

Lovingkindness for the Overwhelmed

Ps 143:1-8

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.

2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

*4 Therefore **is my spirit overwhelmed** within me; my heart within me is desolate.*

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

*6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: **my soul thirsteth after thee**, as a thirsty land. Selah.*

7 Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the

morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

I. Introduction

1. David's prayer in this psalm sounds like many of ours—desperate and desolate.
2. He was being pursued by an enemy that had beaten him down and he needed help.
3. David said his spirit was overwhelmed in him.
4. Did you notice verse 6, how David said, ***my soul thirsteth after thee.***
5. People try an awful lot of things to satisfy that thirst other than God, but David knew where to turn. David stretched forth his hands to God for help and lifted his soul unto God.
6. I try to imagine myself doing that in my prayer time and it feels as though God visits me with His lovingkindness.

7. We are preaching today about Lovingkindness for the Overwhelmed.
- II. Victory over Jabin
 - A. Introducing Deborah
 1. In the early decades after Israel took their Promised Land, after the days of Moses and Joshua, Israel was led by various judges.
 2. These were not kings but were more like governors or military commanders whom God raised up to conquer the various enemies who remained in the land of Canaan.
 3. In this particular encounter, the judge was a woman by the name of Deborah, who was called a “mother in Israel,” and the people looked to her for guidance and comfort.
 - B. Introducing Jabin and Sisera
 1. During Deborah’s time , Israel was being afflicted by King Jabin of Canaan and his military commander, Sisera, and this went on for 20 years.

2. King Jabin had 900 chariots of iron and “mightily oppressed” Israel:
Judg 4:2-3
2 And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.
3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.
3. God used the strong faith of this mother in Israel, to encourage Barak, the captain of Israel’s army, to raise up 10,000 soldiers of Israel to fight against King Jabin and bring an end of this long oppression.
4. There comes a time when we need to quit tolerating oppression that just keeps coming around. I’ve taken this long enough! I’ve had it with you oppression!
5. Why have I tolerated this so long?

6. Well, this was the iron age, and that King Jabin had 900 iron chariots, demonstrated that he possessed the cutting edge, high-tech military technology of the time.
 7. It is like when the U.S. was the first nation to use a nuclear bomb, it brought down a dominant world power, the Japanese Empire.
- c. Encouragement and victory
1. But to Deborah, it didn't matter that King Jabin of Canaan was the "world power" of their generation, they were oppressing God's people and it was time to act.
 2. The time was right because the Lord was on their side, so Deborah encouraged Barak, her military captain—"**this is the day!**":
Judg 4:14-15
14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went

down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

15 And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

3. The point of this brief story is that Israel had been overwhelmed and oppressed by the enemy for years, yet they took that oppression, and by God's hand on them, transformed it into a will to fight.
4. There must come a point where we decide that we have tolerated bondage long enough. I've let the enemy and his 900 iron chariots oppress me way too long.
5. But 900 iron chariots? That is a formidable power. How can we possibly overcome them?
6. Did you notice that Barak, Israel's commander, took 10,000 Israelite warriors into battle?

7. Yes, 900 iron chariots have strategic advantage against foot soldiers, but even if there were 900 chariot drivers in those 900 chariots, Israel still had more than 10 times the manpower of the enemy King Jabin.
- D. The odds are for me
 1. Here is a truth that you can count on: The strength available to fight God's battles outnumbers the strength of the enemy.
Rom 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?
 2. How can that be?
1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.
 3. *1 Sam 14:6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will*

*work for us: for **there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.***

4. There are just some battles that God wants to win for us, and even though our own strength may be small, when you have the Holy Ghost inside of you, there is something greater in you than that which is in the world.
5. If God is for you, it doesn't matter who is against you.
- E. Encouragement from the village musicians
1. What brought my attention to this story of Deborah and Barak and this battle against King Jabin and Sisera, his commander, was actually the victory song that was sung after the battle was over.
2. All of Judges chapter 5 is referred to as "The Song of Deborah," which is a rejoicing over the victory the Lord gave them in that battle described in chapter 4.
3. Here is just a portion of that song that reveals what appears to be a secret to their

victory that day. After the victory and looking back to the time before the battle, Deborah says, “Consider this”:

Judg 5:9-11

9 My heart is with the commanders of Israel,

with those who volunteered for war.

Praise the Lord!

10 "Consider this, you who ride on fine donkeys,

you who sit on fancy saddle blankets, and you who walk along the road.

11 Listen to the village musicians gathered at the watering holes.

They recount the righteous victories of the Lord

and the victories of his villagers in Israel.

