

FAINTING FEARS

Psalm 27

INTRODUCTION:

The Psalmist first gives us some affirmations in V.1 Without health all men are poor. Health is better than wealth, they tell us. Now, my sermon subject of fainting. I do not intend to give a medical lecture today. They tell me that many people who review their illnesses are really giving an organ recital.

I've also heard that a cold was both positive and negative. Sometimes the eyes have it and sometimes the nose.

George Shaw said, I enjoy convalescence - that is the part that makes the illness worthwhile."

But we are talking about an experience which the Psalmist had. Which happened while he was having a terrific battle for his life. At this point, David's fortune was at the lowest ebb. Watching this man of God in his great adversity, 1 Sam. 22:5, we are told that on the advice of the prophet Gad who joined David in his exile that David left the shelter of the cave of Adullam. One can understand a cave might be a dangerous place. They could find him and shut him in. The enemies could surround him. Or somebody could be a traitor. And so he took to the wilderness and the mountains. And this type of wandering life. And as you study David's life, you will see that in all of this God had a purpose. And he wonderfully fulfilled it.

We also see him live through days of adversity. But that is never any reason for discouragement. A man who faints in the day of trouble possesses very small strength. And David was destined to reign as king of Israel. You and I are going to share the throne of all of the universe someday. And the Lord has us in preparation.

The point of David's experience - he wrote at least three Psalms maybe. At this time - Psalm 27, 31, and 54. Others may have been written at this time. But it shapes the man's life. The man of God, David is here facing something that he is not really competent that he is going to be able to battle with. But in I Sam. 23, the Phillistines attack the town of (Keilah) The farmers had harvested their crops and they were being plundered. And David and his men were within reach and they responded to the S. O. S. And this was a little raye of sunshine for David. He had a least one victory. Though he was being hunted in exile. The man here is capable of going to the heights of joy, and the next moment he is going to the depths of despair. So David was afraid and perplexed by his fears. When we discover that this Psalm came forth, in fact, it was one of the darkest hours of his life. And yet David was going to say in V. 1 - The Lord is my light. There were dangerous days. But he was going to say the Lord is my salvation. And here affirms his wonderful relationship with the Lord at the outset of this Psalm.

Let me ask you, where do you go when you are in a jam? Do you have a high priest that lives and makes intercession for you. To whom is it that you go.

So the affirmation in V. 1 - the fear that he has, and the sorrow that he has, he commences by saying --whom shall I fear. Of whom shall I be afraid. And if you observe the circumstances, you will realize that a host gathers against him. The day of trouble. They are all around him. He has problem after problem. But he gives this affirmation of his faith in V. 1. The Lord is my light and my salvation. And then he goes on to make his wonderful appeal.

And in V. 13 - The one I have chosen for a text - he says, I have fainted.

Now this is a common experience which David here deliberates upon. The common

experiences of life. Here is a man who realizes that he has had a very close call. And more than once he has gone down on his knees. But he has tried to get back up. And he dreads to faint. He is reeling in his tracks, at this time. His back is against the wall. And he says, 'I have fainted.'

I read of a preacher who was preaching in a church once that was crowded. And suddenly a gentleman who was standing at the rear of the building, toppled over with a dull thud. The moment before he fainted, he had all the appearances of being interested in the worship service. He was making a worthwhile contribution to the service.

But as soon as he fainted, all of this was over. There was no use to give him a hymnbook - he could not sing. No use to pass him the collection plate - he couldn't give. There was no use to call upon him to pray - he could not pray. There was no use to preach to him because he would not listen. Now this not only influences that man but four other men had to make their contribution by leaving the service and helping him out. Fainting, he ceased to be an asset and became a liability. And this was the thing that David was talking about. And sometimes in our churches, we have people who spiritually faint. Not only physically but spiritually. And how many do we have in all of our churches. Once they could be counted upon to be in their place, every service. That is a wonderful mark of a Christian who is going to be in every worship service. That is the whole moral tone of the community. Their influence was felt through their effort. But all of this has passed. Why? The fires of their enthusiasm have gone out. They are no longer of help but are actually a hinderance. They really have fainted spiritually.

In a city in Virginia, sometime ago, a couple were getting married. And they stood

at the altar, and it was a prominent family. And the event was very important. And everything went well, until the minister at about the middle of the ceremony, his voice began to falter. And he dropped his book. And he, himself, toppled over into the palms. Now there stood the embarrassed couple. They were only (half) married. But I rejoice to say, this minister was not so far gone, that he could not be restored. Some friends took him in the open air and at last he was able to come back and see his task through - and they lived happily ever after. But such tragedies do not always end so fortunate.

I remember performing a marriage ceremony once in a home. Where it was hot summer time. And when we came to the ring ceremony, and I asked the young man to put the ring on the girl, he looked kind of pale and he crumbled right on down to the floor. And finally we revived him, and stood him back up there, and finished off the service. And he was married.

