

David's Prayer When Wrongly Accused

By

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Psalm 7

Augustine encouraged conversation at meals--but with a strictly enforced rule that the character of an absent person should never be negatively discussed. He had a warning to this effect carved on a plaque attached to his table.

As we begin this psalm we see that David, as always, is looking to the Lord to defend him against the wicked slander circulating in Israel. The psalm was composed by David to be sung to a certain tune with great emotion before the Lord as a response to the slander that had been spread by a man named Cush.

Cush was of the tribe of Benjamin, which was the same tribe as King Saul. Cush undoubtedly had an ulterior motive for his damaging slander that had now spread itself around the country. The false report he gave was in order to ingratiate himself with the house of Saul.

David was not the king at this time and he had come to be viewed as an enemy of the crown by king Saul. This was due to jealousy on the part of Saul and not due to any treasonous activity on the part of David. But men who knew of Saul's jealousy could feed that wicked attitude in order to curry favor with the king.

Men are accountable not only for their own sinful behavior but for the way they join in a wicked attitude with another person. One person's jealousy can promote wickedness in others. Saul certainly must share the blame for the slander that was circulating from the mouth of Cush about David because he wrongfully accused David of coveting the throne.

David's conscience did not condemn him. What a blessing to have a clear conscience. God gave every one

of us a conscience. Conscience is that invisible, silent monitor in the soul that convicts us of wrongdoing. No doubt the conscience is programmed to the law of God so that any infraction of the Law triggers the conscience and causes guilt. Even for those of us who have obtained the salvation of the Lord conscience still operates.

In this present life none of us are totally free from a sinful nature. Believers in Christ have a new nature born of God that does not sin. However we still have our old nature that is prone to sin and that can and does sin. Therefore we must constantly be on guard against temptation. And whenever we sin we need to repent and apply the remedy of God in Christ to our sinful soul. This is the only sure way to relieve a person of guilt.

The world apart from Christ copes with guilt in different ways. Men may simply ignore conscience and that hardens the heart. Or men may stifle conscience using drugs or alcohol. Or men may deny the validity of the Law or seek to set aside the Law of God. There are those who object to the Law of God being displayed, publicly or otherwise. Why do they want the Law of God removed? Isn't it because the Law convicts any who break the Law of sin?

In this Psalm David declares his innocence of the treasonous accusations being made against him. The slander against David instead of being stopped by the king, as it should have been, was instead being encouraged. The wicked slander being mouthed about came from those who were taking their cue from King Saul. Cush may have been one of Saul's own blood kin and it is possible that king Saul in promoting treasonous accusations against David had guided Cush.

David rightfully should have been in a place of power with king Saul because he had saved his hide in the matter of the giant Goliath and because he was the king's son in law. But that was not the case. Instead he

had no choice but to become a fugitive from king Saul's jealous wrath.

David could plead "not guilty" before God of the accusations being made against him. He declares, ³

**O LORD my God, if I have done this,
If there is injustice in my hands,
⁴ If I have rewarded evil to my friend,
Or have plundered him who without cause
was my adversary, ⁵ Let the enemy pursue
my soul and overtake *it*; And let him
trample my life down to the ground And lay
my glory in the dust.**

David knew he was a sinner but in this particular matter he is innocent. He has not done what was being said of him.

The righteousness of faith exonerates a man before God. The apostle Paul wrote: ¹ **there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. Rom. 8:1-:2**

The child of God can plead "not guilty" by reason of the atoning work of Christ. But a true Christian should be able to console himself with innocence of life before man as well. David could not have prayed this prayer unless he was truly innocent of the wrong-doing attributed to him by Cush and others. So he was innocent both ways, both by justifying grace and by an innocent conscience.

If a Christian does wrong and he knows it then he is obliged to repent and try to make right the wrong he has done. But when he is not guilty to begin with of the crime attributed against him then he has just grounds to plead his innocence as David did.

David strengthened himself in His God. He says in the opening verses of Psalm 7 ¹ **O Lord my God, in You I have taken refuge; Save me from all those**

who pursue me, and deliver me, Or he will tear my soul like a lion, Dragging me away, while there is none to deliver.

David knows that he had no hope except in His God. The earthly powers arrayed against him were beyond his own strength to overcome. Only in God was there hope of deliverance from king Saul. God can let us be at the end of human help and hope. David had a band of followers but humanly speaking they were no match for the army of Saul.

Listening to a student read the Scripture in seminary chapel, Joseph Sittler, who became blind, heard something he'd never heard before. **"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."**

"The text does not speak," said Sittler, "of the valley of death but the valley of the shadow of death. There is a difference. ... The wonderful truth is that God is with us now. It is not simply that God will be with us in the experience of death itself; it is that God will walk with us through all of life, a life over which death sometimes casts its shadow." -- Quoted by Martin Marty in "Context," August 1 and 15, 1984. Christianity Today, Vol. 30, no. 2.

