

A Prayer of the Destitute

Text: Psalm 102

Key Word: Destitute

Key Thought: Destitution with God Leads to Assurance

I. Description of Distress (102:3-11)

II. Assurance IN Time (102:12-16)

III. Recording God's Greatness (102:17-22)

I. Description of Distress (102:3-11)

The Oxford University Press describe the word "*destitute*" as "*extremely poor and lacking the means to provide for oneself.*" The Bible uses the word "*poor*" to describe it and was often used by Jesus. It also described a "*beggar.*"

"Around 1.89 billion people, or nearly 36% of the world's population, lived in extreme poverty. Nearly half the population in developing countries lived on less than \$1.25 a day."

"World Vision"
Oct 16, 2020

Poverty has spiralled out of control in many countries since the 1950's. Extreme poverty, deep poverty, abject poverty, absolute poverty, destitution are the recent words to describe that condition. In 2018 the International Poverty Line was reset to \$1.90 per day.

Canada presently is rated to have 9 % of our population living in poverty. It is judged on living below \$18,000.00 per year. The cheapest place to live in Canada is in Quebec City. The most expensive place to live is West Vancouver.

Can a person be destitute in more ways then one? For instance, can we be **destitute in our spirit** and yet have abundance of finances and materials?

We don't know who wrote this Psalm. My Bible subtitles it as "*A prayer of an afflicted person who has grown weak and pours out a lament before the LORD.*"

"This is a patriot's lament over his country's distress."

Charles Spurgeon
"Treasury of David - IV"
p. 417

I. Description of Distress (102:3-11) (Contd.)

“For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.

4. My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food.

5. In my distress I groan aloud and am reduced to skin and bones.

6. I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins.

7. I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof.

8. All day long my enemies taunt me; those who rail against me use my name as a curse.

9. For I eat ashes as my food and mingle my drink with tears

10. because of your great wrath, for you have taken me up and thrown me aside.

11. My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass.”

Psalm 102:3-11

There is no doubt that nations of the world are in great distress. I often get asked, “*What do you think is happening? Will our lives ever get back to normal?*” There will always be parts of the world that are facing great distress while others are doing much better. Eventually even the strongest person reaches a point when they think they may not be able to handle it.

Personal problems are much different than **national or global problems** that are almost totally out of our hands. Those living in Israel must be thankful that they are leading the world in COVID -19 vaccinations. Yet they are once again becoming alarmed with the recent change of leadership in the USA. There has been an increase of bombing in Syria. The Israeli energy minister believes that Iran will produce fissile material to create their first nuclear weapon in six months (Biden administration projects it to be three months).

This unknown Psalmist gave us a vivid description of how his health was being affected. His bones were burning due to the high stress it was placing upon him. His emotions were depleted like grass that is burned due to drought conditions. His appetite had disappeared. It seems he had lost so much weight that he looked like skin and bones.

“It is ill for men to be playing the peacock with worldly pride when the ills of the times should make them as mournful as a pelican; and it is a terrible thing to see men flocking like vultures to devour the prey of a decaying church, when they ought rather to be lamenting among her ruins like an owl.”

*Charles Spurgeon
“Treasury of David - IV”
p. 417*

I. Description of Distress (102:3-11) (Contd.)

Insomnia is often the result of a busy mind and a worried heart. Statcan reports that “In Canada, the individual economic burden of insomnia is estimated at \$5,010 per person per year, with nearly 90% of this amount attributed to indirect costs such as work absenteeism and reduced productivity. Lack of sleep causes cardiovascular problems and is also linked to a poor immune system.

Another part that the Palmist lists is being like a lonely sparrow upon a rooftop. This is unusual. Birds love to chirp and brighten up our day. Sparrows nest in colonies. They are known to be gregarious (social). To add insult to injury why would anyone persecute a person like this all day long? They are already isolated and probably not affecting others.

It was common for people to wear sackcloth and dump ashes over their head. Eventually these ashes would mix with their food and drink. Mix plenty of tears with ashes and you can just imagine how unpleasant this would look.

