

# God, Hurry Up!

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Well, we're so glad that you all are with us, as always. There is so much to be thankful for here at Truth Community Church. Thankful for God's word. Thankful for our salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thankful to have one another to share life together with. Thankful for people new to our church. Thankful for those of you that have been with us from the beginning, those that drive a long way, those that live just a minute or two away. Thankful for this beautiful facility. We just have so much to be grateful for here and I'm glad that you all are a part of it together.

We're going to turn, as Andrew said, to Psalm 70, and I invite you to turn there. The title of tonight's message if you take notes and like to keep such things is "God, Hurry Up!" With an exclamation point. God, hurry up! Psalm 70. It's a brief Psalm. It says in the inscription,

For the choir director. A Psalm of David; for a memorial.

Then beginning in verse 1,

1 O God, hasten to deliver me; O LORD, hasten to my help! 2 Let those be ashamed and humiliated Who seek my life; Let those be turned back and dishonored Who delight in my hurt. 3 Let those be turned back because of their shame Who say, "Aha, aha!" 4 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified." 5 But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.

And there is a sense in which Truth Community Church, from my perspective, from my own private perspective in my own internal way of thinking and the way things unfolded in my life, Truth Community Church was born out of the spirit of this Psalm. It wasn't tied specifically to Psalm 70 but 2010, 2011 or so, there were just agitations in my heart that had been building for quite a long time, and a lot of it just desire for ministry, to have my own pulpit and life. I'm getting a little older at that point, coming up on the big 5-0, and it seemed like time was slipping away and things were kind of getting a little bit stagnant in my heart and it seemed like a little bit in the way that life was going for me,

and I was very impatient, or I had gotten to a point of impatience and just praying and saying, "Lord, you have got to help me! You have got to do something here!" And it was the kind of thing where I wasn't at liberty to talk about it with anyone. So as it were, I was shut up to God and in need of his quick intervention, and it was in that time, in that spirit within a matter of a few days or a few weeks, that the first contact came from some folks in Cincinnati and everything followed from here, and as they say, one thing led to another and we are here tonight to study Psalm 70 together. But I can identify with the spirit of this Psalm, that sense of urgency, that sense of there cannot be any more waiting. You need to act now. And I know that that's not unique to me or to the psalmist. You've felt that way in the past as troubles have pressed in, things have been chronic for a very long time, and the pressure just comes to a point where you just cry out, "God, you've got to help me now!" And if you haven't felt that in your Christian life just yet, it's okay, the time will come for you I'm sure, where the urgency of this Psalm is pressed upon you. And it is a wonderful encouragement to me to know that there are prayers like Psalm 70 in the Bible where there is just a rush into God's presence to declare the urgency of a need. Sometimes life is like that and there is not always the opportunity or always the presence of mind or presence of heart to go through a nice little protocol like some prayer seminars would teach you, you've got to do this and then this and then this, and kind of put a straitjacket on you for the way that you must pray.

Well, Psalm 70 blessedly breaks the chains of those human inventions and bids us to come and declare our woe before the Lord with the confidence that he will hear us. And I like that. I like that about Psalm 70 and I like the fact that the Lord receives our prayers in all of our weakness and struggles and difficulties, and hears us as a loving Father, and Psalm 70 gives us that. Psalm 70, like almost every other Psalm if you study them closely enough, ultimately points us to Christ as well, and points us to an aspect of the life and the ministry of Christ that we'll see in a little while. So while this Psalm is brief, it is very very sweet to the believing Christian.

Now, just by way of a little bit of background, something that would be easy to miss, this Psalm, Psalm 70, is a virtual verbatim repetition of something that we saw in Psalm 40. I would invite you to turn back to Psalm 40. This is just an interesting observation that many many people have made. Psalm 40, beginning in verse 13 to 17, is something of a predecessor and very much, at least, a close close relationship to what we've seen in Psalm 70. So you look at verse 13 and you see David here in Psalm 40 saying,

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; Make haste, O LORD, to help me.  
14 Let those be ashamed and humiliated together Who seek my life to destroy it; Let those be turned back and dishonored Who delight in my hurt.  
15 Let those be appalled because of their shame Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"  
16 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let those who love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!"  
17 Since I am afflicted and needy, Let the Lord be mindful of me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.

