

Series: Psalms

Title: When You Are Among Lions

Text: Ps 57: 4- 11

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Psalm 57: 4 My soul is among lions:

David was fleeing from king Saul who had three thousand men—all wanting to kill David. He was hiding in a cave. Our subject is “When You Are Among Lions.” What does a believer do when we are among lions.

Proposition: When among lions God brings his child to glory in the Lord by looking only to Christ because God exalts Christ in his heart.

I do not have an introduction; let’s get right into the message.

Divisions: 1) The trial of lions 2) The cry for exaltation 3) The effect of exaltation

THE TRIAL OF LIONS

Psalm 57: 4 My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

It is common to find wicked sinners called lions.

Proverbs 28:15: As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

Jeremiah 50:17: Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.

2 Timothy 4:17: Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Certainly, David found himself among lions—king Saul and his men, Achish, even his own son Absalom—all wanted him dead. Also, when we are made to see our own sin, we find we dwell among lions because all are sinners. For example Isaiah, after beholding the glory of Christ our King, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa 6:5).

But none of us are among lions like our Lord Jesus Christ was in this earth. He was sinless dwelling amongst sinners. Among us sinners, Christ was in the lion’s den like Daniel. The Pharisee’s and scribes accused and tried to take him the whole of his ministry on earth. At last, he allowed the crowd that came with Judas to take him. Then in the high priest’s hall, he told them the truth, he is the Son of God and it made them roar like lions.

Matthew 26: 65: Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. 66: What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. 67: Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands, 68: Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

In the common hall of Pilate surrounded by the Roman soldiers:

Matthew 27: 28: And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29: And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30: And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. 31: And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

Worst of all, our Redeemer was among lions as he suffered on the cross:

Psalm 22: 13: They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion...21: Save me from the lion’s mouth...

Matthew 27: 39: And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40: And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41: Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, 42: He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43: He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44: The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

As we hear their cruel, mocking scorn we see why our Master said, *“I lie even among them that are set on fire,...and their tongue a sharp sword.”*

James 3: 5: Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6: And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7: For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (Jas 3:6)

Illustration: Imagine if we had no tongues!

But God puts his child among lions for a reason; to bring us to:

THE CRY FOR EXALTATION

Psalm 57: 5: Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. 6: They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.

Why did God the Father set his Son among lions? Why does the Father set us among lions? It is to bring us cry to God for God to be exalted.

Believer, there are times when we simply do not know what to pray. But if we ask God to be exalted above the heavens and to exalt his glory above all the earth, we shall receive our petition.

We cry for God to be exalted when God makes us cry in faith to the Lion of the tribe of Judah to save us. When we cry to the Lord of the lions to save us then we cry for God to be exalted. It may come in different words. But if we cry something as simple and direct as “Lord, save me” then we are crying, *“Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.”*

For his people Christ prayed to the Father for the Father to be exalted and magnify his glory when he hung upon the cursed tree. Christ Jesus highly exalted God by his obedience unto the death of the cross. Our Savior, though he is God, made himself a servant. As the servant of God, as the representative Head of his people, Christ looked to the Father in perfect faith. He depended upon God the Father to save him in perfect faith.

So God settles our hearts on Christ to remember the salvation he accomplished for us *on the cross—“They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.”*

“Selah” means we should pause and think long on what was just said. That means this is a very important verse. It is important because this is what Christ accomplished on the cross. The cross was the pit dug by Christ’s enemies. The devil and his seed thought that by crucifying Christ on the cross they were destroying Christ and his kingdom. But by the death of the cross Christ put away the sin of his people and established his kingdom in righteousness. So while the devil and his seed thought they were winning the victory by crucifying Christ, they were actually falling into their own pit.

Isaiah 8: 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 13: Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* 14: And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15: And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

I preached a message from that passage titled *“The Bait, the Trap and the Broken Yoke.”* Christ was the bait the devil and his seed could not resist—they hated Christ. And Christ on the cross was the trap—by crucifying Christ his enemies fell into the pit they had dug. But by that same finished work on the cross, Christ broke the yoke off his people, redeeming us from the curse of the law.

God foreshadowed this few times in history. Haman was hanged on the gallows he prepared to hang Mordecai on. God drowned Pharaoh in the very sea that Pharaoh thought trapped Moses and the children of Israel.

Brethren, how does God make Christ Wisdom to stiff-necked sinners like us? “The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands” (Ps 9:16) Any non-elect who tries to harm God’s anointed shall be snared in the work of his own hands. Any who reject Christ for their own will and works shall fall into the very pit they dug.

Dwelling among us Christ was in the lion’s den. But what God did for Daniel, he did for our Savior.

Daniels 6:22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath SHUT THE LION’S MOUTHS, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me;...23: Then the king commanded...So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. 24: And the king

commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

God our Father exalted himself and his glory above the heavens when he raised Christ Jesus up out of this lion's den to his own right hand. Christ Authored faith and Finished faith for his people. God is well-pleased for his righteousness sake. No hurt was done him—he reigns supreme over all. It is all because Christ believed his God.

THE EFFECT OF EXALTATION

Psalm 57: 7: My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. 8: Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early. 9: I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. 10: For thy mercy *is* great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. 11: Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: *let thy glory be above all the earth.*

The effect of exaltation is a fixed heart. When the Spirit exalts Christ in our heart so that we see Christ exalted on the cross and exalted to the right hand of the Father, revealing the free salvation Christ accomplished for us, the effect is a fixed heart. It is an awakening. A rejoicing. A desire to praise God alone and give him all the glory.

What will make a sinner believe on Christ? What will convert *a believer* from fearing lions and make us sanctify the LORD of hosts and fear him? When the Spirit of God exalts Christ Victorious in the heart. He fixes our heart on Christ alone in faith. Then we stop glorying in ourselves and our enemies; we glory only in the Lord— "***I will praise THEE, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto THEE among the nations.***"

Isaiah 2:11: The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Isaiah 12:4: And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Why do believers give all glory to God in Christ—"***For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.***" God made *his mercy and his truth* meet in harmony in Christ our Substitute.

Proverbs 16:6: By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

Psalm 85: 10: Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

God forsook his people *in truth* when Christ bore the sin of his people on the cross and God forsook him. In a little wrath he hid his face from us in truth to satisfy justice. Then God was just to have great mercy on us. Therefore, God makes with each believer an everlasting covenant to save us.

Isaiah 54: Isaiah 54: 7: For a small moment have I forsaken thee but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. 9: For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10: For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

Let me end with a question? What is the purpose for which God sends trials? It is because since we still have a sin-nature, we forget God, we forget what he has done for us, we forget what he promises to do. So God surrounds us with lions to remind us of our total inability. He makes us remember to cry out to God to be exalted. Our Father reminds us that Christ is victorious by exalting Christ in our hearts. Through the preaching of the gospel, God says:

Isaiah 44: 21: Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou *art* my servant: I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. 22: I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. 23: Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done *it*: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. 24: Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; 25: That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise *men* backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; 26: That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: 27: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 28: That saith of [Christ] Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

So God brings his child to the end purpose for which the trial was given—he makes us cry—"***Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.***"

Amen!