

How gracious God is in His determination to bless us at our weakest and most desperate times. Like the first four Beatitudes in Matthew 5, Psalm 44 is proof that God sovereignly puts us in places of blessing by making us experience helplessness, demerit, and increased 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

Blessed are the Grateful

The poverty of spirit which Jesus pronounces *blessed* must surely have at its root a firm gratitude for the electing grace of God. We saw last week that the Sons of Korah were indeed such an example of electing grace. 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! This gratefulness transformed their “have-tos” into “get-tos.”

Imagine the loyalty of these rescued Sons of Korah to God’s cause. Imagine the humble thankfulness 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, keep reminding 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

Treasure in Poverty

The great 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 are treasures reserved for believers *in their* poverty of spirit, heart-brokenness, meekness, hunger, and longing to see God! Think about this! Such empty-handed and lowly qualities as those outlined in Matthew 5:1-12 would *disqualify* Christians in a world that stresses ability, assertiveness, pride, and personal wealth, yet they 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, the *memory* of how God sovereignly passed over their ancestor Korah and yet spared many of his descendants *must have* constantly humbled and tenderized the sons of Korah in their service of their king. So may it be with us.

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**Confident in Self Despair**

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. There is simply no excuse for their venting against God, accusing Him of being asleep (Ps. 44:23), and even accusing God of callously hiding His face from their sufferings and forgetting them (verse 24)! John Calvin confirms this just criticism, in his commentary on Psalm 44:24, saying that the holy prayers of this Psalm were in fact “defiled” by such forward, brash complaining against God.

Yet, we must guard against a censoriousness or judgmental spirit against these sons of Korah. For 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? Instead, when we find ourselves like the sons of Korah tempted to speak out against God because of our lot in life, let us 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 by their litany against God, whom they accuse of handing them over “to be devoured like sheep” (vs. 11&22), they turn in their exhaustion to more gracious words of submission and trust in vv. 25-26:

*We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground.
Rise up and help us; redeem us because of your unfailing love. (NIV)*

*For our soul is bowed down to the dust; Our body clings to the ground.
Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercies' sake. (NKJV)*

*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: It’s beautiful to see what sheer physical and spiritual exhaustion brings out in the Sons of Korah, isn’t it? Instead of accusing God relentlessly with a 2nd person form of address (vs. 9-24), describing all that God has unjustly allowed to happen, instead of appealing to their own integrity (vs. 17-19): “We have not been false.... Our hearts have not turned back.... Our feet have not strayed;” they now turn (Psalm 44:26) and appeal only 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. Here are some hymns about our struggle, with the Psalmist, to overcome our complaints to rest in God’s unfailing love:

*Have you not known, have you not heard
That firm remains on high
The everlasting throne of Him
Who formed the earth and sky?*

*Supreme in wisdom as in power
The Rock of Ages stands,
Though Him you cannot see, nor trace
The working of His hands.*

*Are you afraid His power shall fail
When comes your evil day?
And can an all creating arm
Grow weary or decay?*

*He gives the conquest to the weak,
Supports the fainting heart;
And courage in the evil hour
His heavenly aids impart*

. (Hymn # 31 in Red Trinity Hymnal)

*Come, O thou Traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.*

*I need not tell Thee who I am,
My misery and sin declare;
Thyself hast called me by my name,
Look on Thy hands, and read it there;
But who, I ask Thee, who art Thou?
Tell me Thy name, and tell me now.*

*What though my shrinking flesh complain,
And murmur to contend so long?
I rise superior to my pain,
When I am weak, then I am strong
And when my all of strength shall fail,
I shall with the God-man prevail.*

*Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair;
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak,
Be conquered by my instant prayer;
Speak, or Thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if Thy Name is Love.*

(Charles Wesley's hymn on Jacob's encounter
with the Angel)