

January 18, 2023
Psalm 141

The Protection of the Lord

I. We Worship The Lord Knowing That We Need His Protection (vv.1-2)

O Lord, I call upon You; hasten to me!

Give ear to my voice when I call to You!

2 *Let my prayer be counted as incense before You,*

and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

There are many reasons that we come to the Lord in worship:

- Because He is good
- Because He is holy
- Because of His blessings
- Because He deserves our worship, and for many other reasons

This Psalm addresses two of the reasons that He is worthy of worship.

1. Because He listens to us
2. Because He sustains and protects us

Jesus taught a parable in Luke 11 after teaching the disciples to pray. He says this:

5 And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. 9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

- Does this parable mean that God can be annoyed into giving us what we want?
- No. It illustrates how God will listen and respond to our prayers when we petition.
- For us, the application to this point should be clear: we have the opportunity to have the ear of the God of the universe—so talk to Him!
- The same God that holds the universe together moment by moment and sustains our existence is willing to listen to us.
- Whether we recognize it or not, we need His protection at every moment, so we should come to Him with our praise, with our concerns, and with all of our hearts.

II. We Need the Lord's Protection From Our Own Sin (vv.3-4)

*Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth;
 keep watch over the door of my lips!
 4 Do not let my heart incline to any evil,
 to busy myself with wicked deeds
 in company with men who work iniquity,
 and let me not eat of their delicacies!*

- Typically when we think of protection, we think of being protected from scary things.
- We get alarm systems on our homes and cars to protect us from burglars.
- We have a military to protect us from hostile foreign nations and terrorist groups, and we have medicine to protect us from disease and degeneration.
- But the Psalmist first asks the Lord to protect him from his own evil desires. When we think about evil and danger in the world, we tend to think in binary terms (i.e. this person is a good guy and that person is a bad guy).
- The reality is that good and evil run right down the middle of every human heart. In our inner lives, the conscience and knowledge that God has innately given us about what is good and evil does battle with our own sinful desires.

- Even the smartest, kindest, wisest, and capable of humans can fall into the trap of sin in the right set of circumstances. Perhaps the best example of this from Scripture is King David. David is lauded as “a man after God’s own heart” in 1 Samuel, and he clearly was a man who walked with the Lord. In spite of this, David made a series of lazy and selfish decisions that led him to do some egregious things.
- He sought after a married woman, used his power to commit infidelity with her, tried to cover it up by bringing her husband back from war by getting them to sleep together, and then used his power to make sure the man was killed in battle after he didn’t comply.
- David committed adultery and murder all while abusing his power. If even King David could do these things, then that should help us be aware that every one of us is capable of this kind of evil.

This is why the Psalmist (David himself!) asks the Lord to protect him from his own desires, his own words, and his own inclinations. In order to have a healthy spiritual life, we must grasp this same truth, we need the Lord’s protection from our own sinful inclinations.

III. We Need the Lord’s Protection From Outside Danger (vv.5-10)

*Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness;
let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head;
let my head not refuse it.*

Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds.

⁶*When their judges are thrown over the cliff,
then they shall hear my words, for they are pleasant.*

⁷*As when one plows and breaks up the earth,
so shall our bones be scattered at the mouth of Sheol.*

⁸*But my eyes are toward You, O God, my Lord;
in You I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless!*

⁹*Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me
and from the snares of evildoers!*

¹⁰*Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
while I pass by safely.*

- Lastly, we need to the Lord's protection from outside danger.
- This could include sickness, the designs of evil people against us, physical danger, and all other kinds of things that can harm us.
- Particularly in verses 4-10, David seems to have in mind the wicked plans of his enemies whose desire is to see him (King David) come to ruin... Namely, King Saul.
- Not all of us will necessarily have personal enemies like King David had during his time in Israel, but we do have similar dangers waiting to destroy and consume us.
- 1 Peter 5:8 tells us that the devil prowls around like a lion waiting to destroy us, and this certainly bears itself out in the world that we live in.

Conclusion:

The reality that we need the Lord's protection in every area of our lives is sobering, but it should not be debilitating.

- Yes, we are all capable of falling into sin and experiencing damage and destruction as a result.
- But in spite of that, we have hope because the Lord has promised to give us the ability to overcome the world.
- 1 John 4:4 tells us *"You are from God, little children, and have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*
- We need the Lord's protection, but He is faithful to provide such protection to those of us who are in Christ.