

## Harvest Community this week

### Wednesday, September 23

7p – Prayer Meeting, Psalm 44:9-16

### The Lord's Day, September 27

9a – Exodus Bible Class for all ages

10a – Worship. Heb 7:15-17; Mark 9:30-10:45; Gen 26:1-33

6p – Worship. Ps 147:2-6; Jer 20:7-18; Rom 9:30-10:4.  
Matt Van Essendelft leading.

### Wednesday, September 30

7p – Prayer Meeting, Psalm 44:17-26

**September Servants' Rotation:** Greeting—De Haans; Coffee—Hibmas; Cry Room—Postema; Cleaning—Vander Plaats

You may contact Harvest by phone (712-395-0983), email (church@harvestoc.net), or post (209 1<sup>st</sup> St. NE, OC, Iowa, 51041).

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<http://harvestoc.net>

the midweek prayer meeting • 23 September 2009

## Psalm 44:9-16

*Devotional • Singing • Prayer • Doxology*

- <sup>9</sup>But you have rejected us and disgraced us  
and have not gone out with our armies.
- <sup>10</sup>You have made us turn back from the foe,  
and those who hate us have gotten spoil.
- <sup>11</sup>You have made us like sheep for slaughter  
and have scattered us among the nations.
- <sup>12</sup>You have sold your people for a trifle,  
demanding no high price for them.
- <sup>13</sup>You have made us the taunt of our neighbors,  
the derision and scorn of those around us.
- <sup>14</sup>You have made us a byword among the nations,  
a laughingstock among the peoples.
- <sup>15</sup>All day long my disgrace is before me,  
and shame has covered my face
- <sup>16</sup>at the sound of the taunter and reviler,  
at the sight of the enemy and the avenger.

## Devotional

- <sup>9</sup>But you have rejected us and disgraced us  
and have not gone out with our armies.  
<sup>10</sup>You have made us turn back from the foe,  
and those who hate us have gotten spoil.  
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and shame has covered my face  
<sup>16</sup>at the sound of the taunter and reviler,  
at the sight of the enemy and the avenger.*

At v9, the psalm takes a very sharp turn! To this point, it has been all about how God is in total control of history, so that He must receive credit for all our victories; and, we must never trust in what we do to save us. v8 ended with the confidence that the rejoicing in God that we have enjoyed for past victories is just the beginning of an unbroken stream that will last forever and ever.

But here's the problem. Present circumstances don't seem to match up. They don't seem to match up with what we know about the past. They don't match up with what God has guaranteed for the future. What shall we do?

The atheist's approach is to abandon the idea of God altogether. The Arminian's approach is different only in language—he abandons the idea of God's being in total control. One popular (so-called) evangelical speaker and writer said that God was the first to weep when Hurricane Katrina hit shore *because He could do nothing about it*.

But the God of the Bible doesn't make the Arminian excuse for Himself. He isn't afraid of what we will think of Him if we have unanswered questions, and He's big enough to sustain us if in the midst of those questions we will rest in Him anyway.

And that's what the psalmist is counting on. These aren't accusations against God, but the facts of the situation. He is giving the gory details of the suffering of God's people in sentences that keep the proper Author of

*all history*—not just *pleasant* history—in view. So vv9-14 just say, “our armies lost and retreated; the enemy took all our stuff; many of us were butchered; and, other's suffered the even worse fate of being carried off in slavery; “Israelite” is now just a mean name to call people and a punch-line for their jokes.”

They say “You, You, You...” Now, while it's obviously troubling to Him that God is the One doing this, that comfort is also the psalmist's only possible comfort! Notice that v9 is not v1. The psalmist recounts vv1-7 first, because these give him a composite of what the God who does vv9-16 is like—He's a God who all-powerfully runs history for the good of His people, just because He likes to. The psalmist recounts v8 first, because this reminds him of where, ultimately, the God of vv9-16 is taking all of these puzzling events—to His people's enjoyment of Him forever.

Therefore, the psalmist knows that history isn't done yet. If history is a display of God's power, God's mercy, God's faithfulness, and God's salvation, which ends in His people's everlasting joy in Him; then, whatever God is doing now in these strange and painful events, history isn't done yet.

And that's one of the things that we're saying to God, when we lay our most painful circumstances before Him and say: “You've done this, and You've done this, and You've done this...” To be sure, there is an angry and rebellious way of saying this, but when believers say it, they're basically saying, “We know that You're not done yet; so, please do the next thing, and all the future things, until You get to the part where our story can be told as a history of your amazing salvation too!”

