

Psalm 143

There's something I find myself saying over and over again throughout our study of the scriptures and that is this: Jesus never said that He was the *easy* way; He said that He was the *only* way. Make no mistake, a life that's set apart to Christ will be one that's filled with difficulties, with dilemmas, tough times and trials. Sometimes the attack of the enemy is obvious, other times it's very subtle. Sometimes something just comes out of left field and you're trying to crunch the numbers but it's not adding up, you're seeing the dots but not how they connect and it's tough, it creates confusion. You believe Romans 8:28 but right now you just can't put the pieces of the puzzle together; how it is that, "all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose" and this present problem or predicament in your life comes together...

It's a life lesson, one of those anchor Vs that has held me steady over and over again throughout my life as a believer. There they were: Jesus, His disciples and the multitudes. The people asked Jesus, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent." They said, "What sign will you do that we might see it and believe You? Our fathers were given bread from heaven." Jesus said, "Moses didn't give you bread from heaven, My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said, "Hey, we'll have some of that!" That's when Jesus began to say, "I am the bread of life" He began to speak of the need to eat of His flesh, to drink of His blood that we might have life and that apart from partaking of Him we can't have life.

As you might imagine that offended some folks, they couldn't comprehend that the words Jesus spoke were spirit, and they were life. He wasn't speaking about cannibalism, but about receiving Him, His broken body, His blood shed for the sin of the world into our inner most being. So people began to leave Him, many of His disciples turned away from Him and Jesus looked at the 12 and said, "If you want to leave, now's the time."

Translation: "It's not easy following Me, there will be times that you don't understand what's going on, how the dots connect, how the numbers add up and if you can't walk by faith then this isn't the life for you."

The bible teaches us that with out faith it's impossible to please God, because he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. That's when we read what's become one of those anchor kind of Vs for my life.

“But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” John 6:68 “Where else are we gonna go, there's no *where* else, and there's no *one* else that has the words of eternal life.” Nor is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

No matter how tough life gets, how hard it may be, how depressed you or I may find ourselves we will cling to Jesus Christ with all that we are. We will look *to* Him, we will trust *in* Him and pour out our hearts *before* Him casting our cares upon Him because He cares for us. There is no other rock, no other refuge; Christ alone is our shield, our safe place and our salvation.

But make no mistake in this world we will experience tribulation. Paul the apostle said, *“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”*¹

I say all that to say this, psalm 143 is another psalm of David whereby he finds himself down in the proverbial dumps; depressed and despairing. But he does as we need to do, he cries out *to* the Lord and finds his strength *in* the Lord.

The way I've looked at and chosen to outline this psalm is as follows. Vs 1-2 “David's Request”, Vs 3-4 “David's Reason”, Vs 5-6 “David's Remembrance”, Vs 7-10 “David's Refuge” and Vs 11-12 “David's Revival”, as for David's request, notice.

Vs 1-2

So really the request is 2 fold isn't it? #1 That God will hear Him and give ear *to* him and #2 that God wouldn't judge him or deal with Him according to His holiness and justice but rather according to His grace and mercy.

We've talked several times over the course of our study of the psalms about parallelism in Hebrew poetry and how a particular concept may be repeated in a slightly different fashion underscoring the principle and building in intensity.

¹ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ac 14:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Right here in Vs 1 David says, “*Hear my prayer, give ear to my supplications, in Your faithfulness answer me, in Your righteousness.*” David appeals to God’s character as the basis for his prayer, his request. That God would respond to him on the basis not of *David’s* faithfulness, not of *David’s* righteousness, but of *His* (God’s) righteousness and faithfulness. It’s the same exact basis that you and I appeal to God through when *we* sin, or *we* fall short of His glory, His greatness, His perfection. It’s found in 1 John 1:9 “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just (righteous) to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

We *never* appeal to God on the basis of our faithfulness, or our righteousness, we never come to Him on the basis of who we are, but upon the basis of who He is: merciful, gracious, faithful and righteous.

I was talking with a gal Sunday after church who’s been seeking to share her faith with some people she knows and the standard arguments of evolution, big bang, God’s a puppet master and “what about all the other religions” were brought up.

