

PSALMS 13

This psalm was likely written by David when he was being threatened by Absalom rather than when he was trying to escape from Saul. The psalms written by David when he was fleeing from Saul have a distinct tone that David senses he is right with God and there is not a lot of anxiety. After David's sin with Bathsheba we notice the lack of boldness and an underlying heaviness in his soul.

THE QUESTION OF ANXIETY

{13:1} How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? {2} How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Impatience impacts our emotions when there seems to be no let up in the parade of problems that we encounter on the road of life. Anxiety arises and doubts creep into our thoughts when God delays in answering our prayers for relief. We wonder if God is there, or if He is there, does He care. David asked "How long?" four times as he struggled with a dark period in his life. Apparently, David was not sure if God had forgotten him or if God was just looking away from him. We know that God cannot forget but He does allow us to struggle with issues. When that happens, we fight a battle in our minds as to "why" the problems are occurring and "how" we might extricate ourselves from the problems. The battle spills over from the intellect into the emotions and we experience sorrow and we grieve for the loss or the pain we suffer. This is typically a period of self examination and we may discover something in our lives that needs discipline so that we can grow spiritually. As we struggle with the "why" and "how" we are still left with the "when" question of "how long."

David wondered how long the enemy would have the upper hand. The answer is "as long as it takes" for God's purposes to be accomplished in our lives. It is not about the enemy, it is about us and the fact that God is working in our lives to change us into the image of His Son. If we used the analogy of the Potter and the clay, this would be like the clay asking the potter, how much longer do I have to stay on this wheel and get pushed around and be distorted? The potter's answer would be "until we get it right."

When we see those who are evil having success and those who are struggling to do God's will having failures, we are saddened and wonder if God is fair. (God does not operate according to our rules wherein we define fairness.) We must trust God and know that He is working out a far greater salvation for us than what we have designed for ourselves. His definition of success is based on eternal qualities and not temporal values.

THE CRY OF PRAYER

{3} Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; {4} my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

If we consider these two verse in light of the questions of anxiety that David asked in the first two verses, then we see that the prayer for God to look on him is based on the belief that God had "hidden His face" from David. It is almost as if David was thinking that if God could just see how much he was suffering that He would take pity and him and provide relief. Not only did David want God's attention, he wanted an answer to his question of "how long?"

David's next prayer was for God to "enlighten" him. We do need a revelation from God (light to our spiritual eyes) or we may despair when trouble comes. How many times have we

found ourselves in difficult situations and wondered what the Lord was doing in our lives and what changes He was bringing about. We think “If we just knew the purpose of the trials, it would be so much better!” That is probably not true. Most of the time, if God did tell us what he was doing, then we would want to try to work out a solution in our own strength and that seldom, if ever, works.

David realized the importance of not being faint-hearted and failing to trust in God. The alternatives to hope based on God’s promises is despair. If we despair and go into depression, then our enemies will think they have won.

THE SONG OF FAITH

{5} But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. {6} I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me.

David knew the key to overcoming such emotional low points in life. When our soul is “cast down” the answer is to praise the Lord and trust in His goodness and power. In spite of the likely sense of guilt and perhaps an underlying realization that the problems he was encountering were brought on by his own actions, he also realized that his only way out was in God’s unfailing love. David’s faith in God was strong because he had seen God’s faithfulness and goodness throughout his life.