What can we say about this, about the fact that there are such close parallels to two different passages of Scripture? Well, the close relationship really is not that difficult to explain, at least plausibly. Charles Spurgeon over 100 years ago said, "David appears to have written the full length Psalm," Psalm 40, "and also to have made this excerpt from it and altered it to suit the occasion." So he had written Psalm 40 and he comes into a new situation that requires a sense of urgency and he goes back, this is from the human perspective of the writing of Scripture, goes back, lifts up this section, makes it independent and modifies it just slightly for the occasion that was there. So David drew upon his own Psalms to develop his own praying as the Psalter was being developed.

This Psalm, Psalm 70, is a prayer for a quick rescue from severe difficulties and it anticipates the rejoicing that will follow. And just right there, just right there, the severe difficulties, is a good thing for us to step back and remember, especially as I look out and know some of the things that you're either going through or have faced in your past, is the fact that there will be severe difficulties for the believer. Job, of course, went through very severe difficulties, losing his family, losing his wealth, losing his health, and for an extended period of time, suffering greatly at the hands of misguided counselors even who were offering their perspective in the name of the Lord, and we go through and we think of the sufferings that the Apostle Paul went through, certainly the sufferings of our Lord Jesus, and it's so important for us to have a sense in our mind, have a general settled understanding in our mind that being a Christian, being a follower of the true God, does not exempt us from the hardships of life. It does not exempt us from the difficulties that come with living in a fallen world. It doesn't exempt us from the deepest and most severe of sorrows, even. And there is something encouraging even about that so that when these storms of life break out and the rain comes down, the rain of sorrow, and the rain of difficulty, the rain of discouragement, to realize that while this is uncomfortable, it is not unknown territory. It is not something that Scripture does not anticipate. Scripture tells us that it is through many tribulations that we must enter the kingdom of God, as we read in the book of Acts, and as we go through the Psalms and as we have so many times, we see that a godly man, God's anointed king of his chosen people going through suffering, going through sorrow, speaking of David; and then the ultimate King, our Lord Jesus, going through suffering, going through rejection, going to the cross, going all the way to death, and what do we do here in our lives except but to walk in their footsteps, to walk in the footsteps of our Lord.

So we say, we come and we realize, okay, there will be difficult times that approach my life. There will be sorrows that come and they will sometimes seem overwhelming but where this helps us is, is that that is not a mark of the abandonment of God. It is not a mark that something has gone wrong. This is sometimes, sometimes we walk through deep dark woods as a believer knowing that others have gone before us in the path. The Lord led them out on the other side eventually, and he will do the same for us, and in the meantime, we have a Lord having gone through these things in his flesh in the days of his suffering, we have a Lord who sympathizes and who understands when we come to him and pour out our woe to him.

Now for any believer in Christ, there is great comfort in that for us. We take heart from the trials that we have seen the saints beforehand going before us in. James Montgomery Boice, who is one of my favorite commentators on the book of Psalms in his three volume set, he said this in relation to Psalm 70. He said, "David was the beloved king of Israel who reigned powerfully and well for 40 years. He was installed, blessed and approved by God who called him a man after his own heart. David was nearly always in close fellowship with God and yet he had constant troubles and was in nearly constant danger for his life. If that was true for David, should we be surprised that it is often our experience too? Should we be astonished that troubles and dangers, enemies, and even muddy pits are our frequent lots in life? We should not even be surprised if our situation seems desperate, as is David's case here."

So that gives us kind of a perspective with which to approach the text of Psalm 70 which I'm going to break into two sections for you here this evening. Let's look, first of all, at David's prayer for deliverance. His prayer for deliverance. He cries out as this Psalm opens, he cries out to God to rescue him and to rescue him quickly; to hasten to his aid. And one of the interesting observations about this Psalm, which I alluded to a few minutes ago, is that he bypasses any sense of praise, he bypasses thanksgiving to God, and he lays his supplication out and gets straight to the point. I love that about this Psalm.