This is one of the primary differences between Christianity and all the other religions of the world. Every other religion is man’s effort to please God, and if I do enough things, the right way, perhaps I can get God’s attention, beyond that maybe He’ll even be pleased with me and if I’m super lucky He’ll even accept me. It’s man appealing to God, looking to find acceptance from God on the basis of their works, their righteousness.

The bible teaches that man is dead while he lives, that apart from Christ we’re dead in our sins/trespasses (or as it says in Vs 2, “For in Your sight no one living is righteous”). We read in *Ecclesiastes 7:20*, “*For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.*” *Proverbs 20:9* says “*Who can say, ‘I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin’?*” All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, there are none that are righteous, none who seek after God, no not one.

So as to where religion is man’s attempt to reach *up* and reach *out* to God, Christianity is God reaching *down* in His grace and mercy through the person of Jesus Christ to man and giving him everlasting life freely by grace through faith in Jesus. The bible teaches that Jesus bore our sin and through faith in Him accredits His righteousness to us. It’s never about what we do, it’s always about what He’s done. Or as it says in Romans 10:4 “*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*” He’s the end of legalism, a seeking to gain God’s attention through my meager efforts of righteousness.

So like David we say, “Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications, in *Your* faithfulness answer me, and in *Your* righteousness.” It’s never about me, it’s always about Him.

Vs3-4

This is David’s reason. The enemy was persecuting his soul, crushing his life and isolating him, segregating and separating him from those around him who might otherwise help him or strengthen him through a word of encouragement or helping to bear his burden. Now David was dealing with a physical enemy (some say Saul, others think Absalom, that’s really not the issue) who wanted him dead if not destroyed.

What *I* want *you* to see is the battle plan of the enemy of your soul. You and me, we don’t wrestle against flesh and blood (Eph 6), but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Make no mistake his agenda is to persecute your soul, to crush your life and to isolate you and separate you from the body of Christ so that he like a wolf can consume you like a weak sheep who’s strayed from the flock.

In John Ch 8 Jesus said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand for the truth. In Ch 10 He said, “*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.*” John 10:10 And as he begins to persecute you circumstantially, or crush your life inwardly it results (as David points out here) in depression and anxiety. Like one who dwells alone in darkness, my spirit is overwhelmed and my heart distressed with in me... We get discouraged, depressed; it’s those difficult dilemmas and tough times we spoke about in our introduction.

But more times than not when you’re downcast recognize it as the onslaught of the enemy. If there’s sin in your life that’s dragging you down than own it, confess it and repent. If not odds are there’s a spiritual dynamic taking place and we’re not to be ignorant of our enemy’s devices. Rather than be downcast, God desires that we cast down. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,*

casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” God will never be the One who seeks to burden you with fears and/or doubts. God hasn’t given us a spirit of fear (2 Tim 1:7), but of power and of love and of a sound mind. So when we’re feeling downcast, we’re to cast those feelings down in Jesus name.

Vs5-6

David's Remembrance: this is something we see commonly and with regularity in the psalms, a recalling/remembering of God's *past* faithfulness in order to draw strength for a *present* problem or predicament. God has never let me down in the past therefore I have no basis to believe that He'll let me down in the present.

When dealing with depression or anxiety (feeling overwhelmed) David does 4 things that he speaks of in these 2 Vs. #1 He Remembers. He thinks back to better times, the days of old. Even so the bible tells us (Rev 2:5) to *remember* from where we have fallen, to repent and to repeat the 1st works, to return to our 1st love relationship that we had with the Lord. Get back to that new believer, on fire, serving Jesus frame of heart and mind.

#2 He Meditates. He meditates on all of God's works, be it the works of creation, the magnitude of His power, the work of salvation in my life, the various monumental times that God has moved and made Himself real to me. Reflect on those things, think about those things, fill your heart and mind with His word and His ways in your life and in the lives of others. Perhaps He's delivered you from something that had you bound, perhaps He saved your marriage that was headed for destruction.

Perhaps your child is saved whom you were so worried about and wondering what would become of him/her. He's done great things in you, great things for you, meditate on those things.

