

Series: Psalms
Title: For the Destitute
Text: Ps 102: 17
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Psalm 102: 17: He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

This is what David experienced repeatedly. This is what the children of Israel experienced. This is what God's people today experience. In fact this is written to us. It is how God keeps us praising his name alone.

Psalm 102: 18: This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

This is: For the Destitute

Divisions: Toward the end, we will see the context again. But for now, let's focus on this one verse.

What is it to be destitute—*“He will regard the prayer of the destitute...”* What do the destitute do?—they pray, begging the Lord to save—*“...the prayer of the destitute...”* The assurance the Lord gives to the destitute—*“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.”*

WHAT IS IT TO BE DESTITUTE?

One destitute is one in whom the Lord has revealed that we truly are the sinner. The word means one the Lord has stripped or one the Lord has laid bare. We are destitute when the Lord makes us see ourselves as we really are.

After Adam sinned, Adam and Eve saw their nakedness and made fig leaves. But the first thing the Lord did was to strip them of their fig leaves. Throughout scripture, when God brings a sinner to Christ and each time one of the saints need correction, the Lord laid them bare before their own eyes.

The destitute is one the Lord has made know (or once again renewed to see), we have *no merit* in us. Sin is what we are. God makes us behold our sins, making us destitute in ourselves. God must work this in us because a natural man cannot see himself as destitute. He compares himself with others and sees himself as good as most and far better than some. He may *say* he is a sinner but he thinks he is not as bad as some. He thinks his good will outweigh his bad. But to confess he is destitute, a natural man cannot do.

But when God is gracious to create life in us or when he is gracious to renew a believer and chasten us, the LORD makes us behold the Lord Jesus Christ. He makes hear the gospel of Christ and him crucified. God makes us behold that it took the Son of God coming down to take a sinless body, holy and righteous, to represent his people. When we see that Christ's perfect obedience even unto the death of the cross is the only Righteousness God will receive then we become destitute to our own selves. When the Lord makes us see it was a necessity that Christ bear the sin and curse of his people to make us righteous and put the sins of his people away then we become the destitute. The Lord makes his child see it was for him personally—that *his* sins put Christ on the cross—then we behold Christ whom we have pierced! Then our sin becomes exceedingly sinful.

Then again we find no confidence in anything in us. We find no confidence in our outward morality nor in a religious profession nor in any of our works. We become destitute. The destitute is one the Lord has made know we have *no power*. We see ourselves as in a prison and we cannot free ourselves from it by any power of our hand or works we perform. The destitute sees there is none other man below who has power to help him.

This is where the Lord brings us the first hour. This is what the Lord keeps showing his believing people to keep us looking to Christ alone to be our Savior who meets every need.

WHAT DO THE DESTITUTE DO?

The destitute pray to God. We are beggars begging mercy of the Lord. When the Lord makes us destitute that is when we truly cry unto the Lord as the sinner. We become a mercy-beggar. We beg God to be merciful to me the sinner.

Luke 18:13: And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

The tried believer in this Psalm started out destitute, begging. He begins, in verses 1-4, "*Let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*"

God makes us no longer contented with anything of self. When David heard the story that a rich man stole the poor man's one lamb, David was angry and wanted to pour out justice. This was the result of David being guilty. The guilty are the readiest to judge and condemn others. But when God made David know he was the man then David became destitute. Then we beg mercy from the only one who can save us. Then David prayed,

Psalm 51: 1: Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2: Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3: For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. 4: Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

The destitute beg God for mercy with the desperation that a starving man begs for bread. When a man is truly destitute, no one has to teach him how to beg. This is when our groans become our most eloquent prayers. When a man is destitute then he is not too proud to beg. His destitution overcomes his pride. So he is not ashamed to call on the Lord for he knows the Lord is the only one who can save him.

Spurgeon said, "All God's children grow rich one way, by begging mercy from God."

When a man is destitute he feels he only deserves the wrath of God. He sees no reason in himself that God should show him favor. That is when we know we have no ability in ourselves. Then the only thing we can do is beg God for mercy. But when that is the case, here is the good news, you are the very kind of sinner this is written to. This is God's promise.