Look at verse 1 with me. He says,

1 O God, hasten to deliver me; O LORD, hasten to my help!

And the operative word in this Psalm is "hasten." If you look at verse 5, you can see it there at the end. It frames this Psalm as so often key words do as you study the Psalms. He says, "I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God!" And what does this word "hasten" mean? Well, one of the key Old Testament lexicons states it this way, it says this verb has the idea of hurry; move; or to do a task quickly. And David is confessing his inability to deliver himself from his enemies and asks God to speedily take up his cause, and so that's what David is doing. He says, "God, I am in a situation that is beyond my ability to address. You have the power to do it, and yet you seem to be inactive. God, I am ringing the bell, I am calling to your attention my situation and I'm asking you to hurry up, to hasten to my help!" So as we see the need for prompt action also closes the Psalm, "Hasten to me, O God! You are my help, my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay." So there is this sense of urgency in which he is saying, "God, hurry up! This situation cannot wait for your intervention any longer!" And there are some very helpful things for us to think about and to meditate on just in light of the nature of what David is praying here.

First of all, contrary to the way that modern Christianity is often presented with the slick speakers with the \$200 hairdos and all of that, it's not the nature of the Christian life that we always feel like we are in control of the situation, that we are smooth and self-assured. That may appeal to the confidence of the flesh but it's not the reality of true and genuine spiritual life. Often the Lord brings us to a point of utter weakness. A point of failure. A point of discouragement and there is this cry that goes out for help. Well, what's going on

there? Well, first of all, understanding that we are being humbled in the process, it teaches us to look up, to look out beyond ourselves, look out beyond our resources to our God who cares for us, and to learn certain lessons from that.

If you would look back at 2 Corinthians 12, to a familiar passage, 2 Corinthians 12, just wanting you to see that this sense of weakness and even satanic assault is sometimes the place exactly where the Lord would have us to be. 2 Corinthians 12:7 says,

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations [that were given to Paul] for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

And what did the Lord say to him? You know, don't you?

9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

There is a tension there as Paul describes it, and our weaknesses actually become our point of strength because our weaknesses become the point where we cast ourselves more fully and more dependently upon the God of our salvation. So while we might in our flesh, we might initially prefer superficially thinking, "I'd like life to be easy and smooth for me," understand that that's usually not the intent of the Lord for his children to go through because we need these trials to humble us; we need these trials to sanctify us; we need these trials to teach us to rely not on our own strength, our own wisdom, our own ability, our own insight, but to come as Paul did to find there that in his grace is our sufficiency. And beloved, the only way some have said, I have quoted it in times gone by, certainly I've known it in my own heart: you won't know that Jesus Christ is all you need until Jesus Christ is all you've got, and that blessed place of knowing the sufficiency of his grace, it is a pearl of great price; it is a gift of great value but it is packaged, it comes packaged in the difficulties and sorrows of life before we find it.

Well, going back to Psalm 70 with me with those things in mind, David is praying, "God, hurry up!" and he has been brought to this point of dependency, this point of urgency. "God, I have gone beyond my human resources here. You are my only hope and so I call upon you and, God, I'm pleading with you, hurry up, because my enemies are seeking my ruin." Again, Charles Spurgeon says this. He says, "It is not forbidden us in hours of dire distress to ask for speed on God's part in his coming to rescue us."

So this Psalm invites us to draw upon the grace of God, to draw upon the grace of our Lord, and to even be insistent that he would act quickly to help us. This Psalm blessedly

teaches us that prayer does not always follow a canned formula. And you know, I'm grateful for the people who taught me the acronym ACTS in prayer, you know, adoration, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication, very early in the early months of my Christian life. I'm grateful for that. It gave me a pattern to kind of get started with but, beloved, whether you follow an acronym like that or some other method or formula, it is so important for you to understand that they are only a general guideline for you. We cannot cram all of our Christian experience and our needs and our supplications before God, we cannot put them all through the same little grinder because the experiences of life and the experiences of our Christian heart go far beyond that. You know, when your heart is severely broken, I don't need to tell you that sometimes all that you can do is just kind of cry out with minimal words and a lot of tears. And it is such a relief to know that the Scriptures don't point us and say, "You must always pray in this manner," that it invites us to a breadth of experience and a breadth of expression that accommodates the fullness of it and that we go to a God who knows the depths of our hearts, who understands the depths of our thoughts that go beyond what we ourselves are able to understand, and he invites us as a loving Father to come and to lay our burdens before him. I love him for that. Prayer is a living communion with God that is often flavored by the circumstances that prompt it. If the circumstances are urgent and pressing as we see here in Psalm 70, then it is appropriate for our prayers to be urgent and pressing.

