

Praise for God's Promises

In this series of articles we're looking at the biblical truth that God's people will often suffer (e.g., from peer pressure, gossip and slander with the goal of ruining another's reputation or livelihood to physical harm) as we seek to stand for God, his kingdom, his Word and his ways. In my last article we looked at the fact that, sadly, suffering will often come to pastors and leaders in the local church from *other Christians*—or at least those who claim to be Christians. Conflict will often happen because leaders will make changes which will rarely be popular with everyone. And yet, as we saw, change may not be the cause of the conflict but rather, conflict often comes because people fear losing something that they believe is rightfully theirs. Thus far in this series from Psalm 140 we've looked at, *Prayer against Enemy Plots and Prayer for God's Protection*. Today we want to conclude our look at this Psalm as David gives:

—*Praise for God's Promises*

“I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the *afflicted*, and will execute justice for the *needy*. Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall dwell in your presence.” (12-13) In these last two verses of the Psalm, David speaks of what he knows God has promised. No matter what the children of God face we can be confident of God's love and justice. We may not receive justice for our suffering immediately but we will receive justice according to God's perfect timing. In this life, we'll have to suffer if we're truly standing for God. Ultimately, this Psalm points beyond David to great David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Any mistreatment that David—or of any of us—experience cannot compare to the horrible suffering of the One who was, and is, perfectly holy; the perfect One who never did any wrong to anyone. Listen to these familiar words from Isaiah 53:

“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows acquainted with grief....He was oppressed and he was afflicted....By oppression and judgment he was taken away....” How can we be sure that God will be with us as we suffer in this life? We can be sure that God will be with us because he is faithful to his promises. Just as David was God's covenant child, Christians are God's own dear children by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Isaiah prophesies the truth of what the “Suffering Servant” would go through

for his own people. “*He* was wounded for *our* transgressions; *he* was crushed for *our* iniquities; upon *him* was the chastisement that brought *us* peace; by *his* stripes *we* are healed.” As we draw this Psalm to a conclusion, what are some ways in which we can further apply what we’ve heard to our own lives?

—It’s important that Christians are seeking to stand for biblical truth in the non-Christian culture around us. That being true, we want to regularly talk to our children about issues that they may be facing in the schools. We should help them to understand how to respond in godly ways in times of suffering at the hands of others. Jesus suffered and so will we if we’re standing for that which is right and good.

—Although David was imperfect, there’s no indication given in the Psalm that he’s harmed anyone that would be the cause of the persecution that he’s receiving. This is an important lesson. Peter writes in his first epistle that it’s a gracious thing when we endure sorrows while suffering unjustly. “For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.”

(1 Peter 2:19-20) God is glorified when his people graciously endure unjust suffering at the hands of others.

—Although Christians will suffer at the hands of wicked people, we can be sure that we’re never alone because God is always with us. In his commentary on this Psalm John Calvin writes, “[T]he more wickedly our enemies assail us, and the more treachery and clandestine acts they manifest, the nearer is the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, who himself dictated this form of prayer by the mouth of David.”

—Beware of being drawn in to negative and unwholesome talk against *anyone* in the local church, including against the pastors and other leaders. We want to be aware of the dangers of division, gossip and slander. May this Psalm be a reminder that there are those who will seek to harm Christians because we’re willing to take our stand for Jesus Christ. Even so, may we rest in all of God’s promises to his covenant people.

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