

Our Christian Psalms ~ 17

As The Apple Of Your Eye. Psalm 17 recognises that believers can come into desperate straits. David was in deep waters when he penned this Psalm. He was surrounded by personal attacks and spiritual temptations. He likens himself to a hounded animal that has been brought to bay by a pride of hungry lions; they have stalked him, encircled him, and are now crouching, eyes locked onto his every move, preparing to launch the final assault (v:4, 9-14).

At such a time, and in such straits - he addresses himself in prayer to Jehovah, the unchangeable God of the everlasting covenant of grace. Unlike the worldly and unrighteous who seek his destruction (v:14), David has set his heart upon seeing the face of God in righteousness - he looks for nothing less than to awake in heaven through the resurrection in the image of God, and to have God satisfy his soul (v:15). Therefore his prayer is for God to preserve and protect - here and now. He knows that he needs to be kept faithful to God (v:5). He has walked with God with a pure and honest heart (v:1-4), and he now entrusts himself to his heavenly Father to hear and help him - in his great need.

Keep me "as the apple of the eye," he prays, "hide me under the shadow of thy wings"(v:8). That is a remarkable prayer! The apple of the eye is the pupil. It is that small, dark, and very sensitive spot in the middle of your eye. The apple of the eye is a most tender, beloved and carefully protected part of our body. "Keeping" the apple of the eye refers to our instinctive response to something that threatens the eye - immediately we react, we blink, turn away, raise our hand, cover up and protect our eye. We don't have to think or plan that - it is an instinctive, immediate response. That is the way God ordered our frame so that we might understand how he protects his saints. Of course, this is figurative language. God is purest spiritual perfections; he has no body or bodily parts or passions and he never reacts; but it represents something that is real and true about the way God puts forth his sovereign power and love for our safe keeping. That is what David seeks, the intrinsic (instinctive) response of God's faithful love to His endangered loved one. How perfectly this illustrates the truth of verse 7: "Show thy marvellous lovingkindness, O Thou that savest by thy right hand them that put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them."

Should God blink in his defence David would be enclosed within Jehovah's eye lid, or gathered under the shadow of his wing - safe within the protection of the infinite perfections and will of God Himself. And will that not be enough, and more besides?

This Psalm too finds its fulfilment, par excellence, in God's righteous servant, Jesus Christ. He is the only one who has perfected righteousness in his own person and works, praying and trusting even while surrounded by ravening lions; He it is who has walked in all the ways of God with a pure heart, and who through his resurrection power has awoken in glory to behold the face of the Father in a human nature that he has perfected for us! But, it is true also for every believing soul; for you dear believer are united to Jesus Christ. That makes you the apple of God's eye! Jehovah has proved that to be so, for he has shown that He loved you with an everlasting love when he drew you with loving kindness to himself through faith in Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 31:3). That is the proof that you that you are the apple of his eye. He has enclosed you within the very love he has for Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:18-19, 1 John 3:1-2). Nothing can separate you from His love in Christ Jesus, your Lord (Romans 8:39).

When you are compassed by trials and temptations as deadly as a pride of hungry lions - remember your God is Jehovah, and he protects the apple of his eye. Be of good cheer. Pray on. Remember that even the wicked are instruments in his hand (v:13-14). God is keeping you by his power, through faith, unto that salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:5). He promises nothing less than what Jesus has already taken possession of for you.

So, no matter how dire the situation may seem to be, as the apple of God's eye, you may lift your own eyes toward heaven, and focus upon your God and Saviour, and say: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Pastor Connors

Psalm 17 (King James Version)

1Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.

2Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed

that my mouth shall not transgress.

4Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

5Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

6I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.

7Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.

8Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.

10They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

11They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

12Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

13Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:

14From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.

15As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Jeremiah 31:3

3The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Ephesians 3:18-19

18May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

1 John 3:1-2

1Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Romans 8:39

39Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 1:5

5Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.