Now with that said, Psalm 70 is not the only way that you should pray. We are not always in these dire circumstances of life, but it can instruct you. It can help you. It can encourage you that – here it is – when the need is desperate, when your need is desperate, get to the point with God and pray urgently for exactly what you need. In that regard, I always think of Peter when he had stepped out of the boat onto the water and he is walking toward the Lord and he looks around and he sees the waves and he says, "Uh-oh, this ain't good." And what does he do? He just cries out, "Lord, save me! Lord, help me!" And just got right to the point of what his urgent situation required. And here's where I think this helps you, my friends: it is not a lack of faith that brings that kind of urgency to prayer. It is not a reflection of a failure or a sense of not trusting God that promotes the urgency. Quite to the contrary. Quite to the contrary and I say this to defend your souls, to help you in your spiritual life as I say that. This kind of urgency that David is expressing is another peak in a mountain range of faith being expressed. It is another pinnacle, it is another high point for what is he saying except that when he asked God urgently for help, what is he saying except, "God, I recognize your sovereign power over my situation. I know that you can intervene immediately if only you would." This kind of praying is rooted in a great confidence in the utter sovereignty of God and that is an expression of faith, not doubt. The fact that he calls on God in great barrenness and openness of soul, "God, hurry up! God, hasten to my help!" what is this except a great confidence that his God will receive him well and that he has open access to the throne of God to lay out his request before him. There is confidence in his power, confidence in God's love.

What else is it? Well, this kind of prayer in Psalm 70 also reflects an abandonment of self. He says, "God, I come before you without any self-confidence. I admit my total weakness and my total need." So there is this trust and this dependence on the goodness

and the power of God and we need to see this Psalm from that light and draw encouragement upon it that sometimes the urgent prayers are expressing a level of trust that is foreign to a lot of people.

So as we've said in Psalm 69 as we talked about the imprecatory Psalms in a much different context, just remember this, beloved, as you read through the Psalms year after year and, you know, throughout the course of life, to always understand that we are coming to learn from the psalmist, not as some critics would do, to sit in judgment on them and say, "Oh, he shouldn't have prayed this way or he shouldn't have said that," as if the Psalms were designed to restrict us before our God, to put us in the chair of the critic, the judge of the one, rather than finding in the Psalms a model that gives us a way to express our hearts in almost any circumstance that we could ever conceive of. I love the Psalms for that and I know you do too.

Well, having opened up with this sense of urgency, David goes on and lays out his problem before the Lord here in verse 2. He says,

2 Let those be ashamed and humiliated Who seek my life; Let those be turned back and dishonored Who delight in my hurt.

He's asking God to bring shame on those who had shamed David. He's asking God to turn the tables on them. "Lord, they have dealt with me wickedly and they have shamed me publicly. Lord, and you know at the heart of this was great iniquity, great sin, great injustice. So God, I pray that you would turn the tables on them that they would reap what they have sown." He's asking God to confound his enemies who plot against him. He says, "God, it's one thing," the spirit of this Psalm is this, "God, it is one thing for you to bring me low, it's one thing for my God to humble me, to bring me into difficult circumstances but, Lord, it's another, it's quite another thing for enemies who hate me to do that to me. So God, I'm asking you to deal with them and to vindicate me to show that I belong to you, to help me and to vindicate and to show that you are faithful to me against those who are sinning against me." One writer said, just thinking about the concept of enemies, he says and I quote, "It is a sad reality of fallen human nature but you will at some time in life have an enemy who delights in your hurt and harm. Some enemies will hate you in spite of or even because of your virtues." That was David's experience, wasn't it? He was a virtuous man. He was a godly king, recognizing he had a little episode there with Bathsheba that didn't go too well, but the tenor of his life was godliness and here are these enemies lined up against him, in virtue being opposed by sinful men.

