

The Poor, the Sick, and Enemies Psalm 41

by Pastor Roy Hogan

41:1-3

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. 2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. 3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

The term “the poor” is found in the Bible 142 times. This tells us much about God’s consideration of poor folks. If God is interested in the needs of the poor, his children should be as well. Early in the Bible, we find “the poor” mentioned in Exodus 23:11, which reads *But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.* In this commandment of the law of Moses, provisions were set forth in the field, in the vineyard, and in the olive-yard, that the poor may have food. For sure, the poor have the attention of God Almighty. Christians, as well, need to consider the poor.

One of the greatest illustrations of considering the poor occurs in the book of Ruth. Naomi and her sister-in-law, Ruth, returned to Bethlehem from Moab. They returned impoverished. Ruth went into the countryside to glean. Gleaning, done by the poor, was the act of gathering the left-overs in the fields of grain. As was seen above in Exodus 23:11, the book of Leviticus gives further instruction in regard to caring for the poor: Leviticus 23:22 *And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.* Ruth found her way to the field of the mighty kinsman redeemer, Boaz. There she gleaned that she and her mother-in-law, Naomi, could have food.

Another example of God’s consideration for the poor is found in the ceremony of purification for a woman who has given birth. If she was poor, she could bring a lesser offering to the priest: Leviticus 12:6-8 *And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: 7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her*

blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female. 8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her; and she shall be clean. Those who could, brought a lamb and a young pigeon or a turtledove. Those who were unable to afford a lamb, could bring two turtledoves or two pigeons. When Mary, the mother of Jesus, went for her purification ceremony at the birth of Christ, wonder what she brought to the priest? We find the answer in Luke 2:22-24 *And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; Lk 2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) Lk 2:24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.* Our Lord, and his family, were poor. The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nest, but our Savior had no place to lay his head.

For those who will consider the poor, the Word of God promises some powerful and wonderful things as stated in these three verses.

- Deliverance in time of trouble: this is a great promise. God can get to the scene before the police can. God is waiting in the emergency room when the ambulance arrives. He is sitting in the courtroom before the judge walks in.
- Life is promised: many are the obstacles that are unseen to the human eyes. God can see around the next curve. He can move the oncoming vehicle over to his side of the road. Most of us spend a lot on insurance. Considering the poor is a good insurance plan.
- Blessings: we all like blessings. Help the poor and sleep well at night.
- Deliverance from enemies: I appreciate the law enforcement agencies. I appreciate security cameras. We install alarms systems to safeguard our home. God provides his children with security 24/7.
- Comfort in sorrow- the “bed of languishing” may come to me today. No one knows the sorrow sickness and disease may bring their way. We have the assurance God, if we consider the poor, that God will be by our bedside.

It is truly more blessed to give than to receive.

41:4

I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

One must admire David's honesty. Throughout the Scripture, he often admits his failure. This verse likely speaks of the dreadful affair with Bathsheba. David is never hesitant to admit he was his own worst enemy. I have sinned against thee are powerfully honest words. The prodigal son went to his home and admitted he had sinned against heaven and against his father. Often, men are hesitant to come clean with God. Honesty is always the best policy, but seldom does honesty prevail.

41:5

Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

Has anyone ever told you that they wished you would die? The enemies of David were brutal and vicious. How horrible it is to wish death upon anyone. Most everyone has been mistreated at some time. If you have not, likely, your time is coming. The most honorable, sinless man who ever sat foot on planet earth, Jesus, had enemies. I suppose having enemies are part of life. Yet, we dread the thought that an enemy attack may come our way any moment.

One of the most dreadful consequences that arose from David's affair with Bathsheba was that it gave ammunition to his enemies. Every ruler has enemies. The best leaders of the ages had opposition. Pity the poor president of the United States. As king, and like most public officials, David lived under a microscope. Word of David's affair spread like wildfire. This news was music to the ears of his enemies. It was also arrows for their bows.

Have you an enemy that wishes your name would disappear from the annals of history? David's enemies wished that his name would perish from the human tongue.

41:6-8

And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it. 7 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt. 8 An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

How dreadful would it be to be sick in the hospital bed and someone walks in your room and begins to blaspheme you? I do not know what David's enemy visitors had to say. Verse 6 only says that they spoke *vanity*. Perhaps they said "David, I hear this disease you have is going to kill you," or,

“David, I guess you are now getting what you deserve.” An acquaintance of mine was once in the hospital. A visitor came to see him. The first thing the visitor asked was “Who is your doctor?” The friend told him the doctor’s name. The visitor replied “Oh no, he let my cousin die.” Who needs this kind of comfort in time of sickness?

The visitors observed David on his bed of affliction. While they observed him, they were concocting in their mind and heart iniquity to spread against him when they left his bedside. It sound to me as though sick Job’s visitors came to see David as well.

In verse 8, the enemies who visited him declared the disease was going to kill him. We have all met at least one person who knows more than God. Some declared David would never walk again for they said in verse 8 *and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more*. Life is in the hands of God He has the life button. He turns life on, and he turns life off.

41:9-10

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. 10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

Enemies are hard to deal with. It is even harder to deal with a *friend* who has become your *enemy*. The hurt is deep, and the wound is slow to heal. This verse speaks of Ahithophel. He was one of David’s able and persuasive advisors. In our system of government, we would liken him to a member of the president’s cabinet. When David’s son Absalom plotted to take the kingship from his father, Ahithophel defected from David’s side and teamed-up with Absalom.

In the custom of the day, when men ate bread together in friendship and fellowship, a bond was formed between them. David and Ahithophel had eaten bread together. Likely, they sat together many times and enjoyed a meal. The two had bonded. A sacred association was formed between them. Now, Ahithophel had defected. Rather than a hand of friendship, Ahithophel *lifted up his heel against me*.

In verse 10, David pleads for God’s help in lifting him up. He asked God *and raise me up, that I may requite them*. I do not consider David to be a spiteful man. There is more than one occasion in the biblical record of David where he showed mercy on someone who wronged him. One may recall the several occasions when David had opportunity to harm his adversary, Saul,

and he declined to do so. David loved people. He considered the poor. One may recall the Scripture where David did the wonderful deed of restoring crippled Mephibosheth to the kingdom. Only a man with a good heart would do such. Crippled Mephibosheth had nothing to contribute to David or the kingdom. It was entirely an act of mercy on the part of David.

41:11

By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

Surely, God must be in control of all situations. It seems that it would be so easy to steal a king's throne while he was on his bed of affliction unable to stand. Herein is a great lesson. There is a higher power watching over the affairs of life. David discerns that if it were not for the favor of God toward him, his enemies would overwhelm him like a tsunami. A child of God can rejoice and find comfort in the great truth of this verse. God favors his own.

41:12-13

And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever. 13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Has David lost his mind? Here lies a man who has committed the dreadful sin of fornication with Bathsheba. Yet, he speaks, in verse 12, of *mine integrity*. This sickness has surely wounded the mind of David. He is speaking in the fashion of a man who is delusional. Someone, get this man a pill!

David is fine. He has not lost his mind. Yes, he did sin the awful sin of fornication. For sure, God judged him harshly for the sin. Greater, though, are those sweet words Nathan the prophet spoke to David in II Samuel 12:13 *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

In verse 13, the chapter closes with a wonderful affirmation from the heart of David that he knows within his heart *the LORD God of Israel*.