

Heart to Heart with the Living God

Psalm 44


"We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground. Rise up and help us; redeem us because of your unfailing love." Psalm 44:25-26

This Psalm is a national lament, sung at a time of great defeat and suffering for the Israelites. Through most of the Psalm the first person plural (we/our/us) is used to reflect the voices of the people of Israel. Occasionally the first person singular (I/my/me) appears; this is likely a collective voice (the voice of the people as one), or it may be the voice of the King of Israel.

Day 1: Read Psalm 44. Then read it again aloud.

1. Using your own words, write a short sentence that tells what the Psalmist is saying in each group of verses.
 - a. vv. 1-3:
 - b. vv. 4-8:
 - c. vv. 9-12:
 - d. vv. 13-16:
 - e. vv. 17-22:
 - f. vv. 23-26:

Day 2: Read Psalm 44:1-8.

2. About whom are the Psalmist and his fellow Israelites boasting? Which great deeds of the past do they sing about in verses 2 and 3? (See also Jos. 24:8, 11-13.)
3. How does the Psalmist's generation know of the Lord's past deeds? (v. 1; * Deut. 4:9, 10)
4. How do we today know what God has done? What is your role in passing down the history of salvation to the next generation?

Day 3: Read Psalm 44:1-16.

5. Look again at verses 9 through 14.
 - a. What word appears over and over again at the beginning of these verses?
 - b. Whom do the people of Israel hold responsible for their suffering?
 - c. What do the people tell God he has done?

* The  symbol identifies verses for further study.

6. What belief about God is behind both the praise in verses 1-8 and the lament in verses 9-16? (Ps. 135:5, 6; Lam. 3:37-38)
7. What else do the Israelites know about God that makes them bold to come before him now? (vv. 3b, 26b; Deut. 7:7-9)
8. How do verses 9-16 strike you? Would you feel comfortable talking to God this way?

Day 4: Read Psalm 44.

9. According to God's covenant with His people, obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings disaster (📖* Deut. 28). But what does the Psalmist say about his experience in verses 17 and 18?

How does the Psalmist back up the truth of what he says about his faithfulness to God? (vv. 20-21)

10. The first few words of verse 22 hint at one reason for the Israelites' suffering at the hands of their enemies. What is it? (Consider Ps. 2:2, which we studied earlier.)
11. In this psalm the Israelites have recounted the glorious heights of the victories God gave them in the past and have laid out before God the depths of their present defeat and humiliation.
 - a. What do we hear from the people at the close of the Psalm? (vv. 23, 26)
 - b. Do they receive any answer in this Psalm?

Day 5: Read Psalm 44.

12. Is God actually asleep (v. 23a) and oblivious while his people are suffering? (Ps. 121:4)
13. Even as the Israelites suffered, God was working out his plan to set things right. What do the following passages reveal about this plan? (Is. 9:1a, 2-7; 📖* Isa. 11:1-12)
14. Where in the Bible do we see the truest picture of the innocent suffering unjustly? (Mk. 10:32-34; 15:25, 34; Lk. 23:20-25)
15. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the most humiliating defeat is reversed to become the most glorious victory. How does this give suffering believers today an "answer" that the Old Testament faithful were unable to see? (Rom. 8:11, 17, 18, 28-39; 📖* 1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

For further thought: John R.W. Stott writes in *The Cross of Christ*, "I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross.... In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?" (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1986, p. 335). Read Isaiah 53, and meditate on the many ways Christ suffered and the victory he won.