Once again, we step back and marvel at the unity of the word of God and realize that what David's experience was was only a foreshadowing of what would happen to Christ himself when he was opposed at every turn in his ministry by wicked men contradicting him, challenging him, accusing him, making wild accusations as though he were an illegitimate child of Mary, as though he was a son of the devil himself. Well, beloved, once again, just coming back, thinking through our own spiritual experience, do you have enemies that are opposing you as we speak? Do you have those that are making false

accusations against you? Do you have those who delight in your hurt? And you know deep in your heart, even if no one else around understands, you know deep in your heart that you have lived with integrity and these attacks against you are unprovoked. I've been there. I know that you have too. Well, we look to our Christ and say, "Once again, I see my Lord has gone before me. I am merely walking in his wake. I am walking in his footsteps. It encourages me to share in the sufferings with my Lord, to have a small taste of the flavor of what his ministry was like when he walked here on earth, and that I can identify in a small way with the greatest sufferings that he gladly went through in order to redeem my soul." Yes, that's sweet to see that David went through that and to just have a perspective on life that gives us the perspective and the ability to go through it.

Sometimes we will deal with enemies who are nothing but wicked and ungodly and unjust and lying against us, and when that happens, to realize Psalm 70 gives us a pattern where we can say, "God, I know I can come to you for refuge. I can come and ask you for help. I can come and rest in your presence." Paul said, "It was a messenger of Satan sent against me." Just to be able to come and say, "Lord, I know that you understand." And also to remember this: that even in their wickedness, they are under the hand of God. Even in their wickedness, God is restraining them, God has given them only so much rope to deal with you, only so much rope to harass you. They are on a God-appointed leash and can go no further than God's leash will allow them to go into your life, and to take heart in the fact that in time God will yank the leash back, eventually God will pull them back and not allow them to harass you indefinitely. And we take heart in the fact knowing that God causes all things to work together for good, that even those who oppose us, even our enemies in life and ministry, are ultimately an instrument and nothing more than an instrument in the hand of God to achieve other good purposes in our lives. As Joseph said, "They may mean it for evil but God means it for your good." So we can submit to that. We can trust God in that and we can look to him and cry out to him in trust knowing that his sovereign goodness is over all of it.

David is doing that and he says in verse 3, look at there with me, Psalm 70:3. He says,

3 Let those be turned back because of their shame Who say, "Aha, aha!"

And that, "Aha, aha!" means something like, "Too bad, too bad!" And the idea is that these personal enemies were seeking to hurt David and even to destroy him. They were closing in and the threat was imminent and so he says, "God, turn them back. God, they are advancing toward me. They are making progress. Turn them back. Turn them back and let them feel a sense of shame in the midst of that which they are presently glorying in."

They had sought David's life, they were rejoicing in his pain, and David says, "God, turn them back. Deal with them. Bring shame upon them." And sometimes people will ask at this point, "Is that a Christian way to pray?" Well, we've dealt with that with the imprecatory Psalms over the past three weeks and we would say to that, "Of course it is. Of course it is." Think about it this way, beloved: God hates sin. God is a God of justice and he has anger at injustice every single day, Psalm 7 says. He hates evil plans. That's



woven throughout the Proverbs. So what do we do when we pray against wicked men seeking to perpetrate sinful evil plans against us, against us individually, against your family, against a church? What do we think about that when we pray against that? Well, we are aligning ourselves with God when we pray that their purposes might be frustrated. "God, these plans are wicked. What they're doing is sinful. You are a holy God. You hate sin. God, I'm asking you to frustrate every aspect of that so that it will come to naught and that everything that they are doing will just vanish like smoke in a hurricane wind."

We are not meant to be passive in response to evil, and think about it this way, beloved, what happens when wicked people succeed in their plans? Well, those who practice it are strengthened in their sinful resolve. "This worked once, I'll do it again." So of course we ask God to frustrate those kinds of plans when we become aware of them, and that doesn't mean that we can't pray for God to save them, for God to have mercy on them. You know, there is more than one channel of prayer available to us, but we have a right, and we have a privilege, and we have a prerogative to take refuge in our God when wicked people are attacking us and say, "God, protect me. God, turn this back." And when you go through Christian life and you have increasing years of experience, do you know what? It feels pretty good, doesn't it, to have some recorded experiences in your own life where you can look back and see where God did exactly that? People who threatened you harm, people who were opposed to you, they just kind of vanished like smoke in the air and it strengthens you to look back and see that. It strengthens you to look at Scripture and say, "This was my experience in that time and that episode in the past," so that the next time that the next enemy comes along, you can say, "Ah, I've been here before. I fought this kind of battle before. God, let me call upon you in strength and confidence and trust and a certainty that you are going to protect your servant through this." You see, there are great blessings available to us as Christians. There is a great sense of comfort and confidence that belongs to us as we walk with God and as you go through life and develop some maturity and some experience, to say, "I've seen this act before and I know how God deals with it. I know it comes out well in the end, therefore, I will stand like a man. I will be strong. I will be confident. I will be trusting. I won't be undone by this because my God is good and my God is faithful."

