

Psalm 13 • In the Course of Endurance

Introduction

This short Psalm is a good example of what should take place in the course of a serious situation in life which, as yet, has not subsided nor shown any tangible divine response. It addresses our feelings and perceptions in the course of having to endure a hardship, trial or persecution, not yet even seeing the potential outcome in our favor.

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

¹How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?

How long will You hide Your face from me?

²How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
Having sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

[Read v.1-2]

Q: With what do these verses open up this Psalm?

A: With a complaint.

Q: Why is the question “how long” repeated four times? What is this actually addressing?

A: In v.1, this is a dramatic way of reinforcing the chief concern of how long it will be before God acts on the petitioner’s behalf; in v. 2 it is concern for being left alone with one’s own thoughts to navigate the issue and the source of the problem—“my enemy”, thinking they are successful in their efforts.

Q: So what seems to be the greater spiritual issue presented here?

A: That in the absence of a divine response, we tend to revert to our own “counsel”, our own way of interpreting what is taking place.

Application: It begins with an acknowledgment that it is an issue of **faith** in that it is not an outright **rejection** of God, but the danger of **succumbing** to our own ways and preferences.

³Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;

Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

⁴And my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”

And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken.

[Read v.3-4]

Q: What are these verses expressing?

A: A prayer for help.

Q: What does it mean, “enlighten my eyes”?

A: This is a Hebrew idiom for good health. (1 Sam. 14:27, 27; Ps. 38:10) We might say something similar such as, “Restore the luster to my eyes”.

Q: But what seems to be the greater concern again expressed in v.4?

A: That a spiritual victory will be claimed by those who are the source of the problem. What is taking place may be effecting a physical toll, but it’s the spiritual ramifications which are still held as most important.

Application: It escalates to a request to not just address the physical **discomfort**, but the greater **spiritual** outcome.

⁵But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness;

My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

⁶I will sing to the LORD,

Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

[Read v.5-6]

Q: With what do these verses conclude?

A: An expression of confidence.

Q: What is significant about the wording, “But I have trusted”?

A: It is a direct contrast to the previous verses, showing the petitioner’s response to the issues raised. It is phrased as a completed past action to show that in spite of his feelings and the circumstances, he has continually maintained faith and trust in God.

[Continued on the next page.]

Q: What are the three aspects in which confidence is expressed?

1. “Your lovingkindness” – God’s grace, His response even when we do not deserve or warrant it.
2. “Your salvation” – The promise of God’s deliverance.
3. “He has dealt bountifully with me” – God’s record of past answers to prayer upon which current and future acts of personal faith can rely.

Q: To what pinnacle does this brief Psalm attain in its final verse?

A: It concludes with praise.

Q: How is this praise given in the character of the expression of faith, “I have trusted”?

A: The cause for praise, “Because He has dealt bountifully” is also presented as a completed, past action.

Application: The nature of true **praise** given in an authentic attitude of **praise** is to recognize as already **completed** the work of the Lord regardless of present circumstances.

Overall Application

It does not take long to move from personal turmoil to trust and finally to joy when one’s heart is inclined more toward the spiritual outcome of things than the personal loss or attainment of benefits for one’s self alone.