The final distress he felt was one who was lifted up to only be slammed down like a wrestler. I would say that this continuing description describes someone in an utter helplessness condition. He lastly describes himself like an evening shadow which will soon be taken over by complete darkness as well as repeating that he is like grass that has withered because of drought conditions.

II. Assurance IN Time (102:12-16)

“12. But you, Lord, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations.

13. You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come.

14. For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to pity.

15. The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.

16. For the Lord will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory.”

Psalm 102:12-16

I am so glad the words of this Psalm didn't stop with verse eleven. There is Assurance IN Time as well as Assurance OVER time which I finish with. God has set appointed times to show forth His glory. It is earmarked by a great humility from God's people to admit to their sins and recognize what damage it has caused. Inaction is also disapproved by God. He expects us not find pleasure in the sin of others or our own sin. When evil destroys God's temple so all that is left is dust then things have gotten too far out of line.

II. Assurance IN Time (102:12-16) (Contd.)

When the kings of the earth begin to take notice of God and His glory and fear His judgment then we are entering a time of spiritual renewal.

*** I've often watched how it plays out in an illustration of bowling. When I was much younger I made it a habit to go the bowling after delivering the newspapers on my route. I only played 5 pin because I found it difficult to control the balls with my fingers.

One thing is common to both games. I had to learn to follow the markers. I also learned early in the game to aim for and hit the king or head pin. If I only hit the king pin and the other pins are still standing it takes more skill to take them all down, If you miss both of the two point pins, a player of my skill would seldom do well.

That is why God often waits until things are lined up so He can take down the kingpin as well as the lesser point pins. ***

Another game that I rarely played was dominoes because I didn't have the patience to set up all the dominoes. It only takes one domino that is not close enough or slightly angled wrong to end the excitement of the game early. That is why God is patient. He receives much more glory in overcoming an army than just conquering a king. Time has its way of exposing who is really on your side.

Jesus took to the end of His life on earth before exposing Judas. No one wants to be called Benedict Arnold who was charged with Treason for selling the plans for an armed battle and the location of the ammunition to the British.

The Biblical story of Delilah deceiving Samson also brings out the fact that timing makes all the difference. Delilah thought that she had exposed Samson's secret of his great strength. What the Philistines forgot about was that our hair does eventually grow back. He was able to destroy more Philistines with his death than throughout his entire life (Judges 16:30).

I have also learned in life that it is one thing to build and it is quite another to rebuild. The LORD has had to rebuild His name even after His people have fallen into great sin. The more destitute they become, the greater the glory is that God receives. It's important to realise that we cannot win without God. It's not the end of the world when we fall **from hero to zero** as long as God is acknowledged in the end and receives ALL the glory.

III. Recording God's Greatness (102:17-22)

17. *He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea.*

18. *Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord:*

19. *"The Lord looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth,*

20. *to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death."*

21. *So the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem*

22. *when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the Lord.*

Psalm 102:17-22

This brings me to my last point. Can you imagine how unfortunate we would be without our Bibles? It has taken the lives of many forerunners of the LORD to keep the Bible intact and passed on for thousands of years. It is our duty now to pass it onto the generations coming up. Many of our new worship and praise songs continue to be founded in God's Word. **The misery of our souls indoctrinates us into an in-depth prayer life. There is nothing more tenacious than a person's memory when they suffer the wrongs of life.**

God has a clear perspective on what is happening throughout the world. His place in heaven where He sits makes the earth His footstool. He is also omnipresent and omniscient. We have seen many who were cast into prisons receive a pardon.

"In recent years, the number of Chinese Christians has increased significantly; Christians were 4 million before 1949 (3 million Catholics and 1 million Protestants), and are reaching 67 million today, Christianity is reportedly the fastest growing religion in China with average annual rate of 7%."

The more our enemies do insult to the gospel, the more they give us to proclaim. Everyone knows down deep when people act in a manner displeasing to God. We can never expect His blessing or glory to come if we try to hide or change the truth. So never be ashamed to humble yourself and feel destitute. Look up because God's glory is about to be displayed to the nations.

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Date: Feb 7/21

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: I Love You Lord

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