THE LORD WILL HEAR THE DESTITUTE

"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

The destitute usually are afraid, at first, that God will not hear and regard their prayer. We see God is holy and we are sinners. Therefore, at first we think our sins are too great for the Lord to hear us. But what is the qualification to be a beggar? Utter poverty! What is the qualification to come to the great Physician of mercy? Sickness from head to toe! What makes us qualified to be filled with the riches of Christ? Total emptiness! So God promises—"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

We can be assured that God, for the sake of his Son, will hear the prayer of the destitute because this is how the Lord keeps his children knowing that we are grass and that his grace is as immutable as God. David says that in verses 11-12, "*My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.*" This is how God keeps himself in our remembrance. It is by his immutable love and grace and mercy.

Malachi 3: 6: For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. 7: Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

The true sinner can be sure God will hear and have mercy on the destitute. When we see we are destitute, God made us see it. It is God's set the time to favor his child and his church. That is the good news in verse 13, "*Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.*" When the Lord brings us to see we are destitute in ourselves, it is the Lord who brought us to that end. It is God's purpose in the preaching of the gospel and in the afflictive providence God sends upon us. It is God's set time when he will arise to help his destitute child.

This is also a word for those who are already his servants. Verse 14 goes with verse 13. It declares this is for God's servants who favor the dust of God's city to the riches of this world, "*Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*" The Lord made Jerusalem a heap of stones and the children of Israel were carried away as prisoners. Yet, God's saints in Israel took pleasure in Jerusalem though it was now a heap of stones and they favored the dust thereof.

The Lord has made us living stones. He has given each of his saints a heart for the Lord's church, his people. The Lord has made us each know we are weak as dust. So we favor even the weakest of our brethren. We pray from our own destitution and for our brethren who are destitute. The good news is, God hears.

This is how he makes us know his name and keeps us praising the Lord alone as we read in verses 18-20, "*This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.*"

When the children of Israel were prisoners in Egypt, they were destitute. They groaned by reason of their taskmasters. And the Lord looked down and heard them.

Later, God delivered the children of Israel to the enemy to chasten and correct them. Again, they became destitute prisoners, "*the children of death*" as the margin says. They saw they were unable to free themselves from prison.

Right now, there are some the Lord is making to behold their sin for the first time, drawing them to Christ. There are others who believe on the Savior, who are now full of many doubts and fears. Some saints have sinned and are crying the cry of the destitute. Others have experienced great and heavy losses and others bear heavy crosses of various kinds. When we suffer any of these things, we are in a prison. The only thing we can do is groan by reason of the hard bondage. But the entire time Israel was in bondage, the Lord had his eye upon each of his chosen children. He still does. The Lord heard the groaning of the prisoner then and he still does.

Behold God's faithfulness to us by looking to Christ on the cross. When Christ bore the sins of his people, the Substitute groaned upon the tree. God our Father heard him, and at the set time, loosed him. Now, having raised Christ to God's right hand and made him Head over all things to the church, it is the glory of our Redeemer to hear those he redeemed and loose us from our prison at his set time!

Isaiah 49: 9: That THOU mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures *shall be* in all high places.

By loosing the children of Israel and delivering them back to Jerusalem, they praised the Lord and declared his name. This is why we can be sure he will hear us. This whole work of salvation is to make us "*declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem*" (v21). This is why we can be sure the Lord will hear those God has everlastingly loved. He will keep his people declaring his name, his works and his praise! The whole church shall give God all the glory when the Lord has gathered us all together in the end, "*When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD*" (v22). John saw the saints gathered about the throne in glory and he wrote,

Revelation 15:3: And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

What was Moses' song? It was the song of the Lamb! When the Lord had delivered them over the Red Sea:

Exodus 15: 1: Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2: The LORD *is* my strength and song, and he is become my salvation...13: Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people *which* thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided *them* in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

There are many trials for each of us to pass through before we reach glory where there is no sin and sorrow anymore—"you must through much tribulation enter the kingdom." But when we see our sin and are destitute, our gracious Lord teaches us,

Hosea 14:2: Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

For all the reasons we have seen here, we can be assured—"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." This is how God keeps us praising his name. This will be our song for all eternity,

Micah 7:18 Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy.

Amen!