It is a tragedy to have a half finished task. And there are beautiful pictures that are never quite finished. There are books that are never quite read. And this is a failure. When people faint. And this is a common experience that we are talking about here in this. The Bible warns against fainting over and over again.

Isa. 40:28 - It says the Creator fainteth not.

In 40:29 - He giveth power to the faint.

Isa. 1:5 - The whole head is sick and the heart is faint.

Now let us see in two ways what all of this means in this Psalm. First of all let us look at the reasons for the fainting. And then secondly, let us look at the remedies, that the Psalmist has to offer.

I. REASONS

First, the atmosphere. A bad atmosphere is likely causing us to faint physically. And it causes us to faint spiritually. This is one of the reasons. The wrong kind of atmosphere. Sometimes the atmosphere is created by individuals. And by groups. That give no help or hope. There are also churches like that. Where you come in and the usher reminds you that this is the beautiful house of God. And the members of the church are friendly, they are reverent, and they are worshipful. And the minister and the choir comes out - and both seem to have some good tidings. To enter into such a service, is to give you the feeling. Surely God is in this place! And to be a part of this congregation is to be an enriching experience.

Now you go into other places where the atmosphere is chill like an East wind. It is just like a killing frost. Everything turns brown. And nothing really thrives in it.

This is what David is in. V. 2-3. He says these wicked enemies of mine would eat up my flesh.

V. 3 - They are like a host in camp against me. He says even a roar comes up to battle against me.

Have you ever been in an empty house? And you have heard noises, or thought that you heard something. And if you were upstairs, you thought you heard something downstairs. And something grips you just like an icicle.

It was your turn to stand up and say something in a meeting one time - and somebody else did a very sick job.

Have you ever had the telephone to ring about one o'clock in the morning. Maybe some member of your family was out at a party or something. And the first thing you thought - there was an accident. Or you think about the worst. And fear paralyzes you. I would imagine in this room full of people today, that there are those who have had that great feeling of fear, that has come to you. The experiences of fear. David had this problem. He was in the wrong atmosphere, run off from the throne, away from his own family in exile almost. Publicly being disgraced.

It is interesting that the Greek doctors of old had theories about fear. They said it was the personally, it was determined by the fluids that sloshed around in people's body. And that had something to do with the temperament of fear.

The second reason is due to blood - V. 6. He says, in the midst of my enemies, I will offer in this tabernacle sacrifices. And this indeed is the cause of some people fainting - because of blood. The sight of blood. In the New Testament we discover that Jesus came, and one man came to him and said - Lord, "I will follow thee. Whether-so-ever thou goest. Now that was a great, great desire and promise. Nothing could be really better than that. But Jesus knew this young man did not understand what was involved in his promise. Therefore, he began to tell him a story about himself.

How he was homeless, more so than the foxes. That he might sleep on the mountain side. And then he showed him the cross and something of that crimson blood upon it. And at that moment, the eagerness of that man fell into a dead faint. While he yearned for the good things, the price was greater than he was willing to pay. And that is all too often the case with some of us. Some of you are not in the fight - not because the call of Christ makes no appeal, but rather because you are afraid of the sacrifices.

Third, because of weakness. V. (5). In the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion. Set me in his tabernacle and hide me in the rocks. This is another cause for fainting. It comes from weakness. Naturally, people are weak. And sometimes it comes from weariness, sometimes people are tired out. And they faint. I think this is the case of Elijah, who after his contest on Mt. Carmel, raced down 17 miles and then a day's journey into the wilderness. He was tired. And he began to complain. As he was under the shade of a juniper tree.

Now Christ's way of life is not an easy one. It is not drifting with the current. It is not going with the tides and the fashions of the day. At times, you get tired of being good. And we feel in our hearts that we should just throw away all of this business and go back to Egypt where they have the onions and the garlic, and to go on our selfish way.

We sometimes faint because of a lack of food. Now, many of the saints of God have fainted for the same reason. They have forgotten that their spiritual needs are just as pressing as their physical needs. And this is the word that we should take to heart. To beware, lest we starve our souls. David here is hiding in the pavilion of the Lord.

Fourth, disappointment is another reason. Now if anyone had reason to be disappointed, it was David. He was disillusioned. And we become disappointed with ourselves. And sometimes we become disappointed with other people. Are we ever satisfied with things.

We are sometimes under the chastisement of the Lord. My son, despise not, the chastening of the Lord. Nor faint when thou art reckoned of him, Heb. 7. There are people who faint when they have to suffer some, or when they are trusted in some way.

