

Harvest Community this week

Wednesday, August 19

7p – Prayer Meeting, Psalm 41; called elders' meeting, to discuss fall Bible class, immediately following

The Lord's Day, August 23

9a – 'War of Words' Bible Class for all ages

10a – Worship. Heb 7:1-3; Mark 6:32-56; Gen 26:1-5

6p – Worship. Ps 145:20-21; Jer 16:14-17:11; Rom 9:24-29. Installation of additional elders. Gary Vander Hart leading. *Afterparty at [your name here; have it at your house!]*

Wednesday, August 26

7p – Prayer Meeting, Psalm 42:1-6a

August Servants' Rotation: Greeting—De Groot; Coffee—Hermans; Nursery—Lavermans; Cleaning—Vander Harts

You may contact Harvest by phone (712-395-0983), email (church@harvestoc.net), or post (209 1st St. NE, OC, Iowa, 51041). **If you would like information, prayer, counsel, or some other assistance please contact one of our elders:**

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the midweek prayer meeting · 19 August 2009 · Psalm 41

Devotional · Singing · Prayer · Doxology

¹To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

Blessed is the one who considers the poor!

In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;

²the LORD protects him and keeps him alive;

he is called blessed in the land;

you do not give him up to the will of his enemies.

³The LORD sustains him on his sickbed;

in his illness you restore him to full health.

⁴As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me;

heal me, for I have sinned against you!"

⁵My enemies say of me in malice,

"When will he die, and his name perish?"

⁶And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words,

while his heart gathers iniquity;

when he goes out, he tells it abroad.

⁷All who hate me whisper together about me;

they imagine the worst for me.

⁸They say, "A deadly thing is poured out on him;

he will not rise again from where he lies."

⁹Even my close friend in whom I trusted,

who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

¹⁰But you, O LORD, be gracious to me,

and raise me up, that I may repay them!

¹¹By this I know that you delight in me:

my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.

¹²But you have upheld me because of my integrity,

and set me in your presence forever.

¹³Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,

from everlasting to everlasting!

Amen and Amen.

Devotional

¹To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;

The word ‘considers’ is actually a little more active, more like ‘prosper’. The word ‘poor’ has a basic meaning of ‘weak’, especially from affliction. One of the reasons that we are tempted not to do this is that we assume the worst about them and how they got into that situation. It’s no accident that David begins *this* Psalm *this* way, because that is exactly what his enemies (and even friends!) have done with his weakness and his illness. But God has been the opposite of these, and those who are blessed of God and saved God are like Him in His mercy to the undeserving.

²the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. ³The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health.

So David jumps right into how Yahweh deals with our weaknesses. The enemies want God to waste him away (v8), kill him (5b), and even destroy his name (5c). God does exactly the opposite: keeping (ESV ‘protects’) him, enlivening him, and making him blessed in the land.

v3 is actually a very precious picture. Literally, it says, “Yahweh supports him on his sickbed; all his couches You turned in his sickness.” The image is that so far from distancing Himself from the believer’s trouble, the Lord is constantly attending us as if a nurse, watching for the slightest wrinkle or lump in the mattress—He makes sure that every detail of our illness is to our good and affords us the greatest possible comfort in the midst of it. Compare this to the visitor in v6!

⁴As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you!"

Now here is an amazing thing—David cries out for grace and mercy, not because he has been good to God, but because he has sinned against Him! He knows that the nature of God’s grace is to treat His enemies better than the best of men treat the best of their friends. The condition that “qualifies” us for grace and healing from God is our sin!

This, of course, opens up v1 for us further. Even if *we know* that someone’s trouble is well-deserved, if our thoughts and efforts of them are truly the result of God’s gracious work in our hearts, then like Him we will compassionately strive for his ultimate good.

⁵My enemies say of me in malice, "When will he die, and his name perish?" ⁶And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad. ⁷All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me. ⁸They say, "A deadly thing is

poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies." ⁹Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

“An evil for him!” (ESV, “in malice”)—that’s how the wicked respond to the plight of their enemies, with delight in the misery and a thirst for more. And I wonder if we are ever guilty of the insincerity of v6, visiting the suffering and emptily saying the “right things” while we’re there, but collecting wickedness so that when we go out we can tell it—vv7-8 give an example of what this looks like.

Before we decide that we’re not guilty of this, we should look at v9. Do we “make our heels great” (ESV, “lift our heels”) against close friends as they suffer? This covers a range of ideas covered by our sayings from “kick him while he’s down” to “dig our heels in against.” Shouldn’t we respond the like the disciples did when Jesus quoted this and examine ourselves, “is it I, Lord?”
¹⁰But you, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them! ¹¹By this I know that you delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me. ¹²But you have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in your presence forever.

