

The Dishonored Man

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 44

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I. Hezekiah and Sennacherib (2 Chron 32:1-23)

“Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. and in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered” (2 Chr 31:20-21). In the midst of this spiritual renewal and revival, *after*, in the words of the Chronicler, *these deeds of faithfulness*, calamity struck. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, attacked Judah and laid siege to the city of Jerusalem.

And it was just such a situation that sets the background to Psalm 44. Psalm 44 was written during a time of spiritual renewal and national calamity. The king and people were endeavoring to serve the Lord with faithfulness. In the midst of this, however, calamity struck. Israel’s armies were defeated by her enemies and the nation appeared to be on the brink of ruin.

II. Summary

“It is a psalm calculated for a day of fasting and humiliation upon occasion of some public calamity, either pressing or threatening. In it the church is taught, I. To own with thankfulness, to the glory of God, the great things God has done for their fathers (v. 1–8). II. To exhibit a memorial of their present calamitous estate (v. 9–16). III. To file a protestation of their integrity and adherence to God notwithstanding (v. 17–22). IV. To lodge a petition at the throne of grace for succour and relief (v. 22–26).” (M. Henry, 805)

III. The Dishonored Man

A. Remembering God’s *Hesed* (1-8)

The psalmist recalls God’s faithfulness in the past, a faithfulness of which the children *“heard with their ears”* from the fathers who *“told them.”* God had brought Israel into the promised land and driven out the tribes that dwelt there by His might not their strength:

“It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.” (Dt 9:5-6)

The psalmist has seen the Lord’s faithfulness in his day as well. The Lord has not only been the God of the fathers; He has been the psalmist’s God as well. The singer of the psalm makes a personal assertion of faith. This reminds us that the only way that _____ can be faithful is if the Israelites are faithful. The psalm summons each of us to covenant faithfulness.

B. Lamenting Current Dishonor (9-16 cf. 2 Chron 32:13-15)

The psalmist is deeply disturbed by the current calamity – most likely a military defeat. Though our fathers remained faithful to the Lord, God seems to have *cast them off and put them to shame*. In verses 15-16, the psalmist identifies with this national dishonor. It is not just the dishonor of the nation; it is _____ dishonor. But this shame does not arise from the psalmist's unfaithfulness (like Psalm 51) but from the taunts of God's enemies.

C. Protesting Our Faithfulness (17-22)

This dishonor has come even though our fathers were faithful to the Lord. They had not *forgotten* the Lord nor *dealt falsely with the covenant* (17), yet they were suffering. This reminds us that *not all suffering is discipline for sin*. Some suffering is for the glory of God: "*Yet for _____ sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*" (22).

D. Petitioning God's *Hesed* (23-26)

So the psalm closes by petitioning God to show His favor once again, to manifest His covenant faithfulness, His _____.

IV. Dealing with Dishonor

A. Suffering Dishonor *for* the Lord of Glory (cf. Rom 8:31-39)

Psalm 44 reminds us that when we are faithfully serving the Lord, we have the privilege of crying out to God in the face of calamity and summoning Him to rise up on our behalf.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

B. Suffering Dishonor *with* the Lord of Glory (cf. Phl 2:5-11; Col 1:24; 1 Pt 4:13; Hb 13:12f)

Psalm 44 reminds us that our Lord Jesus does not distance Himself from our _____ but identifies with us in it. He takes up our shame and reproach. He does not keep us at arm's length. He identifies with us and owns our dishonor as His own, "*My dishonor is continually before me, and the shame of my face has covered me*" (15).

V. Conclusion