

Introduction: Our study of Psalm 44 in the early and tumultuous days of 2021 shows how determined God is to help us at our weakest and most desperate times. Psalm 44 is proof that God sovereignly puts us in places of blessing by making us experience helplessness and even broken-heartedness about our sin. It is at such low times that His covenant faithfulness and love shine through. May we, then, experience the joy and relief of being able to say with the Psalmist in Psalm 44:26: “Rise up and help us; redeem us because of your *unfailing love*.”

Mon/Tues: read Psalm 44:1-3 and Matthew 5:1-3. The poverty of spirit which Jesus pronounces “blessed” must surely have at its root a firm conviction of the electing grace of God. For example, we saw last week that the “sons of Korah” were indeed such an example of electing grace in Psalm 44. Even though their earthly father, Korah, turned out to be a “vessel of wrath”, prepared for destruction”, (Rom. 9:22), God was able to snatch these sons of Korah and use them for His glory as life-long servants in His house!

Imagine the loyalty of these saved sons of Korah to God’s cause. Imagine the gratitude which would permeate all their works around God’s House as Levites! How did Jesus put it? “He who is forgiven much, loves much.” No wonder there is such a love for God’s house in so many of the Psalms of the sons of Korah: Psalm 42:2,4; 46:4-5; 48:1-3 and 48:11-14, (to name just a few)! They loved worship because they treasured the grace which had been shown them!

Meditate and Pray: “Lord, remind us of the deep, abiding grace shown to us in Jesus Christ. Give us a whole-hearted joy in “offering up our bodies as living sacrifices” as we, with the help of the sons of Korah, have a fresh view of your mercies! Most important, make us to be dedicated servants in your house, loving the place of thine abode. Amen.”

Weds/Thurs: read Psalm 44:1-8 and Matthew 5:1-12: The greatest blessings of the Kingdom of God ... citizenship; comfort from the Spirit of God; inheriting the world; being filled with righteousness; seeing the face of God and great rewards in Heaven, (see Matthew 5:1-12), are treasures reserved for believers *in their* poverty of spirit; heart-brokenness; meekness; hunger and longing to see God!

Think of about this! It is marvelous that such empty-handed and lowly qualities as those outlined in Matthew 5:1-12, (which *disqualify* Christians in the eyes of a world that stresses ability; assertiveness; pride and personal wealth), *are actually the only qualifications we bring to the throne of God!* Oh, let us humble ourselves right now, under God’s mighty hand, that He might lift us up in due time! After all, don’t you think that the *memory* of how God sovereignly passed over their ancestor Korah, and yet spared many of his descendants *must have* constantly humbled the sons of Korah in their service of their king?

Meditate and Pray: Ask God to continually give you a memory that is keen in recollecting your sin, but slow to remember the offenses of others against you! As hymn # 251 puts it:

*Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat, and the
burden of the day.*

*Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One Who suffered there for
me;
And from my stricken heart with tears two wonders I
confess;
The wonders of redeeming love and **my**
unworthiness.*

Fri/Sat/Sun: read Psalm 44:22-26. We saw last week that even the sons of Korah, when pressed by trials and painful persecution, fell into the trap of accusing thoughts and words against God. We learned that there is simply no excuse for their venting against God – whether accusing Him of being asleep in Psalm 44:23, or even accusing God of callously hiding His face from their sufferings and forgetting them in verse 24! John Calvin confirms this view when he admits in his commentary on Psalm 44:24 that the holy prayers of this Psalm were in fact “defiled” by such brash complaining against God.

Yet we must guard against a judgmental spirit against these sons of Korah. Which one of us is able to go through humiliations, mournful tragedies, hungering and thirsting, and especially unjust torments at the hands of a hostile world, – without bitter regrets, doubts *about* and even recriminations *against* God? When we find ourselves like the sons of Korah tempted to speak against God because of our lot, keep in mind *the way this Psalm ends in verse 26*, as proof that the sons of Korah persevered in faith and hope, despite their groans and questionings against God. Utterly exhausted after their complaint against God, whom they accuse in verse 11 of “handing them over to be devoured like sheep”, God gives them healing words of submission and trust in vv. 25-26:

*For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground.
Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love! (ESV)*

Meditate and Pray: Beautiful to see what sheer physical/spiritual exhaustion brings out in the sons of Korah, isn't it? Instead of accusing God relentlessly with a 2nd person form of address in verses 9-24, describing all that God has unjustly allowed to happen; instead of appealing to their own integrity in verses 17-19: (“We have not been false... Our hearts have not turned back... Our feet have not strayed”) – they now turn in Psalm 44:26 and appeal to God's covenant faithfulness: “Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love...” . Ah, sons of Korah – you have learned the secret of the kind of faith which yields itself up to God. When you are weak in your own eyes, then God appears strong on your behalf. Sing about the sweet spirit of repentance which God brings upon us when we have exhausted ourselves with our doubts and bitter words against Him, using hymn # 186:

*One there is, above all others,
Well deserves the name of friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once His kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love!*

*Which of all our friends to save us,
Could or would have shed their blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled, in Him to God:
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a friend in need.*

*When He lived on earth abasèd,
Friend of sinners was His name;
Now, above all glory raisèd,
He rejoices in the same:
Still He calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.*

*Could we bear from one another,
What He daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious friend and brother,
Loves us though we treat Him thus:
Though for good we render ill,
He accounts us brethren still.*

*O for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often,
What a friend we have above:
But when home our souls are brought,
We will love Thee as we ought.*