It may help to know that “close friend” in v9 is “man of my peace” and “repay them” in v10 is an intensive form of “give them peace”—from the same exact root. The idea of “repay” comes from the idea of completion in the word “Shalom,” and the intensive stem means to do to them exactly as completes them. It could mean “give them what they’ve got coming.” Probably better, though, is that in light of v9, David is saying, “Make me well enough that I can be a man of TRUE Shalom to them,” and in light of v1, David’s desire is to be like God in bringing Shalom to the undeserving.

Also, “because of my integrity” is literally “in my blamelessness.” The idea is that by God’s grace (v10) and upholding (12a), those who are sinners against Him (v4) aren’t just counted but actually made blameless. Heb 12 teaches that God does so for every believer, so that he can have the holiness required to see Him; and, this is exactly the logic of v12—God by grace gives blamelessness because He desires to give us fellowship with Himself forever!

v9 clued us in to the fact that this Psalm isn’t just about David but in large part prophetic of Jesus. And Jesus is exactly the best example ever of vv10-12!

¹³Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

This concludes not only the Psalm but the first book of the Psalter. Psalms 1-41 have been about God’s grace in helping, saving, and transforming sinners who are in trouble. Psalm 41 is an appropriate climax, and v13 the only right response!

Singing (same tune as 'Abide with Me')



¹Blessed is the one who cares for those in need; the Lord delivers him in times of strife. ²The Lord will surely bless him in the land; He will protect him and preserve his life.

He will not hand him over to his foes that they may satisfy their evil will.

³The Lord will on his sickbed give him help, and He will raise him up when he is ill.

⁴I said, "Be merciful to me, O Lord; Heal me, because against you I have sinned." ⁵My enemies with malice say of me, "When will he die—his name come to an end?"

⁶They visit me with falsehood in their hearts and then go out and spread their wicked lies. ⁷Against me all my foes are whispering; the worst of fates for me their minds devise.

⁸They say, "A vile disease has struck him down; he never will get up and leave his bed." ⁹My closest friend has turned his back on me—my trusted friend, with whom I shared my bread.

¹⁰But You, O Lord, be merciful to me And raise me up their malice to repay. ¹¹I know that You are pleased with me, O Lord; for over me my foe does not hold sway.

¹²In my integrity You hold me fast; before You I will constantly remain.

¹³O praise the Lord, the God of Israel, for ever and for evermore! Amen.

Prayer

- Harvest's worship, evangelism, discipleship, elders, teachers, parents; officer training and election
- Our Presbytery, the PCA, the church around the world, particularly mission works and the persecuted church
- Our country, particularly those in high position
- Celestin—family, ministry to Muslims, efforts to help Congolese Presbyterians with farming
- MTW, SAT-7, MERF, ITEM, Gideons, Gospel for Asia, and other world mission works
- PRAISE for healthy delivery and quick recovery for Kristen Dorr and Tyler Robert; pray for complete recovery, healthy development, and family adjustment
- Robin – God's grace, mercy, and peace for everyone involved
- Heather Hakim – Jonathan Isaac and Beatrice Christi due end of November
- Phyllis Vanden Brink – getting medical care at Happy Siesta in Remsen
- Maggie's sister Melanie – frequent migraines, awaiting CAT scan results
- The Rowenhorst Family—Randy's headaches; falls increasing, subsequent injuries
- The Kauk Family in the loss of Jo Ellen
- Carla Van Essendelft's pregnancy, due November
- Jacob De Groot – air national guard school in Pensacola
- Jonathan Vander Plaats – stationed in Norfolk
- Ron De Groot – looking for work, physical and spiritual progress, Christian friends

Doxology

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Him, all creatures here below!
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host!
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!*

Study Questions for next week, Psalm 42:1-5a

¹*To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.*

As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.

²My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

³My tears have been my food
day and night,
while they say to me all the day long,
"Where is your God?"

⁴These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.

⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation ⁶and my God.

What does the psalmist want from God, in vv1-2? How badly does he want this?

Isn't God everywhere? Doesn't the psalmist know that? What does he especially have in mind at the end of v2 (cf. v4)?

What have his recent circumstances been like (v3)? What is the response of the people around him (v3b)? How are these people different from the ones in v4?

Looking at what the people around him are saying (v3b), and how he currently feels (v3a), what kind of effect have they been having upon him? What two things is he sorely missing (vv2, 4) by being so far from Jerusalem (cf. v6b)?

To whom does he speak first about his troubles (v1)? To whom does he speak second about his troubles (v5a)? The first statement to this person is a question. What kind of statement is "Hope in God"?

In v5... What future reality does the psalmist use to combat his erring feelings? As he talks to himself, upon whom does he keep the focus? What do the possessive pronouns in the last line teach us?