Well, just to point this to Christ again as we like to do, Matthew 27, if you would turn there, David said that there were men delighting in his hurt, calling after him, "Aha, aha!" Matthew 27:39. Jesus is being crucified,

39 And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads

Now, I don't really need to say this now but am going to. Sometimes you have a picture from paintings and artwork and all of that, that Christ was elevated really high like multiple multiple feet high on the cross at the time. That wasn't the case. That wasn't the Roman nature of the crosses on which they crucified men. The crosses were not all that high off of the ground. The men were not hanging that high off of the ground so that it was possible to make eye contact with them. So this was a close crucifixion. This was a close manner of execution, I should say; rather than having to look up and put your chin way up to be able to see them, you just barely had to lift your head and you were looking

at them in the eye. It was not that tall of an experience. And what happens here, what's being described here in verse 39, those passing by were hurling abuse at him, wagging their heads, you should have the picture of this being something that was right in Jesus' face, not something that he was looking down at from a distance because he was elevated so high, but this was right in his face and these enemies were mocking him in verse 39, wagging their heads, verse 40,

40 and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him

Now just stop right there. It was enough, in one sense, speaking humanly, it was enough that Christ was going to bear the eternal wrath of God on our behalf and that he was being crucified in our place, in our stead, and suffering God's wrath on our behalf so that he might redeem our souls. That would be enough. That was more than a day's work. That was an eternal work that he was doing there, bearing the eternal consequences in his human body of the sins of everyone who would ever believe in him, and it was a crushing spiritual experience to know that the Father somehow in whatever way this meant, was going to turn his head away from Christ, and he is in the midst of fulfilling the covenant of redemption made before the beginning of time, and you have these people, you have these wicked men coming and taunting him in the midst of that spiritual sacrifice that he's offering. The chief priests, the scribes, the elders, plural. Notice the plurality of it. People gathering around delighting in his suffering. Has there ever been a time when the depraved sinful heart of men has been on fuller display than when those men gathered around the foot of the cross? In that holy moment of redemption when the eternal Son of God in innocence is laying down voluntarily his life for sinners? And in his physical agony and in his spiritual agony, these deadbeats come along and mock him and delight in the human shame of the crucifixion, delight in his apparent weakness, and mock him.

Verse 42, they are enjoying the spectacle, talking to themselves,

42 "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. 43 "HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE Him now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words.

Oh, beloved, step back in time, as it were, in your mind, step back into that moment and look with humbled adoring eyes on your Lord Jesus, seeing the extent of his suffering manifested in the wicked people mocking him even as he is bearing sin on your behalf. He had earlier said, "You know, if I wanted to, I could call down legions of angels to deal with this situation." It's not that he was without power, it was not that he was helpless, it was not that he was sinful, it was not that he wasn't the King of Israel as they were insinuating with their mocks. No, he's the greatest one ever. He's the highest and most exalted one ever, and in his hour of suffering, humanity is at his feet mocking him,

showing their opposition to him, delighting in his suffering. Sinless virtue in our Lord Jesus being mocked by sinful vice in men. Well might our Lord have cried out as he did, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" There has never been in any human experience a greater sense of isolation than what Christ was experiencing at that moment, and he did it gladly for you to pay for your sins, to redeem you, to make you his own.

So as we see Christ on the cross, the question cries out for an answer. "God, God, how long are you going to allow this to continue?" And we realize when we go into our own times of sorrow and difficulty and challenge, Christ was there first. "God, how long are you going to allow this to continue? Oh yeah, Jesus. Oh yeah, my Lord." And we are renewed in strength even as we cry out, remembering that our Lord has walked that path before us. He, speaking of Christ, is precious.