But when discouragement and disappointment come, people just give up. There is an old story of a man in a (blizzard) who lost his life in the mid-west. When they found his body, it was only a few feet from his own door. No doubt he put up a good fight, before he allowed himself to sleep the sleep of death. But it was night and he was discouraged. He could not see how near he was home. And I feel that (had) he really known, he would have gone those remaining steps. He fainted and lost hope.

Maybe that is the secret that you need to grasp today. You are so close to doing what Christ wants you to do and then you fail to do it.

Fifth, there is a mystery of fainting. There is just something about people fainting that there is an unknown reason quite often. It is a mystery. And in this tangle of human life and injustice of things, we could ask a thousand questions - but why was David feeling this way. It is probably a mystery.

As long as we are in the land of death, many things are going to be a mystery.

V. 10 - When my father and my mother forsake me. Here is a thing to think about - that would cause anyone to faint. David said when my father and mother, the nearest and dearest friends that I have on this earth, when they die or are away from me. And here I am disabled, and they cannot help me in this time of need.

I think what David describes here is, here is a poor orphan. He is left fatherless and motherless. Here he is - a poor sheep, forsake, and orphaned. But then he says the Lord will somehow take you up.

What then are the experiences of such. Here is a place of weakness and mystery. In childhood, you never think of these things. So David is looking at that which is worse. How will I be able to take it when my father and my mother have forsaken me. When I am cut off from my roots - there is no way back. When all the bridges have been burned. But that is not yet worse than anything that can happen to me. Just so long as I am not forsaken by God. But then life would be unbearable.

So here is a man looking at life - and he is about to faint. He said, I have fainted.

II. REMEDIES

We looked at some of the reasons for fainting and for these fears. Now what are the remedies. Where will we find them.

First, the road to help is found in V. 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me

in a (plain path) because of mine enemies.

Now this means, and we can only guess, that roads are tore up. And he prays this in V. 11. Lead me to a level path. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries. But lead in such a way that I'll be able to get back on the road to help. Instead of fainting.

Keep busy - someone has said is the cheapest kind of (medicine) that there is on this earth. And one of the best. Don't allow yourself to become upset by the small things. Life is too short to be little. Think and act cheerfully. And co-operate with the inevitable.

One man says, never get too busy to attend your own funeral. A man who is too busy for God, is too busy.

And a man ought to be working in the things of God if he is going to find his way back to health, and not faint.

In spite of the temptations to faint, David is telling us now, I have learned how to stand firm and he tells us very truthfully that unless he had surrendered in his faith, he would have never made it.

(He) took the road back to the (church). The Psalmist found his strength in his worship in the (sanctuary). He was zealous and faithful in his attendance, and his services of the church. Now he might have gone for various reasons, but this was one of the supreme. That he might behold the beauty of the Lord.

In these services, somehow, his past - all of his experiences which were visible to him faded when he came face to face with God. And he says, Lord teach me now to walk this plain road. Not to be weary. And to run and not faint.

Second, related to God. This was the second remedy. First, he made his way to the church. He developed a relationship with God in V. (13). I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living. Yes, this man believed. He is just stopped in his tracks in the goodness of the Lord.

Goodness is one of the richest words in our vocabulary. I think it has great Bible revelation. It is even a greater word than holiness, or a better word than righteousness, when you think about it. Because it includes all of this tender mercy. Beauty, gladness, the Lord of goodness. He is the Lord of all that is right. All that is beautiful. All that is glad. All that makes the prosperity in human life. He is the Lord of goodness.

Now what light does this fact of God cast upon this strange life of ours. How does it help us. In what sense does belief in this God who is so good - help us.

Well, it helps us to relate to him. To relate our lives to him. And this is an abiding life. To know him, is to be changed by him. Whatever mystery we may have to face in life, or whatever we may have to endure. Whatever darkness we may have to go through. Whatever agony we may have to bear. Life with all of its vast facets are being related to him. And this had new meaning and new value, and new learning.

The land of the living is a place of weakness. And we become conscious of our inability. But in the light of this revelation, and relationship to God, it suggests to us that we will never be disappointed.

When David got his relationship with God straight here - his belief, he lays it out for you in the opening verse. Verse 1. Just a brief glance at that verse, V. 1.

V. 1 - The Lord is my light. And that is a powerful statement there. Have you ever been ^{IN} a dark place. Or gone through a tunnel. It is a little scarey. But he says the Lord is my light. And that means that the Lord is with him. You know the old saying, I don't know what the future holds. But I know who holds my future.

Now there is the matter of death - but what lies beyond. And of course, there is some uncertainty. But there is the resurrection and the life.

The Lord is my salvation. And that is great. Guilt can play havoc in a person's life. And you'll be extremely miserable. All have sinned against God. And when we begin to see God has layed down a sample of behavior that we are going to be answerable to him for - and we see that our actions, no matter how important they are, have been out of order. According to God's judgement, then we are in serious trouble. David was worried about some of this. But God, to whom, we are responsible and against whom we have sinned, is willing and able to forgive us. The depths of his forgiveness is so great, that he is free to declare us not guilty in the highest court of Heaven. This forgiveness comes because Christ has paid the penalty, for our sins.

