

## Psalm 13 – “Perfect Timing”

Introduction -- Why does the LORD not come to our aid immediately when trouble starts? Why must there be a delay in the LORD’s help? Our impatience is the bane of many sleepless nights and our trust in the LORD’s care has taken a severe beating in the process. The sufferings that every believer will experience in this life add to our impatience. Our pressure cooker society has shaped and moulded us in ways that we do not care to admit. We are very much like the world rather than God in our thinking and actions. This hurts our testimony as Christians before our many loved ones who are still outside Christ.

Our reaction in times of trials is of utmost importance. The Name of Christ is at stake. Our spiritual well being is visibly seen in the manner that we go through trials. When we are victorious in the face of persecution, the Name of Christ is magnified. However, when we stumble and fall into sin by complaining and murmuring, then the Name of Christ is shamed. There are only two options. The old man would love to murmur and complain in time of trials and great difficulty. This is the sinful nature of the old man. However, as believers, we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. The sinful nature was crucified with Christ. The life that we now live, we live by the grace of God and Christ who lives in us. He strengthens all of us that we might live holy lives for Him. When we were depraved sinners, we could not help ourselves but sin because sin was our heartless master whose wages is death. Now that we are born again in Christ Jesus our Lord, we have the power not to sin. We are able to not succumb to sin with the Holy Spirit’s help and enabling. Therefore, there is no temptation so great such that we have to fall into sin but we can overcome the temptation so that we need not sin!

David was going through very great difficulties in his life. Whether Psalm 13 was penned before he became king or after is difficult to determine. If it was written before he became king, then the oppressors were King Saul and his men. If the psalm was written after he became king, then the oppressor was his son Absalom. Whichever the case might be, oppression is still oppression. David’s feeling was probably the same. The difference could be in the intensity of the oppression. If the oppressor was Absalom, the pain must have been worse. David was not murmuring to man here but crying to the LORD for help. He opened his heart to the LORD as the sufferings were too hard to bear alone. He could not wait for the persecution to end. David felt that the LORD might have forgotten him and left him at the mercy of his enemies who wanted him dead.

**I. Will God ever forget?** (v 1-2) – The rhetorical question from David is revealing, bearing in mind the conclusion of the psalm. How could David feel forgotten by the LORD unless he was under intense and unbearable persecution? When we are happy

and all is well in the LORD, there is no feeling of being forgotten. To be forgotten is a terribly lonely thing. With David, it was more in the mind than in reality. It feels as if no one can help. We are at our wits' end. We might be surrounded by many people but all of them do not understand and cannot help to relieve the pain, sorrow and fear in the heart. The worst kind of loneliness is to feel that perhaps even God might have forgotten us.

The intensity of this feeling was not lost to David and he asked another rhetorical question. The second rhetorical question was short and to the point emphasizing the urgency of his feelings. In the original Hebrew language, it is only one word! He uttered "for ever?" The second line in verse 1 is synonymous with the first line. This is for emphasis. In other words, David emphasized his loneliness and feeling of being forsaken by the LORD very intensely! Verse 2 reveals a bit more of what David was going through; verse 1 merely describes the intensity of David's feeling without explaining the cause for the feeling. David said that he had to speak within himself as to how long he waited for the LORD to bring deliverance. David described his trial as "having sorrow in my [his] heart daily." The word "sorrow" is a strong word that was also used by Jacob when he surmised that if he were to lose Benjamin his son after having lost Joseph, his sorrow or grief would bring him to the grave.

David's sorrow was exacerbated by the presence of his enemies. His enemies continued to have the upper hand no matter what David tried to do. David had no escape. The enemies seemed untouchable. They dominated and their will was carried out with impunity against David. For David to feel in his soul the intense pain of the LORD's apparent desertion was more than David could bear. When inner sorrow is coupled with the presence of the "high and mighty" enemies, David was overwhelmed. He felt he was near death within him as the pain intensified with no relief in sight!

**II. Will I ever die prematurely?** (v 3-4) – David turned to God in personal prayer. He continued to address God using the covenantal name Jehovah. This is the basis for David's appeal through his prayer unto the LORD. The use of "God" i.e. "elohiym" is an appeal to the power of the LORD. David used three imperatives to emphasize the urgency of his prayer. The first is the word, "consider" which means "to pay attention." The second is "hear" which means "to answer." The idea here is not for the LORD to obey, which is the usual meaning of the word "hear" when the subject of the verb is God. In this instance, David used a different word which is usually translated as "to answer." David cried to the LORD to answer, which means to intervene and deliver David out of his trial. The third is "lighten" which means "to give light." It is not to be understood as to lighten a load. David prayed to the LORD to open his eyes that he might be able to see and understand the delay in sending help.

David knew that the LORD would help. He wanted to understand the purpose for the delay. He did not wish to die before he was delivered. If David were to die before the deliverance, his enemies would gloat and say “I have prevailed against him.” David added by saying that his oppressors would also rejoice when David was moved i.e. shaken or overthrown. This is seen by the use of the synthetic parallelism in verse 4. This is a very common cry from God’s people who are fighting the good fight of faith. They were not fighting for their own name or glory. David was doing God’s will, having been anointed the king of Israel which was not of his own doing or initiative. He did not ask to be king but was made king by God. Only God could remove him. He did not want to fail the LORD by allowing these oppressors to move him from the path that the LORD had set for him. Evil men will rejoice when they see the will of God thwarted. They rejoice when God’s servants fall and give up the good fight of faith! David cried to God for intervention as his sorrow was crushing his soul. But God’s servant will never die prematurely. For believers to die prematurely in the hands of the enemy means that God’s work through His servant can be thwarted by sinful men. That would mean that the LORD is no longer sovereign. This will never happen. David might have felt like dying but it cannot happen to God’s servants.

**III. Will God ever be late?** (v 5-6) – No matter how sorrowful David felt, he would always trust in the LORD. Literally the word order is, “But I [emphasis] in Thy mercy have trusted.” The focus is not on David’s trust, for that seems to be rather weak here, but on the mercy of the LORD. David had experienced the mercy of the LORD before. He knew that he deserved all the sufferings due to him simply because he was a sinner. However, to appeal to the LORD’s mercy means that David acknowledged that though he deserved all these sufferings, he pleaded to the LORD to spare him for mercy’s sake! This is the right and biblical way to always pray for God’s deliverance. David’s heart would rejoice in the LORD’s salvation. David knew it would come. It was only a matter of God’s perfect timing.

David concluded by singing praises unto the LORD. The reason is that the LORD had dealt bountifully with him. What an amazing revelation given by David here. From the great sorrow David endured in his soul, the near death inner grief within him and the torment of his enemies on the outside to the LORD’s timely deliverance, this equals “the bountiful dealing of the LORD” toward His servant!

Conclusion – When the verdict from the High Court was out, many of God’s faithful servants cried and were devastated. However, when the judgement from the appellate court was known, many of God’s servants rejoiced. The journey was a long one. The LORD knew the end from the beginning. The innumerable precious lessons learned from this spiritual battle have strengthened the faith of many. Trials are long at times but

they are never longer than intended by the LORD for the blessings of God's people. These blessings include the strengthening of our faith and prayer life. God is never late in helping His children. He is always on time because His timing is always perfect. Amen.