Well, if you go back to Psalm 70, we've seen David's prayer for deliverance, here in the last two verses we see the second section of this Psalm, the praise for deliverance. The praise for deliverance, and you will find here that we echo some themes that we emphasized in Psalm 69. David is now going to expand his prayer beyond his own circle of need and expand his prayer for the good of God's people. He looks beyond his situation and he encompasses all of the people of God in his intercession in this prayer that he makes before his God. He says in verse 4,

4 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified."

You know, brothers and sisters, it's healthy for us, it's good for us, to remember in the midst of our trials, in the midst of our urgent prayers, that there are other righteous people who also need God's help. It reminds us not to pray just in a completely self-centered manner, but to expand our prayers out for the well-being of all of God's people. And here's the thing that I would encourage you to think about, my friends, my brothers, my sisters with whom I will be around the throne of God one day rejoicing in the completed work of Christ forever and ever amen, that's going to be a great day; here's what I would say to you about your trials and a particular aspect that they should have upon your heart. Your very deep trials should soften your heart toward others and foster your prayers for them; to realize that as you have suffered, as you are feeling pain, that it equips you, that it brings sensitivity to you. "Oh, do you know what? I see their situation. They must be in pain also. God, would you help them? They love your salvation like I do. I pray that you would work in their hearts to comfort and strengthen them so much that the outcome of their lips would be, 'Oh, let God be magnified.' Comfort them in a strong and mighty way, O God, so that they would be brought to praise as well."

I would remind you as we've looked at the Lord's prayer, what's called the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6, that that prayer is couched in the plural. "Father, give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors." And on it goes, "Deliver us from evil." There is a plural to it, not first-person singular, "God, do this for me," but we're mindful that as we are growing in prayers, we are growing in our Christian life, that our vision, as it were, is expanded. The blinders are taken off and we see all of the people

of God, at least at a minimum those that we interact with and we embrace the circle of the people of God that we know in our prayers as well, so that it's not simply a matter of seeking my own well-being, my own spiritual satisfaction, my own help in the hour of my need.

Look at verse 4 with me again in light of that. David says, "God, let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, 'Let God be magnified.' God, bless them also even as I'm praying for help in my own situation." And my friends, as you think about his enemies delighting in his hurt, verse 2, and their shame and all of that, as he has contemplated that and brought that and laid that before the Lord in prayer in all of their wickedness, the answer to that wickedness is found in the cry at the end of verse 4, "Let God be magnified. Yes, God, they are sinfully trying to harm me but, God, let the outcome of this be, 'Let God be magnified.' God, let this burst forth in praise to the accomplishment of your glory and may their wickedness find the response in praise." And it would not be too much to say that kind of praying, "Let God be magnified," is the pinnacle of prayer in times of hardship. Not simply, beloved, not simply, "God, help me." Not simply, "God, help them too." But moving beyond the horizontal to the vertical, to the highest aspiration in prayer, "God, let your name be magnified. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Let that be the outcome of this." As we follow this kind of theme through Scripture, we find prayer seeking the glory of God no matter how he disposes of our problems.

If you'll turn back prior to Psalms to the book of Job in Job 1, we alluded to Job at the start of this, didn't we? And after he had lost his family, lost his wealth, and the messengers are just coming one right after another, they are speaking on top of each other. Look at verse 14,

14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants...I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them..." 17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants...and I alone have escaped to tell you." 18 While he was still speaking,

This didn't happen over time, this was happening in minutes. Job's entire life was dissolving before his eyes and verse 18,

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

And Job standing in utter brokenness, standing meaning Job, there he is, without the time to process these multiple calamities that have come upon him and the unspeakable grief that would follow, verse 20. What did he do?

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

And there are those moments, thankfully they are pretty rare for most of us, there are those moments of severe news coming where your mind is drawn to this response of Job. "God, I came into this world with nothing, I'm going to leave this world with nothing. These circumstances pain me but, God, you are unchanged and I give you my praise." Discipleship tested in the crucible, the furnace of affliction.

