

PSALM 70

This psalm is adapted to a state of affliction; it is copied almost word for word from the fortieth, and, some think for that reason, is entitled, “a psalm to bring to remembrance;” for it may be of use sometimes to pray over the prayers we have formerly made to God upon similar occasions, which may be done with new affections. David here prays that God would send,

I. Help to himself (v. 1, 5).

II. Shame to his enemies (v. 2, 3).

III. Joy to his friends (v. 4). These five verses were the last five verses of Psalm 40. He seems to have intended this short prayer to be both for himself and us a salve for every sore, and therefore to be always in mind; and in singing we may apply it to our particular troubles, whatever they are.

PSALM 70:1-5

URGENT PETITIONS

To the chief musician. A psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

The title tells us that this psalm was designed to bring to remembrance; that is, to put God in remembrance of his mercy and promises (for so we are said to do when we pray to him and plead with him. ²⁴¹⁶Isaiah 43:26, *Put me in remembrance*) — not that the Eternal Mind needs a remembrancer, but this honour he is pleased to put upon the prayer of faith. Or, rather, to put himself and others in remembrance of former afflictions, that we may never be secure, but always in expectation of troubles, and of former devotions, that when the clouds return after the rain we may have recourse to the same means which we have formerly found effectual for fetching in comfort and relief. We may in prayer use the words we have often used before: our Saviour in his agony prayed thrice, saying the same words; so David here uses the words he had used before, yet not without some alterations, to show that he did not design to

tie himself or others to them as a form. God looks at the heart, not at the words.

I. David here prays that God would make haste to relieve and succour him (v. 1, 5): *I am poor and needy*, in want and distress, and much at a loss within myself. Poverty and necessity are very good pleas in prayer to a God of infinite mercy, who despises not the sighing of a contrite heart, who has pronounced a blessing upon the poor in spirit, and who fills the hungry with good things. He prays,

1. That God would appear for him to deliver him from his troubles in due time.
2. That in the mean time he would come in to his aid, to help him under his troubles, that he might not sink and faint.
3. That he would do this quickly: *Make haste* (v. 1), and again (v. 5), *Make haste, make no tarrying*. Sometimes God seems to delay helping his own people, that he may excite such earnest desires as these. *He that believes does not make haste*, so as to anticipate or outrun the divine counsels, so as to force a way of escape or to take any unlawful methods of relief; but he may make haste by going forth to meet God in humble prayer that he would hasten the desired succour. "*Make haste unto me*, for the longing desire of my soul is towards thee; I shall perish if I be not speedily helped. I have no other to expect relief from: *Thou art my help and my delivered*. Thou hast engaged to be so to all that seek thee; I depend upon thee to be so to me; I have often found thee so; and thou art sufficient, all-sufficient, to be so; therefore make haste to me."

II. He prays that God would fill the faces of his enemies with shame, v. 2, 3. Observe,

1. How he describes them; they sought after his soul — his life, to destroy that — his mind, to disturb that, to draw him from God to sin and to despair. They desired his hurt, his ruin; when any calamity befel him or threatened him they said, "*Aha, aha! so would we have it; we shall gain our point now, and see him ruined.*" Thus spiteful, thus insolent, were they.
2. What his prayer is against them: "*Let them be ashamed*; let them be brought to repentance, so filled with shame as that they may seek thy name (¹⁸³⁶Psalm 83:16); let them see their fault and folly in fighting against those

whom thou dost protect, and be *ashamed of their envy*, ^{Isaiah 26:11}. However, let their designs against me be frustrated and their measures broken; let them be turned back from their malicious pursuits, and then they will be ashamed and confounded, and, like the enemies of the Jews, *much cast down in their own eyes*,” ^{Genesis 6:16}.

III. He prays that God would fill the hearts of his friends with joy (v. 4), that all those who seek God and love his salvation, who desire it, delight in it, and depend upon it, may have continual matter for joy and praise and hearts for both; and then he doubts not but that he should put in for a share of the blessing he prays for; and so may we if we answer the character.

1. Let us make the service of God our great business and the favour of God our great delight and pleasure, for that is seeking him and loving his salvation. Let the pursuit of a happiness in God be our great care and the enjoyment of it our great satisfaction. A heart to love the salvation of the Lord, and to prefer it before any secular advantages whatsoever, so as cheerfully to quit all rather than hazard our salvation, is a good evidence of our interest in it and title to it.

2. Let us then be assured that, if it be not our own fault, the joy of the Lord shall fill our minds and the high praises of the Lord shall fill our mouths. Those that seek God, if they seek him early and seek him diligently, shall rejoice and be glad in him, for their seeking him is an evidence of his good-will to them and an earnest of their finding him, 105:3. There is pleasure and joy even in seeking God, for it is one of the fundamental principles of religion that God is the *rewarder of all those that diligently seek him*. Those that love God's salvation shall say with pleasure, with constant pleasure (for praising God, if we make it our continual work, will be our continual feast), *Let God be magnified*, as he will be, to eternity, in the salvation of his people. All who wish well to the comfort of the saints, and to the glory of God, cannot but say a hearty *amen* to this prayer, that those who love God's salvation may say continually, *Let God be magnified*.