#3 He Muses on the work of His hands. This is kind of a reinforcement underscoring the meditation; spending time thinking about how great and awesome God is. The word "muse" means to ponder, or proclaim, just letting the truth of God's word permeate you and assimilate into your being; you in Christ and His word in you... In the 8th psalm, 3rd and 4th Vs we read, "*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?*"² Isaiah speaks of God as measuring the waters in the hollow of His hand, heaven being the span of His hand (Isa 40:12), the dust of the earth being comprehended in a measure and the mountains weighed in scales and the hills in a balance. It's just healthy to meditate upon the magnitude of God. Because the better grasp we get on His magnitude the more our problems shrink. The bigger our God is, the smaller our problems become.

² *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ps 8:3-4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

4^{thly}, finally David worships the Lord, and cries out in prayer *to* the Lord. He says, “I spread out my hands to You.” It’s the posture of prayer, of worship and reverence before the Lord, “My soul thirsts/longs for You like a thirsty land.” It’s the picture of dry/cracked-hardened desert needing that refreshment that only the rainwaters can bring.

God’s presence, God’s voice, God’s word, is (in the words of the Proverbs [25:11]) like apples of gold in settings of silver (a word fitly spoken). It’s like water soaking into the dry/cracked and desperately needy ground, it works healing, rejuvenation, brings life and vitality, strength and refreshment.

Vs 7-10

David’s Refuge: he says in Vs 9, “In You I take shelter.” He’s leaning *on* God, looking *to* God, wanting to hear and learn *from* God, “God I trust You, I want to be taught *by* You, by Your Spirit” that should be the desire of every child of God, to want to learn from God, to be taught how to walk upright and in a way that’s pleasing *to* God. Of course we’re instructed in just that way through the *word of* God. He just submits himself completely and totally to the Lord. He says, “For I lift up my soul to You.” “I offer all that I am, O God, to You. Lead me, teach me, direct me, correct me, have Your way completely in me. Give me ears to hear You and cause me to know the way I should walk.”

Again I point out that God has given us these things in His word.

The bible says, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*”³

We note that David says, “Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning,”. Occasionally we speak about the fact that God is worthy of our 1st fruits. Sunday morning we spoke of the 1st fruits of our increase. Utilizing our present position to prepare wisely for our future state; here David is speaking of the 1st fruits of his day. Be it money, be it time, whatever it is God is worthy of the 1st of it, the best portion of it. We do well to set our minds and hearts in submission to the word of God as we start our day, to have our morning devotions.

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (2 Ti 3:16-17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now there's no condemnation if you have a different routine, it's not a bondage thing, or a burden thing, but it certainly can be a *blessing* thing to get your day dialed in through the word of God...

It's through the word of God that He will teach you to do His will; His Spirit will lead you in the land of uprightness.

Vs 11-12

David's Revival: "Revive me O Lord, bring my soul out of trouble." We note again that David's not asking for anything on the basis of who he is or what he has or hasn't done. He doesn't deserve anything but judgment and he knows it. So he says, "For the glory of *Your* name do a work of deliverance in *my* life. I know I don't deserve it, not saying that I've earned it, just help me for Your name's sake." "Deal with and destroy my enemies in Your mercy toward me and destroy those who afflict my soul for I am Your servant." Of course the scriptures teach that we are more than conquerors *through Him* who loved us (Rom 8:37).

It's not by our might, or by our strength, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. David doesn't seek to attack those who are coming against him personally, he simply commends them to the Lord and asks Him to take care of it expediently. Vengeance is the Lord's, He's the One who will repay. We cast our cares upon Him knowing that He cares for us and set our sights upon leading lives that glorify and magnify Him. So let your requests be made known to God and leave the results in His hands...

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your goodness, for the richness of Your word and the tenderness of Your ways; how You speak to us, lead, guide, direct and correct us. I pray for anyone here tonight who might be struggling with depression, or anxiety, being overwhelmed or distressed. That they might be encouraged and set free tonight to the glory of Your name. We thank You that You love us and that You'll never leave nor forsake us; and we give You praise.