

PSALM 13:1-6

CHAPTER STUDIES ON THE PSALTER

"After prayer comes praise; after faith comes peace and confidence."

The fourfold complaint with which the Psalm opens is not unknown to us. Whether, so far as the state of the soul in general, or some special burden is concerned, it sometimes seems as if Jehovah had forgotten us, and were hiding His face from us, leaving us to the counsels of our own hearts and to the power of the enemy (vers. 1, 2). Truly our pleading then is like striving 'to enter in at the strait gate.' Luther most aptly characterizes this questioning as 'hope which despairs, and despair which yet hopes.' The fact that it is couched in the form of questions, and addressed to Him in the accents of prayer, is evidence of the godly character of this sorrow, and pledge of its speedy removal. To shut up sorrow or conviction in our hearts is to be consumed. But to come with it straight to God, to pour out our hearts, and to tell all our sorrows and doubts, even that of His forgetting us 'forever,' which is the doubt of doubts, is evangelical repentance, turning and returning to God, as He reveals Himself in the covenant of grace.

Confession having been made, and the burden rolled off, the entreaty follows, not unmingled with anxious sighing (verses 3, 4). A fourfold prayer this, as there had been a fourfold complaint. See how firmly prayer holds by Him, when, the moment his soul is unburdened—by leaving its burden before

God,—he can say, 'Look hither' (attentively behold, consider), 'hear me, Jehovah my God' Most significantly he adds, after entreating grace from the covenant God 'lighten' (literally, cause to be light) 'mine eyes, lest I sleep death.' 'For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light.' Light and life, sleep and death, are spiritually correlative terms. As everyone in spiritual distress, he primarily solicits inward light, and only after that outward deliverance. It needs the opening of our eyes on His part, light from on high, if we are not to sleep death. But it only needs that. Christ and salvation are there; we do not see them, and hence we sleep in death. But to behold is to live. Oh, what a subject for prayer, what need of prayer, what encouragement to prayer! 'What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?' We may apply directly to our God, and from a state of sleep and death be immediately transported into one of light and of life. Oh, golden key of believing prayer, which Jesus gives us to unlock those pearly gates of the realm of light and of life! 'In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.' I have all, since Jesus is offered to me. There is only a 'lest' left of fear and danger, or rather a 'that not' as the Hebrew word means. These things are behind me. I urge them as pleas, knowing that 'my God'

cannot 'deliver me to the will of mine enemies,' 'that mine enemy shall not say' (be not saying), 'I have been able against him' (I could, I have been powerful, or prevailed); 'my oppressors' (they that press upon me, my tremblers) 'jubilee' (or, be jubilant) 'when' (or, because) 'I shall be moved' (am being moved).

But, as already noted, all this is past. After prayer comes praise; after faith comes peace and confidence. Right over against their devices and jubilee he puts his own trust and jubilee, and there he remains, singing the praises of redeeming mercy. 'And I, in Thy grace have I trusted' (the idea being here that of cleaving to it); 'my heart shall jubilee in Thy salvation; I will sing to Jehovah, for He hath dealt bountifully with me' (He hath returned benefit unto me). Here there is firm ground on which to rest. Not looking behind, but cleaving to free and sovereign grace; laying hold upon, and holding by it, though in truth it is 'Thy grace' which holds us. If this is not gospel truth, or glad tidings, surely it is nowhere else to be found, in heaven or on earth. Arise, my soul, and make trial of it; learn to know Him, learn to trust His grace, and learn to jubilee in His salvation—body, soul, and spirit, world without end. Amen. (*The Golden Diary*, Alfred Edersheim, updated by Mark Wash)

Can you identify with David's words "How long, O Lord"?

What was David asking God to do?

What is David's tone toward the end of this Psalm?