

HOPE IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS

Psalm 71:13-15 ... “Let them [one’s enemies] be confounded and consumed who are adversaries of my life; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor who seek my hurt. But I will hope continually, and will praise you yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of your righteousness and your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits.”

Are you consumed with fear and uncertainty when severe trials come your way? It has happened to all of us at one time or another. As we mature in our relationship with Christ, moments of fear and anxiety become less frequent and less severe. They also do not last as long. Your trials may be financial, sickness, job-related, family matters, or something else. In today’s Scripture passage, the Psalmist is speaking of adversaries; people who were threatening or trying to hurt him. In the times in which the Psalms were written, Israel was nearly constantly at war with neighboring armies. David himself (who may have written the 71st Psalm) had enemies within his own palace court; people he could not trust and who wanted to knock him off the throne so they could take over. That may not be your struggle, but you can still face hard circumstances that test your faith and your resolve.

In the first part of today’s passage, the writer wishes his enemies confusion and dishonor. Frankly, when I face trials with difficult people, I do not pray against them, but for them. In fact, Jesus teaches us to do that in Matthew 5:44 ... “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” However, I have never faced someone who is desperate to kill me. Perhaps under such conditions, I might also pray that they would be made to look foolish.

The second part of today’s passage is the writer’s pledge to have continuous hope and to praise God despite the threats he is receiving. Furthermore, he says he will “tell of your [God’s] righteousness and salvation.” It is a powerful witness when a believer who is under fire and being persecuted, ignores the battle and insists on telling others about the goodness of God. When an unbeliever sees and hears you living in the hope of Christ, and witnesses your willingness to encourage others despite your own difficult situation, it is a genuine testimony; perhaps it will influence someone else to follow Jesus.

God placed the testimony of others in the Bible for our instruction and hope. No matter what your trial is or how badly you are hurting, it will always lift your spirits and improve your outlook when you praise God and tell others about him.

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