

DEVASTATED BY FALSE ACCUSATION

Psalm 69: 1-36 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Twenty one years ago, an incident in the life of man of God was reported in the devotional, "Our Daily Bread." John, the man of God was driving home late one night when he picked up a hitchhiker. As they rode along, he began to be suspicious of his passenger. John checked to see if his wallet was safe in the pocket of his coat that was on the seat between them, but it wasn't there! So he slammed on the brakes, ordered the hitchhiker out, and said, "Hand over the wallet immediately!" The frightened hitchhiker handed over a billfold, and John drove off. When he arrived home, he started to tell his wife about the experience, but she interrupted him, saying, "Before I forget it, John, do you realize that you left your wallet at home this morning?" A second story God the Holy Spirit has led me to share with you, is a sad and frightening account told in Jerry Jenkins book "Hedges, Loving Your Marriage Enough To Protect It." This book written in 1989 and published by Wolgemuth and Hyatt, on pages 76-78 tells this story of a young evangelist. He was just barely 21, on fire for God, effective in his preaching and soul-winning, and he was in great demand from local churches. He had preached several large crusades and was soon invited to an area-wide effort at which he would be the main speaker. Though he was not yet even out of college, he was a protégé of God-anointed international evangelist, Sammy Tippit, a man who mentored him and admired him and considered him a wise young man of God. Although this young evangelist didn't have a steady girlfriend, he dated regularly at his Bible college. Spiritually, he was alert and mature. He was young, however, and some might say he was naive.

The first night of the crusade he headed up the counseling ministry in a large room near the pastor's study. A beautiful teen-age lady asked if she could speak with him personally. He tried to assign her to someone else, but when she persisted, he agreed for her to wait until he was finished with the others. More than an hour after the meeting had ended, the rest of the counselors and counselees had left, he was alone with the young girl. A few minutes later she burst from the room, screaming, "He made a pass at me! He wanted to make love to me!" That very night the pastor of the host church and a small group of the crusade planners confronted the young evangelist and demanded an explanation. He denied the girl's charge but he had no witnesses. The girl was an upstanding young woman in the church, and there was no reason to disbelieve her story. "What did happen in that room?" the pastor demanded. "To tell you that would be to make an accusation behind someone's back," the young evangelist wisely said. "This is what happened to me. I ask only that I be allowed to face my accuser." The pastor and the others crusade members promptly canceled the rest of the crusade. They agreed that the young woman

should be asked to face the preacher in their presence. Two nights later she showed up with her parents at a private board meeting. The pastor asked if she would care to speak about her charges against the preacher. “She has already said all she has to say, “her father said sternly, her mother nodding and glaring at the accused.” “Would you, son, care to share your version of what happened in that room the other night?” “No, sir,” the evangelist said. “I see no future in that. Only she and I know the truth, and I cannot defend myself. I’d just like to say this to her. “Cindy, you know what happened and what didn’t happen in that room. If you don’t tell the truth, I will be branded and may never preach again. This will damage my reputation and that of this church, and even that of God. If I did what you say I did, I deserve no better, but we both know that is not the truth. I’m begging you in the name of Christ to set the record straight.” Silence hung heavy as the board and her parents watched her face contort into a grimace before tears began to flow. “I lied,” she said quietly. “I’m sorry. I lied. He didn’t make a pass at me; I made a pass at him. When he turned me down, I was so embarrassed and ashamed and angry that I made up that story. I’m so sorry!”