David in Psalm 70 concludes this Psalm by renewing his prayer for a quick deliverance. Verse 5, if you will look at it with me. He had expanded out, "God, bless all the people that are looking to you who rejoice in you. Bless and protect all of your people." Then he brings it back, he brings it full-circle. He's still in his hardship and he says in verse 5,

5 But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.

He's afflicted and needy because he is completely dependent for help. One commentator says there is not a moment to lose, or so at least it appears at ground level. David has recognized his spiritual bankruptcy, his helplessness in the realm of his physical trials and, beloved, isn't it true that an exercise of saving faith is found when a sinner recognizes that he is not able to help himself, that he cannot erase the stain of his own sin and he cries out to Christ, "I am afflicted! I need help here! I needed spiritual deliverance! Help me now or I die!" And David's prayer is expressing that kind of trust at the end of the Psalm. He's not a self-made man. True believers – watch this – true believers are not looking inside to find their resources. They are not looking inside to find adequate marks of contrition before they go to the Lord. No, they are crying out directly to him. They see his call as Christ said in Matthew 11, "Come to me." As we saw in Matthew 7, "Enter." And they see this command of a gracious God lovingly inviting them and they cast themselves completely on him for deliverance.

Do you know something of that in your own spiritual experience? Have you turned to Christ alone for deliverance from sin? And when your circumstances are desperate, beloved, let this Psalm give you grace and confidence and assurance that in those times you can turn to God and trust him and you can know that he is worthy of your trust.

I would remind you of one thing. We won't turn there but to remind you that chapter 1 was not the end of the book of Job, it was the start. There was a lot of pain and confusion and all whole lot of bad counsel in the next 37 chapters. God revealed himself to Job. Job confessed, he said, "I repent in dust and ashes." And what happened in verses 7 through

17 of chapter 42? What did God do? He restored him. He repaired the situation. He gave to Job double of what he had before.

That is what our God is like. Yes, he will bring us through the times of affliction. Yes, sometimes the fire of trials will seemingly be singeing our hair and the heat and the oppressive furnace of that just seems to melt us along the way. But beloved, don't lose sight of the end of Job. God restored him in the end and do you know what? Do you know what? Do you know who God is? Do you know who God is to us in our trials? Do you know? He's a God who restores. He is a God who restores. He restored Job. We talked about the crucifixion of Christ, what did he do for Christ? He raised him from the dead. Christ ascended into heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God, fully restored where no one is questioning his supremacy. In the courtroom of heaven, no one is mocking him. All bow before him and acknowledge his greatness. And do you know what the outcome of your trials are going to be? It's going to come out in glory for you as well. Maybe you'll find some resolution and peace in this life, maybe you'll just limp for a while like Jacob did and you'll walk with the pain of that and you walk with a bit of a spiritual limp. That's okay. Do you know what? You won't be limping in heaven. The fullness of restoration will be yours and when you see Christ face-to-face, every tear is going to be wiped away. Your deepest sorrow on earth is going to be replaced with an even deeper sense of comfort and joy and praise at his throne. To see Christ for one moment face-to-face in his resurrected glory will repay all the trials of life. And do you know what we have waiting for us in heaven? Not a moment of the beatific vision, what we have is an eternity to anticipate, giving praise to this God who has given us such a great deliverance from our enemies outside, and our enemy of sin inside. What a great God, the God who restores, the God who provides deliverance, the God who gladly receives us in our time of desperate need.

Let's pray together.

*O God, you never abandon your own and deliverance for us in our physical and spiritual grieving hearts will surely come in your time. Father, I look out and I see these beloved friends, these faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, who are here this evening, why? Because they are seeking you. Why are they here? Because they find gladness in you and in your word. Why do they come again and again, Father? Because they are trusting continually in Christ even through their tears and their broken hearts and their struggles with sin. Father, for them, I would echo the prayer of David in verse 4, "Let all of them as they seek You rejoice. Let all of them be glad in You. Let all of them who love Your salvation say continually, 'Let God be magnified.'" As you ascend to the throne of their affections, of their priorities, Father, may your glory fill their hearts, may your goodness be their source of consolation, may your greatness be their trust, and may it flavor, Father, may your glory flavor all of life to them in a way that allows them to walk sometimes with a limp, sometimes with tears, but with a settled trust in the greatness and the goodness of you, of our Lord Jesus, confident of the final outcome. And in that, Father, may they find reasons for joy and praise. Bless us to that end, we pray, our God, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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