

Sermon 6-21/25-17 Psalm 41 When One is Down

Dear Cared for by the Lord:

As we set God before us as an object of trust, so God sets us before Him as an object of protection. Psalm 41 is God speaking to anyone who may be down and out.

King David wrote Psalm 41. Some believe it was during the time he was being persecuted by his own son Absalom who drove David out of the king's palace and replaced him as king for a short time. This was a very trying time for David as he fled Jerusalem to save his life.

It speaks of God's tender, loving care in the critical care unit of life.

I. The Chance to Help vv1-3

The Psalm begins by reminding us that the Lord takes note of our compassion toward others. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Mt 5:7

Blessed we are when we consider the poor....those who are weak and desponded....poor in substance and weak in body. Blessed is the one who...

- When we attend to the poor
- When we act wisely toward the poor
- When we give careful thought to the poor, the weak and the helpless

He who considers the poor trusts God, willing to give from his own resources. He who considers the poor helps those who likely will not help him in return.

The merciful will obtain mercy.

We are able to give mercy because we have received mercy from our Lord. We are able to love others because the Lord loved us first.

Verses 1b-3 of Psalm 41 depicts the Lord as a doctor dispensing His tender loving care.

What is our greatest need?

- To be forgiven of our sins
- To be made holy by the righteousness of Christ
- Hebrews 10:10 "...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

We also have physical needs. We pray for our physical needs to be met in the Lord's Prayer.

Our give us this day our daily bread. What does this mean?

Luther says: "To sum things up, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in the world, for we need daily bread because of life alone...but this petition is especially directed also against our chief enemy, the devil. For all this thought and desire is to deprive us of all that we have from God or to hinder it...He also causes lightning and hail to destroy grain and cattle, to poison the air, and so on. In short, he is sorry if anyone has a morsel of bread from God and eats it in peace." Pp. 443-444 Concordia The Lutheran Confessions

In verse 3 the Lord is pictured as one who holds us up when we suffer and sustains us. The phrase "sustain him on his sickbed" literally means to adjust the bed of the bed-ridden so he may be more comfortable.

Most commentators believe that David's misery and low estate as described in Psalm 41 was due to his sickness and the danger that he was in for his own life.

II. The Chance to hurt vv4-10

King David speaks of his struggles and requests God to deliver to him...

- Grace
- Health
- Forgiveness

David acknowledges his sin before the Lord and asks for God's mercy and healing. It has been said that confession is good for the soul. Confession is also good for the body.

After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba he then was involved in the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah. David waited a whole year before he confessed this sin to the Lord. When David finally confessed he wrote Psalm 32.

David acknowledges that his unconfessed sins brought him physical illness. He writes: **"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long...my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer."** Ps 32:3-4

Un-confessed sin will affect physical health. A guilty conscience will affect physical health.

That's why David also wrote in Psalm 32: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him." Ps 32:1-2

David came clean before the Lord but he still was beset by his earthly enemies. David speaks of being physically ill and having people visit him not to give him encouragement but to find out how ill he is and to spread lies about him. Vv5-8 These people who visit him during his illness only want to find out how much time he has left before his demise.

This is called a “lying condolence” When people visited David they said the right things but did not mean them in their heart...

- We are so sorry to hear that you are sick
- We hope you are going to be better soon
- Is there anything we can do for you?

After they left David they said to themselves: “Didn’t he look awful? I don’t think he is going to make it.”

It’s one thing to have one’s enemies betray you but quite another to have one’s friend betray you as David contends in verse 9. David’s close companion betrayed him.

- Of course, his own son, Absalom, could be the person David is describing here. Absalom who spread lies about his father and drove his father out of Jerusalem to take over as king certainly betrayed his father.
- David’s own trusted adviser, Ahithophel, also betrayed him. II Sam 15:12

This verse is also a prophetic verse pointing to Judas’ betrayal of Jesus. This verse was quoted by Jesus when he instituted the Lord’s Supper with his disciples and said: “He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.” One who shared a meal with Jesus...one of His own disciples betrayed him.

“The kiss of the traitor wounded our Lord’s heart as much as the nail wounded his hand.” Spurgeon

David has trust in the Lord that his enemies will not triumph over him.
Vv10-11

Neither will our enemies triumph over us. Our greatest enemy, Satan, has been defeated.

The Apostle John saw the victory of the Gospel over Satan in his vision of Revelation.

Revelation 10:1ff “Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven...he was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand...and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion.”

- This angel is so large that all can see him
- With a voice like the roar of a lion, all in the world could hear him
- This angel announces the Gospel for all the world to hear
- The Gospel is proclaimed throughout the world inviting sinners to find hope in the light of the Lord.
- The world can’t afford to ignore the message of the Mighty Angel
- God’s victory over the forces of evil will be made known for all to see and hear
 - Pp. 108-110 7 Visions 7 Truths The Book of Revelation David Scherbarth

III. The Last Word vv11-13

David revels in God’s care and realizes it is the Lord who sustains him.

When David speaks of integrity in verse 12 he is not saying he is perfect but because of God’s grace and forgiveness he has freedom from a fatal

defect. We all do in Christ. We are covered by the righteousness of Christ.

David also acknowledges the Lord's fellowship with him: "And set me before Your face forever." More important than the triumph over his earthly enemies was walking with the Lord.

"To stand before an earthly monarch is considered to be a singular honor, but what must it be to be a perpetual courtier in the palace of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible?" Spurgeon

What David is saying is this: He praises the Lord for the Lord watches and cares for him. David is an object of God's love and so are we.

David recognizes God's compassion and says Amen which means "It is true."

Luther said about our hearts: "A human heart is like a ship on a wild sea, driven by the storm-winds from the four quarters of the world. Here it is struck with fear, and worry about coming disaster; there comes grief and sadness because of present evil. Here breathes a breeze of hope and of expectation of happiness to come; there blows security and joy in present blessings.

Amen and Amen – It is true!

When one is down - turn to Psalm 41