

## The Lord Establishes His People

Psa. 102:1-11

### Introduction:

1. Sometimes the difficulties of this life are overwhelming.
2. I believe the writer of this Psalm understood that.
3. What he writes is a desperate plea.
4. He cries out to the Lord and begs for a quick response.
5. His language is graphic.
  - a. "My days have been consumed in smoke."
  - b. "My bones have been scorched like a hearth."
  - c. "My heart has been smitten . . . and has withered away."
  - d. "I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop."
6. He is so consumed with distress he has forgotten to eat. And when he does eat it is like eating ashes. His drink is mingled with weeping (tears?).
7. Where is hope? Where is joy? Where is celebration? All seem to be eclipsed by distress. Perhaps you share the Psalmist's sentiment.

### Discussion:

- I. The man of God is afflicted (1-11).
  - A. The question arises, "Is this an individual who is afflicted and complaining or is this person representative of Zion? (cf. v. 13).
    1. Zion is a term used to describe Jerusalem and particularly to describe her as the capital city of God's kingdom. It is the stronghold and fortress of God's kingdom (cf. 2 Sam. 5:7). Heb. 12:22 it comes to represent the city (the people as its citizens) of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.
    2. The two concepts are mingled together. What the individual is experiencing Zion is experiencing. In almost parabolic form the one is thrown down alongside the other.
  - B. The affliction is severe (3-9).
    1. There is a personal bodily aspect to it.
      - a. The Psalmist refers to "my bones," and "my heart." He says, "I resemble a pelican in the wilderness."
      - b. "I have become like an owl of the waste places."
      - c. "I lie awake."
    2. His enemies humiliate him all day long (8-9).
      - a. For those of us who have been relentlessly ridiculed and humiliated we can feel his pain.
      - b. We may even see in this the reproach born by Jesus for our sins (cf. Isa. 53; 1

Pet. 2:21-24). Heb. 11:26 and 1 Pet. 2:21-24 calls on us to bear up under such reproach as we share the sufferings of Christ. Heb. 12:3 says, "Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

- C. The Psalmist recognizes that the affliction is because of the Lord's indignation and wrath (10-11).
  - 1. It is almost ironic that he cries to the Lord for help while recognizing that his affliction comes as a result of the wrath of God.
  - 2. When I first read his words, "You have lifted me up," I want to read hope into it. But the Psalmist says, "You have lifted me up to throw me away."
  - 3. And if that is not a gloomy enough picture he adds, "My days are like a lengthened shadow." The sun is going down; darkness is enveloping me. "I wither away like grass." And that image may not do much for us here in the lush grassland of Kentucky, but in Israel's arid wilderness of rocks and sand and heat it is poignant.
  - 4. The Lord's indignation and wrath come as a result of our unfaithfulness (Psa. 101:6-8). Note that this Psalm begins with singing of the Lord's lovingkindness and ends with the commitment to "destroy all the wicked of the land." Those with good hearts are like the Lord. They despise injustice, slander, arrogant hearts, and those who take advantage of the vulnerable. So, do not fault God for being like you. Indignation and wrath against evil is right!

## II. The Lord will have compassion and be gracious to Zion (12-17).

- A. The Lord abides (12). What that means is that although circumstances are difficult the Lord continues therefore there is hope. But it is not just the fact that God abides that provides hope.
- B. He abides AND arises and has compassion (13). It is time to be gracious. The Psalmist rests confident in God's continuance and His compassion. With these there is deliverance.
- C. His compassion on Zion will result in the nations fearing the Lord (15-17).
  - 1. When those of the world see what God does for those who are His they will come and say, "Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths" (Isa. 2:3).
  - 2. In this language we hear rumblings of Gentiles coming to the Lord for deliverance and being relieved of their afflictions.

## III. The Lord will create a people that He may be praised (18-28).

- A. He had created the nation of Israel for His glory (Isa. 43:7), but the Psalmist sees a generation to come that will be created (18-19). In Christ we have been created to the

praise of His glory (Eph. 1:4-6, 11-14).

- B. He hears the groaning of the prisoner (20) doomed to death.
  - 1. Jesus came to set prisoners free (Isa. 58:1-7; 61:1; Lk. 4:18).
  - 2. Heb. 2:14-15: "Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."
- C. God is glorified when people see His work (21-22).
  - 1. He brings peoples together (Gal. 3:26-28; Eph. 2:14-22).
  - 2. And kingdoms to serve the Lord (Isa. 2:3; 1 Tim. 6:15).
- D. His eternal endurance is reflected in His seed being established (23-28).
  - 1. The Psalmist recognizes his temporal nature (23-24a).
  - 2. But God endures forever (24b-27).
  - 3. He perpetuates His servants and their children (28).

Conclusion:

- 1. What I see here is the man of God afflicted and relieved by a compassionate and gracious God.
- 2. I see a people created by God from those who are groaning prisoners.
- 3. I see Him acting through time to create a people for Himself.
- 4. Can we in our affliction not be so overwhelmed that we lose sight of the hope that He provides? Will we in our afflictions grow weary and lose heart? Cf. Heb. 12:1-13.
- 5. Or will we be faithful to the Lord who establishes His people?