is more rattlesnakes. So Lord, send us bigger and better rattlesnakes. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

Now folks, that sounds humorous, but there's a great thread of truth here.

God loves you too much to let you live in sin and still have pleasure, joy, and prosperity.

Note not only The Sad Misery of a Captured Christian but secondly:

2. THE STINGING MEMORY OF A CAPTURED CHRISTIAN (VS. 1)

Psalm 137:1

¹ By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, **when we remembered Zion.**

This is the reason that a Christian can't be happy if he's been captured, if he's a believer in Babylon: because he remembers Zion.

Remember:

Zion was the holy hill of Jerusalem.

Zion was where God had His temple.

It was the place of the sacrifice for sin.

It was the nearest and the dearest place to a child of God. And, here these believers—when they were in Babylon with all of the paganism, and all of the worldliness—they remembered the time when God was so near, and God was so real, and God was so precious.

Note the words William Cowper penned:

Where is the blessedness I knew,
When I first saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill

Here by the river of Babylon was a sad misery when
they remembered Zion – a stinging memory.

That leads us to consider thirdly:

3. THE SARCASTIC MOCKERY OF A CAPTURED CHRISTIAN (VS. 2-3)

Psalm 137:2-3

² We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. ³ For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

The Babylonians sarcastically said to these captives –
sing us one of those songs you sang in Zion.

The said this mocking the children of God.

Understand:

The people of this world delight to see a Christian fall.

It thrills them to make a mockery of the people of God, when the people of God fall into sin.

Note the words of the Lord n John 15:19:

John 15:19

¹⁹ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Illustration: Samson

One of saddest characters of the Old Testament was Samson.

Samson was the heavy weight champion of the Old Testament who lost his crown and lost his title.

Remember what the Philistines did when they finally captured Samson?

They put out his eyes, and they made him to grind at the mill.

They bound him and made him to grind.

Imagine how the Philistines mocked and laughed at Samson?

Remember the mockery and laughter when Jim Baker and Jimmy Swaggart fell.

Any time a Christian stumble it delights the world and the people of Babylon.

They mockingly say, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

The world loves to blur the distinction of between Jerusalem and Babylon.

What a mockery!

Angels weep and devils laugh when a believer disgraces the name of the Lord.

Think about it—the sad misery.

Think of it—the stinging memory.

Think of it—the sarcastic mockery of believers in bondage.

Note lastly:

4. THE STOLEN MELODY OF A CAPTURED CHRISTIAN (VS. 4)

Psalm 137:4

⁴ How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?

Every Christian has been given a song.

Our song as a believer is linked to our deliverance and freedom.

When you get in bondage, your song goes.

Note what the Bible says about the Christian song.

Psalm 32:7

⁷ Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

What happens when you get to be a Christian in captivity?

You can't sing the Lord's song in a strange land.

There's only one thing that can steal your song:

A. Suffering Can't Steal Your Song

Suffering can't steal your song.

Remember when the Lord was in the upper room just before Gethsemane—they had the last supper.

Calvary was just a few hours away—do you know what the Bible says?

Matthew 26:30

³⁰ And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Mark 14:26

²⁶ And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

As the Lord faced Calvary, he faced it with a song.

Paul and Silas, in a dungeon at midnight, sang a song that brought the house down.

In a dungeon, they sang.

Suffering can't take your song away.

B. Sorrow Can't Steal Your Song

Note: Isaiah 30:29

Isaiah 30:29

²⁹ Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.

They had a song in the night.

The daughter of the late Adrian Rogers penned these words when she was a teenager. She wrote these words in a time of great grief.

Joy through my teardrops, and gains through my losses
Beauty for ashes, and crowns for my crosses;
He binds my wounds, and He dries all my tears
Calms every storm and He conquers my fears.

He gives me hinds' feet to walk on high places,
He floods my soul with His heavenly graces;
When I am weak then His strength makes me strong
I know I can trust Him, He's never been wrong.

Trials may come and temptations assail me
Though I may falter, He never will fail me;
So Satan I bind you in His holy name
For at the cross Jesus' blood overcame!

When doubt comes, when I'm lonely
When my heart is sad;
I'll lift up mine eyes to my Savior above
And Jesus will make me glad.

When in my heart there is sadness and sorrow
Jesus has promised a brighter tomorrow;
Victory is mine, yes, it's already won
I've only to claim it by faith in God's Son.

All of my cares I will cast down before Him
Even in trials my heart will adore Him;
He bears my burdens, He comforts my soul
Oh why should I worry when He's in control?

Lord in the time of deep grief and emotion
I will yet serve You with constant devotion;
You have not failed me one step of the way
That is the reason I'll trust You and say:

I will praise You! I will praise You!
Jesus Christ my King;
For You fill my heart with a song in the night
Yes, You make my heart to sing!

Understand sorrow can't take your song, not can
suffering.

Note what can take your song:

C. Sin Can Take Your Song

There's only one thing that can steal your song, and it's sin.

A Christian in captivity has no song.

David was carried away, captive by sin, and David said in Psalm 51:

Psalm 51:14-15

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. ¹⁵ O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Christians in captivity have no song to sing.

One way a believer knows they are filled with the Spirit and walking close with God is they haven't lost their song.

Close:

Maybe there is someone here this evening that would say I know my sins have been forgiven, but I have lost my song because I have been brought into captivity.

You may ask, “How can I sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” The answer is you can’t.

Like the song writer wrote:

I wandered far away from God. Now, I'm coming home.

Then you’ll be able to sing once again the Lord’s song.