

Waiting for Salvation

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

- [0 : 00] We're in Psalm 119, verses 81 to 88, Calf. Let me read it out loud for us.
- My soul longs for your salvation. I hope in your word. My eyes long for your promise.
- I ask, when will you comfort me? For I become like a wineskin in the smoke, yet I have not forgotten your statutes. How long must your servant endure?
- When will you judge those who persecute me? The insolent have dug pitfalls for me. They do not live according to your law. All your commandments are sure.
- They persecute me with falsehood. Help me. They have almost made an end of me on earth. But I have not forsaken your precepts. In your steadfast love, give me life.
- [1 : 09] That I may keep the testimonies of your mouth. Let me brief this evening because this recovers a lot of the themes that we've been looking at over the last two weeks.
- And here, this psalm is characterized by longing for God. Twice, it mentions the word long. Verse 81 and again in verse 82.
- And the context seems to be some kind of persecution, affliction, assault by the enemy. The word persecution occurs twice as well in verses 84 and 86.
- It seems like the psalmist is in pretty desperate straits. He describes his condition like this in very vivid imagery in verse 83.
- It says, For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke. And I have not forgotten your statutes. This is normally a wineskin. It contains wine but also other forms of drink in this day and age.
- [2 : 14] But when it's regularly used, it's moist, you know, plump, it's pliable, flexible. But when you're not using it, people would hang it on the rafters above the hearth to dry, you know, so that the smoke and the heat from the furnace goes up to it.
- And if it's not used for a long time, in disuse it becomes very dry, kind of, you know, kind of crusted or even rigid.
- And it's a great picture of kind of your life or being sapped from you, a picture of dryness, of being longing and waiting for, you know, water or, you know, wine.
- And so he describes his life that way. I have become like a wineskin in the smoke. However, even then, he has not forgotten God's statutes.
- He puts it very literally later in verse 87, very bluntly, that they have almost made an end of me on earth. And again, he says still, but I have not forsaken your precepts.
- [3 : 24] So this, I don't know what exactly it is. They're slandering him, his enemies, because he says in verse 86, they persecute me with falsehood.
- But it's pretty intense. He's literally at the end of his rope. He's at the end of his life. He feels like he's about to die. And out of that desperate place, he asks God these heart-wrenching questions in verse 82.

When will you comfort me? How long must your servant endure? When will you judge those who persecute me? But even as he's asking these questions through it all, he insists on keeping God's promise, keeping God's laws.

Yet I have not forgotten your statutes. I have not forsaken your precepts. This is a good lesson for us. I mean, it's really hard to imagine that kind of suffering, persecution.

I mean, maybe believers in a place like Algeria that we've been praying for for the month of September, you know, know what it's like to be persecuted in this way and cry out with such longing. I think we experienced it in a much smaller degree, if at all.

[4 : 40] And, I mean, it's almost humorous for me to even mention this, but, like, my week's been kind of rough.

And we had a, I mean, a long week last week, and then on Sunday we were pretty exhausted. We didn't even go to the Rift Fest because we've been going for the last three years.

And then on Monday, Hannah came down with, like, some kind of stomach flu. So she was literally bedridden for, I think, maybe, like, 20 hours of the day.

And then it's, like, throwing up and not able to do anything. And then I thought, and then Inji gets it the next day.

Yeah. And then Inji starts throwing up and then has a diarrhea. And I'm like, oh, at least Ine and I are okay, you know. And then I take Ine to school on Tuesday.

[5 : 49] And then I get a call from the school nurse saying that she has a fever. And that's why I need to go pick her up. And then come back. And then, like, I'm trying to do grocery shopping or whatever. And then Inji throws up on my shoulders.

And I have to clean it up, you know, and, like, at the grocery store. And it's, like, it was just one of those weeks, you know. It's, like, I have hardly had time to do anything. I hardly had time to prepare for the sermon.

And then, like, and also, it's not even just the physically, physical trials of it. But spiritually, like, it becomes harder. Like, I mean, it will totally ruin my rhythm for, you know, prayer and in the morning.

And, like, I'm just, and I'm more irritable, you know, when all these things are happening. It's hard to be patient with kids when you're doing all these things for them.

And they're totally oblivious to your benevolence and are complaining and whining and crying for every little thing. And then you're just, like, how long, oh, Lord, right?

[6 : 49] I mean, it's so trivial in comparison to what the psalmist is going through. But we all go through things like that in life. And I think it's, but God gives us those trials, as we know from other places in Scripture, to test us, to prove the genuineness of our faith, right?

And that's the thing. It's in this stanza, the answer to his prayers don't come. But the fact that he's praying shows that he's persevering in faith. He's waiting on the Lord through all these things.

And in 1 Peter 1, 6-7, it says, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So what he's saying there is when, just like a gold, you know, when it's tested through a fire, you know that it's real gold. It's not fool's gold. A person's faith, its genuineness is proven when you endure through trials and you still have faith.

That means with every trial, we have greater assurance of salvation, right? Because every time we go through another one, we realize, no, we have real faith. God's preserved us and we're going to make it to the end.

[8 : 0 4] And this psalmist is experiencing that. He feels like he's at the end of his life, but there's light at the end of the tunnel. He knows that as long as he endures, as long as he waits, as long as he longs for the Lord, there's going to be vindication.

And he's proven, tested genuineness of his faith. It's going to result in his ultimate salvation. And that's what we should, our posture should be in life. That's what Christ did, right?

Christ suffered and died in our place and was ultimately vindicated through his resurrection and ascension. And we are to, as his followers, walk in the footsteps, hit his footsteps.

And as we do that, we become a picture of what Christ has done for the world to see. And we get to experience the joy that Christ experienced in persevering in the faith.

So let's sing a song and pray. Amen. Amen.