But that's next week's section in vv17-26. In this week's section, the psalmist is basically giving God an account of current circumstances. What a blessing to be able to do that! We needn't fear like the atheist who says, “If you're there, I'm in trouble.” We needn't doubt like the Arminian who says, “I hope you can do something about this...”

And this rock-solid confidence that God is the One working all things together is what enables us to say v6 in a situation like this. How easily we might slip into resting upon ourselves! How quickly we might resort to measures that oppose what God has commanded or ignore what God has counseled!

If we have confidence in God, however, we are driven to exactly what the psalmist is doing here: prayer. And lest we forget what we're supposed to do, God gives us an example of such a prayer as a song for His people to sing in worship throughout the ages. What a good, patient, wise, and merciful God!

## Singing

4. <sup>9</sup>But now Thou hast re - ject - ed us, Hast  
 5. <sup>10</sup>And Thou dost cause us to turn back Be -  
 6. <sup>11</sup>Thou gav - est us like sheep for food, 'Mong

brought us un - to shame, And when our hosts go  
 fore our en - e - my. And for them - selves our  
 hea - then scat - tered us. <sup>12</sup>Thou cheap - ly dost Thy

forth to war, Thou dost not go with them.  
 hat - ers take What - ev - er spoil they see.  
 peo - ple sell, No prof - it make by us.

7. <sup>13</sup>Thou makest us a great reproach  
 To neighbors near and far,  
 A scorn and laughing stock to those  
 That all around us are.

8. <sup>14</sup>A byword Thou hast made us be  
 Among the nations all,  
 The cause of taunts and shaking heads  
 Among the peoples all.

9. <sup>15</sup>Before me all the livelong day  
 I see my sad disgrace;  
 And I am covered with the shame  
 That clouds my troubled face,

10. <sup>16</sup>Because of him who speaks reproach  
 And voices blasphemy,  
 Because of the avenging foe  
 And cruel enemy.

## Prayer

- Harvest's worship, evangelism, discipleship, elders, teachers, parents
- 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
- De Groot's – grieving the death of their great-grandson
- The Dahn family, in Yu Jueng's semester in Cincinnati
- Heather Hakim – Jonathan Isaac and Beatrice Christi due end of November
- Perry Krosschell—headaches, vision, shoulder after bull attack
- Kristen Dorr, baby Tyler Robert, and family – complete recovery, healthy development, family adjustment
- Phyllis Vanden Brink – getting medical care at Happy Siesta in Remsen
- Sandi's uncle Frank – head-on collision on Wednesday
- Maggie's sister Melanie – frequent migraines
- Maggie's friend Kasie and baby Caleb
- Heather's mother Martha – has had a series of strokes, which will likely continue with increasing impact
- The Rowenhorst Family—Randy's headaches
- Carla Van Essendelft's pregnancy, due November
- Jacob De Groot – air national guard school in Pensacola
- Jonathan Vander Plaats – stationed in Norfolk
- Lisa Vander Plaats – semester in Nicaragua
- 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 44:17-26

<sup>17</sup>All this has come upon us,  
though we have not forgotten you,  
and we have not been false to your covenant.

<sup>18</sup>Our heart has not turned back,  
nor have our steps departed from your way;

<sup>19</sup>yet you have broken us in the place of jackals  
and covered us with the shadow of death.

<sup>20</sup>If we had forgotten the name of our God  
or spread out our hands to a foreign god,

<sup>21</sup>would not God discover this?  
For he knows the secrets of the heart.

<sup>22</sup>Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

<sup>23</sup>Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?  
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever!

<sup>24</sup>Why do you hide your face?  
Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?

<sup>25</sup>For our soul is bowed down to the dust;  
our belly clings to the ground.

<sup>26</sup>Rise up; come to our help!  
Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!

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Is it possible for v17-18 and 20 to be true in an absolute sense?

What is he saying, then, about their *knowledge* of any unrepented sin?

What does he trust that God would have done with such a sin, before bringing calamity upon them (v21)?

What conclusion does he draw, then, about not just the ultimate but the immediate reason for their suffering (v22)?

Do we know of somewhere else in the Bible that this happened?

In what other passage did we recently think about v22, concluding that this opportunity exists and should be the main focus of all *Christian* suffering?

Does God sleep? Does God reject His people? Does God forget? What is the psalmist really praying for God to do in v23?

Where have we recently seen the idea of God remembering (bonus: 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders, what did we say the Bible means when it says that God “remembered” something)?

To whom was v25 supposed to happen?

How does v26a compare to Numbers 10:35?

Between whom, then, does the psalmist really see the battle taking place?

What is his final and best argument (reason) for the request that he is making to God (v26b)?