Then the people of the Lord

marched down to the city gates. NLT

4. When did the warriors decide to march to battle?

5. Yes, Deborah did tell them it was time to battle and Barak led them, but did you notice this group of village musicians who had gathered at the watering holes to sing?
6. It appears that the warriors gathered at the watering hole just before heading out to battle, to get their drink and fill their water bottles.
7. This is similar to when Gideon took his soldiers to battle and God told him to watch how his soldiers drank at the watering hole.
8. They filled up on water but also filled up on courage.
9. You see, the “village musicians gathered at the watering holes” in order to sing encouraging songs of victory to the warriors. Their songs were not about gloomy stories, death, and despair, but recounting the righteous victories of the Lord.
10. Do you know what you need to be listening to when the enemy is oppressing you?

11. Songs that recount the righteous victories of the Lord. And recount the victories of the villagers, the common people.
 12. In other words, that is when it is time to look up, it is not all gloom and doom when you are trusting in God for your salvation.
 13. God is doing marvelous works. If we can quit pointing our binoculars at the bad scene, and instead point them at the good works of our God, we can be lifted up once again and have the courage to fight on.
- F. Know the facts of victory
1. There is a principle here that helps us win the war over the things that oppress us.
 2. While the natural, human response is to focus on the size problem and its impossibility, or to focus on your lack of resources and help in comparison to the size of the adversity, we need to look at the size of God's army that is with us.

3. As Elisha told his servant who was terrified by the size of the enemy:

2 Kings 6:16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

4. For Elisha and his servant, a multitude of enemy had surrounded his city, but when God opened the eyes of his servant, he saw a mountain full of God's chariots of fire!

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

5. So it doesn't matter how many chariots of iron that are charging toward you, God has a mountainside full of His chariots of fire ready to fight your battle!

6. That is what we need to be listening to instead of the words of doom, gloom, and despair.

III. An overwhelming victory

A. Smitten to the ground

Let us return to Psalm 143 that we started with. And notice the overwhelming difficulty that David was facing at this time:

Ps 143:3-8

*3 For the enemy hath **persecuted** my soul; he hath **smitten** my life **down to the ground**; he hath made me to dwell in **darkness**, as those that have been **long dead**.*

*4 Therefore **is my spirit overwhelmed** within me; my heart within me is **desolate**.*

Notice how David went from being overwhelmed at his persecution being smitten to the ground in darkness and desolation:

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

7. We have got to remember what God has done in his works of old. What has God's hand accomplished before?
8. This is just what the village musicians at the watering holes were doing—singing the songs that recounted the glorious works that God had done in the past.

6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

7 Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

- B. Lovingkindness in the morning
1. But for those who are slipping down into the pit, there is lovingkindness in the morning:
Psalm 143:8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way

wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

2. In the morning before the battles of the day begin, we must search for and find lovingkindness for the overwhelmed.
3. Recount the righteous victories of the Lord
4. I counted them once, but it is time to recount them.
5. In the morning, at the start of your day, pray this prayer:
Psalm 143:8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.
6. There is something tangible that will affect your day when you go to the Lord for your overwhelming feelings.
7. Lovingkindness makes such a difference in our day.
8. In the New Testament, the highest expression of love is agape love. But in the

Old Testament, the highest expression of love is this Hebrew word, *hecedh*. It is a love which remains constant regardless of circumstances. It means mercy, kindness, goodness, to be gracious or merciful, to deal kindly.

9. Constant love from God in the morning goes a long way in our day.
10. The world is an unkind place.
11. We deal with unkind people—hateful and scornful people.
12. And that brings our spirits down and gives us a heaviness.
13. But when we pray, “cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning, and lift our soul to God, He gives purpose and guidance to our life.
14. And God’s lovingkindness raises our courage to face whatever foe that we must face.
15. And it was those village musicians who reminded Israel’s soldiers of God’s great

lovingkindness in the past, His righteous victories, and provided the encouragement to trust Him for the battle of the day.

16. What are you listening to?
17. Compare how much of the songs of God's victories you listen to compared to the bad news stories of the day.
 - c. A physical touch from God
 1. Get a good taste of what God can do:
Ps 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
 2. I need to get so close to God that I can hide in the shadow of His presence:
Ps 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
 3. The Apostle John showed how those close encounters with Jesus helped Him long after the encounter:
1 John 1:1-4

*1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have **handled**, of the Word of life;*

*2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was **manifested** unto us;)*

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

*4 And these things write we unto you, **that your joy may be full.***

4. When we taste, see, and handle God, especially when we are feeling overwhelmed at the battle facing us, it provides a tangible connection to God's presence that brings full joy, the touch of God's lovingkindness, and the reminder that God has a long history of victories.

IV. Conclusion

1. So really, what have I got to worry about? Can God take care of it? Or is it too big for God to handle?
2. *Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.*
3. The key to that verse is, “With God.” Are you with God?