We are facing one of the major passages in the Word of God about false accusations and reproaches that fall on believers. Many good and godly commentators tell us Jeremiah is the writer of this Psalm. Why? It is because of his zeal for God’s house. The Psalmist was humiliated, scorned and it corresponds perfectly with Jeremiah 15:15-18. Then there is the peculiar nature of Jeremiah’s suffering. He was cast into a dungeon, where he sank in the mire. He makes reference to water overflowing him in Lamentations 3:53-58. Then finally, the close of the Psalm 69, in vs. 34-36 is the summary of Jeremiah chapters 30-33. That is a profound argument for putting Jeremiah’s signature on this Psalm. But there is a problem. The title plainly ascribes the Psalm to David, to be led by the choirmaster according to a tune called Lilies. It is true that these titles of the Psalms are not part of the original text, but they are definitely ancient. The Jews who wrote the superscriptions knew what they were singing about. The ancient Jews believed that David wrote the Psalm. The key to knowing for sure who wrote the Psalm, is found in Romans 11:9, 10. Paul quoted there from Psalm 69: 22, 23, where we read today, “Let their own table before them become a snare; and when they are at peace, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually.” Paul tells us by inspiration that David wrote this psalm. That’s good enough for me. Regardless of whether the author is David or Jeremiah, both in this case, had occasions to be godly innocent sufferers. The psalmist here speaks of a deep and difficult affliction. David complains in this psalm of great distress and trouble that he was in. He earnestly begged God to relieve him and help him in vs. 1-21. He asked for the judgment of

God upon his enemies in vs. 22-29. He concluded the psalm with the voice of joy and praise, in assurance that God would help him in vs. 30-36.

Have any of us here today been where the psalmist was? Have any of you been falsely accused? Have we ever been at the point in our life that no matter which direction we turn, there is always something or someone that seems appointed as the enemy's emissary and ambassador of pain and conflict for our life? I have had many seasons of being buffeted by false accusations, and on the 12th day of January, I can tell you that 2014 is not free and clear of accusations. By standing up for God's Word, His authority, and submission to God's will in the family, the devil hates authority. At times, our accusers seem so bent on making our lives miserable, trying to get us to give up, that the enemy of our souls uses a time of our physical sickness, to orchestrate an all-out assault and attack on us. As we catch it from all sides, just like David, our pain, our difficulty, and our discouragement intensifies as the false accusations are leveled, day after day and hour after hour. The attacks usually come first from our foes, then from our flesh, even from our own family or from our own family of God, and at times, even from our own faith. David speaks of his foes in v. 4, of his flesh, v. 3, of his family, v. 8, and of his own faith, v. 9. David sought the Lord in the midst of the attacks from all sides. But God taught David six most difficult lessons as He walked with David through the fire of false accusation, reproach, alienation, and shunning. What are they?

WE MUST WAIT FOR OUR GOD TO DEFEND US WHICH AT FIRST MAY APPEAR TO BE A HOPELESS CAUSE. (I.)

Notice the first four verses of Psalm 69. We read, "Save me, O God for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold. I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal, must I now restore?" Examine this first hard lesson. It hinges on verse 3—"My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God." Have you been there? In verse 1, drowning seems David's inevitable end. Momentarily, David looks like a drowning victim. Then quicksand is threatening to swallow him up, v. 2 and there is no foothold. David's cries to God for help seem to be unanswered yet. v. 3—as David is losing his voice crying out with a parched throat and his tears have fatigued him until he is weary. David's eyes are going blind as he keeps waiting in vain it appears upon His God. To add to David's plight is his ability, despite his poor eyesight, he sees his attackers are too numerous and powerful to fight them off—they are more than the hairs of his head, and to add insult to injury, the attacks of false accusations are unprovoked. — "He is hated without a cause." – v. 4. The question arises with David, "Since the

accusations are false, and he did not steal, must he now restore something he never took or stole in the first place? This psalm over and over, not every verse, but a number of verses are Messianic. Jesus said to His disciples in John 15: 19 and 25, “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you...But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: “They hated Me without a cause.”—right from our text in Psalm 69: 4. Seeing this part of the psalm as Messianic, gives us a higher bar to reach than seeking just to learn from David to pray, wait, and ultimately, we must be led in our Gethsemanes, to not give up when the sky turns black and we feel forsaken. It can see hopeless as we try to learn to pray, “Not my will but Thine be done.” Yet never buy into the idea that praying for God’s will to be done is not a prayer of faith. It is the greatest! 2ndly,