Now we need to understand that the Saviour helps us here at this point.

Dr. Briscoe once told about a woman standing up in his church, and telling about her experience. She said, I worked in a woman's fashion store, while she attended college. And she was unable to resist the tempting, beautiful clothes all around her. And she began stealing them. And eventually she became so fearful and ashamed, that she confessed her sin to the Lord. And then she sought his forgiveness.

Next she went and told her employer, and asked for an opportunity to repay him. He was so moved by her repentance and desire to do the right thing that he helped her greatly.

When she told this story in the church, she concluded, in a way that was unforgettable. "Throwing her arms in the air in a great gesture of freedom she says, any of you can look in any part of my life, and there will be nothing hid. And all is confessed, and all is forgiven. It is great to be free."

Now this is the remedy against failure - to be rightly related to God. And to believe that the Lord is my salvation.

The Lord is a strength to my life. There is a sense of inadequacy in many people's lives today. Day after day situations come to them. And sometimes it is their own fault and sometimes it isn't. But this is not the case with all. There are lots of people who have fears of fainting. New mothers, new husbands, new recruits. Athletes who are injured. But we find what the Lord is to us, he is our strength.

And the last thing he says in V. 1 is - of whom shall I be afraid? Having made his confident statement known - the Psalmist asks the question, of whom shall I fear? And that is an extremely difficult question to answer. In fact, it is impossible to think of anyone who could be frightened, or frighten him, or any circumstances that could unnerve him. I think he drives the point home. And I think this has power and confidence for us today.

Third, revitalized by personal discipline. V. 14. Now these remedies we get on the road to health through the church. We properly relate to God. And finally, we revitalize our whole soul by personal discipline. V. 14. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Time does not permit me to give you a real full explanation on this last verse-- wait on the Lord. But the one who has learned to master his fears, becomes an encourager to the fearful. And this is one of the quickest and safest routes to healing of the fainting condition that I know of. It is through waiting. Waiting on the Lord.

This is hard to do, isn't it? Did you ever try to wait. There is nothing more difficult to do.

Think about it. It is much easier to work for God. Than it is to wait for God.

It is easier to be active in some kind of service, than it is to wait for some victory that he might be wanting to give you.

The expectation - we'll wait and see. That's the way we need every day to meet in the common market of life.

If I had time, I would illustrate to you how this waiting was demonstrated at Bethlehem. Waiting was the whole process. And this is something marvelous, that we see as though Bethlehem would never come to all the people who had waited. Who had taken their place. And who had looked for the coming Messiah. But here is God, who waits, and we wait.

Now God will not give his power, or show his purpose to a weary, compromising, defeated Christian who couldn't care less about his will. Who gives himself over to the God's of material gain and amusements of this world. Who reveals in the lust of the flesh, unholy desire.

How much the church needs the blood of Christ applied. To every part of its life. That the will of God may be made known.

Are you in doubt. Are you about to faint. One voice may be saying to you - come this way. But somehow your judgement says faith is leading another. Worldly wisdom says this path. And the voice of the spirit says, that path. If you are not sure, then you need to get somewhere with God until every other voice is silent. Until all human opinions are shut out. Until you learn to look to the Lord and wait.

There is no victory without a fight. There is no battle without wounds. And David most of all, had discovered that here was a great position. And he had learned

V. 12: Deliver me not over to my enemies - Woman, Richmond
Daughter named (unconverted family - child -16- people told her ~~the~~ anac minister told her to fight back - Her mother told her Bible had to overcome fear with faith. Fainting ~~by~~ waiting. And if you want guidance in that direction, and if you want the light from Heaven in your path, you must be prepared honestly to pay the price. And to live as a Christian. *and for every problem, she said I will not try to get answers, because answers to God - Read Bible & found these 3 verses - 12, 13, 14 - & wanted - memorized - & used with God family education*

In Open Window, back in January, there was a little devotional about the secret of security. And the writer told about Stillman Martin, ^{and wife} the composer of "God Will Take Care Of You". He said the man and his wife spoke at their school, and they gave their personal testimony about writing this beautiful hymn. Then they sang it with their aged voices.

He said, their son was the principal at the school. And after meeting his parents, I better understood the reason for his strict discipline.

But the Martin's song dug deep into his life. And he said, whenever he felt physical fears, whenever the task was too hard, whenever I was lonely, whenever I found that I needed comfort and strength, I would simply hum these words.

No matter what may be the test —
God will take care of you —
Lean weary one upon his breast
God will take care of you.

What power and what strength for fainting fears is found. And may you discover the same by waiting upon God.