This was what was happening to David. He was walking through the valley of the shadow of death because king Saul was out to kill him if he could.

Let us also note that words can devour; slander can ruin a man's reputation. We ought to be reminded that the Devil is at war with every child of God and he seeks to ruin his reputation, his support and his testimony. The child of God is like a helpless sheep before the malice and enmity of the enemy of souls. Only God can deliver us from the malice and enmity of Satan who is called the accuser of the brethren. David understood that and so should we.

David is hopeful toward God because he knows that God approves righteousness but deplors

wickedness. David speaks in verse 11 of the constant anger of the Lord toward the wicked: **God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day.**

We learn from this that God has a steady, uniform attribute of righteousness that resists the proud and opposes the wicked. We can rely on this, even though God is long-suffering and patient, not willing that any should perish but that all might come to repentance, yet he does not overlook sin. David refers to this attribute of holy indignation against sin as he pleads his case before God.

We can do the same when we are on the same ground David was on. He was innocent. He had been slandered and defamed and it was turning the country against him. Only God could deliver him. But God is fully able to do that.

Notice that David holds open to these wicked men who were slandering him the possibility of repentance. Repentance is one of the hardest things men have to do but God has commanded all men everywhere to repent.

When King Henry II was provoked to take up arms against his ungrateful and rebellious son, he besieged him in one of the French towns. The son, being near death, desired to see his father and confess his wrongdoing, but the stern old sire refused to look the rebel in the face. The young man, being sorely troubled in his conscience, said to those about him, "I am dying, take me from my bed, and let me lie in sackcloth and ashes, in token of my sorrow for my ingratitude to my father."

Thus he died, and when the tidings came to the old man outside the walls that his boy had died in ashes, repentant for his rebellion, he threw himself upon the earth like David had done at the death of his son Absalom, and said, "Would God I had died for him."

The thought of his boy's broken heart touched the heart of the father. If you, being evil, are overcome by your children's tears, how much more shall your heavenly father find in your bemoanings and confessions an argument for the display of his pardoning love through Christ Jesus our Lord? This is the eloquence God delights in, the broken heart and the contrite spirit. -- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*, (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, Inc, 1990)

Sad to say, men dead in trespasses and sin do not desire to repent. They like their sins and do not want to give them up. They are wed to their lusts and pride. Nevertheless, all men are held responsible for their sin and hardness of heart.

We don't read anywhere of Cush or Saul repenting, though Saul did seem to repent at times, but he always returned to his hateful, jealous attitude toward David. So the repentance was not maintained and his heart would harden once again.

How treacherous is the human heart. How difficult it is for men to repent and stay free from resentment and anger and self-pity and jealousy. The fruits of an evil heart are listed by the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:19-21. **¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. 5:19-21 (NASB)**

God allows all of us to be tested. David was surely tested in the slander that was directed against him, but he still held out hope for the wicked men who slandered him. He was not vindictive. He was willing for them to come to repentance. But men can get so bitter that they hope men go to hell. They curse men to hell. But this was

not the attitude of David. He allowed room in his psalm for repentance for those who were slandering him.

David notes that the divine arsenal is full of deadly weapons with which to inflict punishment on the wicked.

¹² **If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready.** ¹³ **He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts.**

God can send sickness, infirmity, disease, insanity, plagues, famine, war, earthquakes, fire, storms, calamity, terrorism, dread of unmentionable horrors and finally hell forever. David makes the point in verses 15 and 16 that there is poetic justice. The sinner who conceives mischief will dig a pit for himself. He will fall into his own trap; he will be blown up with his own device that was planned for another.

Saul sought after David with the sword and fell upon his own sword in the end. Haman hung on the gallows he had built for Mordacai. The men who sought Daniel's death in the lion pit were themselves thrown into that pit with all their wives and children.

We see this law of retribution in both Biblical history and secular history. The sovereign God who wills that retribution operate in the universe directs all history. As a man sows so shall he also reap. God's equity may be obscure in the beginning but it will appear in the end. There is a day of final reckoning coming and God will vindicate the righteous and He will destroy all the wicked.

David can say in the close of this psalm, ¹⁷ **I will give thanks to the LORD according to His righteousness And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.**

All of the wickedness of men will be set at naught and be put away forever in that final assize. We see it partially now, though in some instances we do not see the

end of the matter, but we will one day see how God has established just recompense to all men who have ever lived. The righteous will be set on his right hand and be blessed forever and the wicked will set on his left hand and be sent from His presence into everlasting torment.

We can pray this psalm of David whenever we have been slandered, or whenever satanic enemies seek to destroy us. We shall come forth victorious over all of our foes, even as David did. He died in a good old age with his kingdom intact and his reputation revered and honored.

David leaves behind a legacy of faith in God as his protection and refuge and he was fully vindicated in his faith. May that be my faith and your faith as well!

Hymn #468 “My Faith has Found a Resting Place”