WE MUST EXPECT REPROACH AND SHUNNING BY THOSE WE LOVE BECAUSE OF OUR ZEAL FOR GOD’S GLORY. (II.) Notice verses 5-12. “O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.” I want to just stop here and tell you—this is not Messianic. Jesus was sinless, but none of us are sinless. Thus, even as we face false accusations, we must know that none of us are ever facing false accusations, as sinless saints. It was as if David was praying, “God, “You are aware of my sin, but my wrongdoing in a totally different area does not justify this persecution and all these false accusations. Only Jesus faced false accusations in sin-less-ness, for He knew no sin. Notice in v. 6, “Let not those who hope in You be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek You be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel.” David in v. 6 is acknowledging that though the accusations against him are false, none of us, can come under the searchlight of the devil’s “dirt on Carlson—or dirt on ...add your name without finding something that could cause shame for God’s people or dishonor to God’s Name. David doesn’t say what he was thinking of, but I have an idea that his prayer is, “Lord, I know you forgave me for my awful sin with Bathsheba and Uriah.” Don’t let others still keep bringing up that past dirt in my life—don’t let it make more believers stumble or ashamed, and don’t You be dishonored one more time because of my past sin.” Notice v. 7- “For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face.” Now the truth that this current problem is a false accusation is made clear. David is saying, “This time my accusers don’t have me pinned against the wall. No, they have trumped up their charges and I am bearing this reproach for Your Name’s sake.” It is true of Jeremiah that he quoted this verse to pray to God, saying, of himself in Jeremiah 15: 15, “Know that for Your sake, I bear reproach.” Verse 8 is Messianic as it states, “I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons.” This was true of Jesus for John 1: 11 states, “He came unto His own and His own received Him not. We read in Mark 3:21 that Jesus’ brothers

went to seize Him, for they were saying, “He is out of His mind.” And in John 10: 20, the Jews said of Jesus, “He has a demon, and is insane. Why listen to Him?” Beloved, when we face such false accusations, know Jesus faced them first. Go to v. 9 which is also Messianic. “For zeal for Your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.” When we follow the Lord passionately, no lukewarmness, but zeal for Him and His house, it will be said of us what the disciples said of Jesus after he cleansed the temple. They quoted Psalm 69: 9, saying, “Zeal for Your house will consume Me.” Beloved, zeal without knowledge is not good. Make sure your zeal for God and His glory is what brings reproach on us, and not a zeal for ourselves.

Along with David’s desire not to dishonor God, and his own recognition of his own sins, and his request not to be a stumbling-block to the godly, reproach and alienation and shunning was coming to him from following hard after God from seeking God’s glory. Along with reproach comes alienation, shunning, dishonor, and our best attempts for God will be mocked. Notice verses 10-12. “When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach. When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them. I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.” In our best efforts to humble ourselves before God, weeping in our souls with fasting, and putting on sackcloth, there will come alienation and shunning. Even folks at church, the elders and respected leaders who sit in the gate or on the board, may shun us and isolate themselves from us. When we are the victims of false accusations, the word gets around and we become the “song of the drunkards.” Even drunken bums shun us. Thirdly,

WE MUST SUBMISSIVELY PRAY FOR GOD’S DELIVERANCE,

APPEALING TO HIS SAVING FAITHFULNESS. (III.) (v. 13-19) Listen!

“But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of Your steadfast love, answer me in Your saving faithfulness. Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me. Answer me, O LORD, for Your steadfast love is good according to Your abundant mercy, turn to me. Hide not Your face from Your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies. You know my reproach, and my shame and my dishonor; my foes are all known to you.” Notice in v. 13 the sensitivity of David to being submissive to God’s timing of deliverance—“at an acceptable time.” Notice in v. 13, 16, David’s appeal to God’s steadfast love, mercy, faithfulness and compassion. Verses 14, 15 remind the Lord he is about to drown—a tone of desperation and urgency. Verse 17—Make haste to answer me. And notice in v. 18, 19, the appeal to God’s honor—My foes are Your foes. 4thly,

WE MUST SURRENDER OUR BROKEN HEARTS TO GOD, KNOWING THAT DURING OUR REPROACHES, WE MAY FIND LITTLE OR NO COMFORT. (IV.) V. 20, 21 are totally Messianic, with overtones for us.

“Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.” Beloved, when it gets bad for us, remember the crucifixion of Jesus. Mt. 27: 34 states, “They offered Him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when He tasted it, He would not drink it.” What are these kinds of time in our lives, beloved? Jesus tells us in Matthew 5: 11, 12. Paul states in Phil. 3: 10 that we are fellowshiping in His sufferings. In Col. 1: 24, Paul states that we fill up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of His body, the church. Explain. Fifthly,

WE MUST PRAY FOR GOD TO TURN THE TABLES ON OUR FALSE ACCUSERS! (V.) Notice verses 22-28. “Let their own table before them become a snare; and when they are at peace, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually. Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them. May their camp be a desolation; let no one dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom You have struck down, and they recount the pain of those You have wounded. Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from You. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.” This is a section of David’s words known as imprecatory. Imprecatory means to pray down curses and calamities on our enemies. In this day of grace, I urge not a soul here to ever pray this part of this Davidic psalm on your enemies. But we can get the picture of a New Testament way to pray—“Dear Lord, turn the tables on our false accusers. Make their traps for us a snare for themselves and turn their confidence into trembling. Let their snares set for us, catch them. Bring them to full repentance in tears for those whom they have wounded.” Though I cannot tell us today with confidence, pray down God’s wrath upon them—take away their posterity, smite them physically, pour out your burning wrath on them and wipe them from the face of the earth.” What can I say? I can pray as David prays in verse 26, 27, “Don’t let them come into my woodshed when You, Lord, discipline me. Don’t let the wicked exploit me, when I am under Your rod.” Then, I would add one contrasting prayer to v. 28—“Lead them to You and someday write their names down in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Sixthly and lastly,

WE MUST PRAISE GOD IN FAITH, AHEAD OF OUR ACTUAL DELIVERANCE FOR HIS VINDICATION THAT IS COMING. (VI.) As we look at these last words, notice they are faith words of praise. They begin in a plea and they end in a crescendo of praise. Verses 29-36 read, “But I am afflicted and in

pain; let Your salvation, O God, set me on high! I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. When the humble see it they will be glad; You who seek God, let your hearts revive. For the LORD hears the needy and does not despise His own people who are prisoners. Let heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and everything that moves in them. For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there and possess it; the offspring of His servants shall inherit it, and those who love His name shall dwell in it.” Certainly David experienced deep pain and anguish in unjustified persecution and many false accusations as we do. He was not perfect as was the greater Son of David, our Lord Jesus was. Certainly saints under discipline can be exploited by the enemy, but since most of this psalm is Messianic, my final thoughts are explained in the Gospel according to Isaiah. We read in v. 26, “For they persecute Him whom You have struck down. Isaiah 53: 10 tells us, “It was the will of the Lord to crush Him.” So why not enter into the calling down of fire, as Jesus could have when He was crucified. Remember—what will take away your prayers for the damnation of the enemy are found in some of the final words of our Lord as He was being crucified. Over and over He kept saying, (Luke 23: 34) “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” That is the key of how the grace of Jesus turns the tables on our prayers to damn our enemies into prayers that they will come to salvation. That’s truly how our prayers for deliverance can turn into a paean of praise. Imagine as we close God taking your worst false accusers and turning them into beloved brothers and sisters to live with forever in glory. Let it stretch us as we suffer and may we pray for our false accusers until under deep conviction, our Pauls who are part of our stoning find Jesus on the Damascus Road. Amen.