

Psalm 35 – Plead My Cause! (Part 2 of 3)

III. **The Plea to PRAISE (vs. 9-14)** – The desire of every born again believer is to praise the LORD. The Holy Spirit who dwells in him will urge him to praise the Lord. He cannot help himself because of the Spirit of God's prompting. Not only is he compelled to but he desires it very strongly. He knows that he is praising his heavenly Father whom he would not know if not for the grace and mercy bestowed upon him through Christ. When he does so, his praise will be based upon the teaching of the Word of God. It will not be carnal. It will be holy and spiritual. He understands it well. He rejoices in the LORD because he now can. It is a privilege that he cherishes with all his heart. It is always the best time in his life to be able to praise the LORD. He knows that he is right with God in Christ! This delights his soul tremendously. It makes his life rich and full on this earth. It is a life that he had never experienced until God saved him in Christ. Now that he can be joyful in the LORD, the attractions of the world will grow strangely dim with every passing day. The psalmist addressed God as the LORD which is the covenantal Name of God. This means that the psalmist has a personal relationship with God. He knows Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour.

Using synthetic parallelism, the psalmist, David, says that in the LORD he has experienced true salvation. The LORD not only saved him from physical harm and danger but also from sin, death and hell. David experienced the protection of the LORD from lions and bears, including a Philistine giant named Goliath, but there were no enemies in David's life that were worse than King Saul and his son Absalom. These were his people. The former was his king who wanted him dead. The latter was his eldest son who wanted his throne! These enemies were the worst and most painful to bear. He loved them and cared for them and they turned around to kill him! The emotional and mental torture he experienced must have been unbearable if not for the grace and mercies of God which are new every morning strengthening him. The most endearing salvation is the forgiveness of sin which means removal of death and hell from David's life. This gave him the greatest joy, for not even death could separate him from his LORD!

David had much to rejoice and to praise the LORD!

Verse 10 (synonymous parallelism) – To express the greatness of the gratitude that he felt in his heart for the LORD, David said, "All my bones shall say, LORD, who *is* like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?" All the bones in David's body, from the tiniest to the largest, internal and external, every part of David would like to declare that there is no one who is like the LORD, his God! God is unique! There is no one like Him! This is based upon a personal experience rather than a theological conclusion! The personal experience with the one living and true God and to confess from within the soul that there is no one like Him is

what is needed today. The Bible is too theoretical for believers today; when they read the Word of God or hear the Word, do they receive it as the very words of God? They are more likely to receive it as the word of man! This was not David's experience! He shared from his heart the intimate presence of the LORD in his daily walk and struggles. All David wanted was to walk in God's will. But his enemies tried their utmost to drive him out of it. The moment David disobeyed the Word of God in order to lighten his load or get rid of his enemies, he would have transgressed against his LORD. He needed his LORD to strengthen him. He needed to experience what it means to believe that the LORD is sovereign and that all things work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose!

Therefore David shared that the LORD will help those who are helpless. The enemies were too strong for him to overcome but the LORD was there to protect and defend, repeatedly. Using different words but expressing the same sentiments, David shared that the LORD delivers the poor and needy from those who desire to spoil them, i.e. to take them forcibly! The LORD delivered David when he was boxed in by King Saul many times. He nearly was defeated by his son Absalom if the LORD had not intervened and confounded the counsel of Ahithophel, his trusted counsellor who betrayed him and sided with Absalom! David experienced these from the LORD and his praise was natural and forth coming. There was no need to urge or cajole him into praising the LORD. Believers today who drag their feet to praise the LORD every Lord's Day cannot identify with David. Those who walk by faith and pray without ceasing throughout the week will understand David very well. Coming to church every Lord's Day is the best day of the week for these obedient children of God. Like David, every bone in their body will say to the LORD that there is no One like Him in all the earth!

Verse 11 (synthetic parallelism) – David described one of his enemies' tactics that hurt him. False witnesses attacked him. They were not there in his life and then suddenly, they appeared out of nowhere. They just arose from the earth like some evil monsters seeking to devour David! This was how David described his enemies! In the service of the King of kings, false witnesses will always "rise up." This is the way of the Devil. This was warned by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5:10-12**, "**Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**" [emphasis added] It is no wonder Satan is known as the father of lies in the Bible (cf. John 8:44). As long as the servant of God like David remains on earth, he is serving God. As long as it is not because of a sin committed in his life, he will suffer for Christ when he is tried. Physical hurt, threatening words and false witnesses are part of the evil deeds committed by those who serve the

Devil. The amazing thing is that many of these evil men sincerely believe that they are doing God's will in their wickedness. They are blind to their own sin. They are in denial about their obsession to hurt others. In this state of denial, they lie. They distort the truth. They numb their own conscience by telling others that they are doing God's will. Some even confess to hearing a voice inside them to do it! They truly believe that it is the voice of God when it could in reality be the voice of the Devil himself. King Saul may have cried that he was anointed by the LORD, and he was, but he denied that the same LORD who anointed him also rejected him! He did not want to accept that he had sinned against God and done wrong. He hid his own sin by lying about David and blaming David for his own failures. The kindness and righteousness that David did to King Saul were quickly forgotten.

That is why David said, "They laid to my charge things that I knew not." David did not know any of these things that his enemies falsely accused him of. This makes the defence of these lies even harder! All David wanted to do was the will of God. In the course of doing God's will, some may be hurt, like King Saul. They feel threatened. They want vengeance. They make false accusations in the guise of some "noble" reasons, deceiving the ones who are gullible. The ones who know the truth of the Word of God will not be easily deceived. The reason is that they will use the Bible as their guide. Those who were deceived by these evil ones were probably evil men themselves who might have had a grudge against David or had wanted to get something from King Saul. Men come together for the same cause. That is why it is said that "the enemies of my enemy are my friends"! David had enemies because he wanted to do the will of God. There were the envious ones and the ones that David's holiness and rightness had offended. Light and darkness do not mix. When the light shines, darkness disappears. Darkness will try to force its way back in by reducing the light. Lying and deception is one the best and effective ways Satan has been using through the millenniums to diminish the light of Christ in the lives of believers. As long as the servants of God remain steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, they will be victorious. The evil one will continue to do his utmost to stop God's people from doing God's work. The way to deal with such liars is to do God's work faithfully. Dear believer, do not let them succeed in stopping you from fulfilling God's purpose for your life.

Verse 12 (synthetic parallelism) – We know that these enemies were once David's friends or at least acquaintances because of this verse, "They rewarded me evil for good." David did good to help them. Instead, they turned around and wanted to destroy him. What evil men these professing believers of God are who lie and deceive in the Name of God to destroy the people and the work of God! These are more common today than in David's time because these are the last days that we are living in. Satan knows that his days of doing evil are numbered. Soon, when the LORD returns, Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit. His days of doing evil to deceive man are numbered and he will pick up his pace. It is important that whatever we as believers do must be based upon the Word of God. God's standard must be

the only guide in decision-making and in life, not sentiments or friendship. Relationship based decisions are nepotistic in nature and very sinful. This kind of decision making will destroy lives and the work of God. The lives destroyed include the life of the sinner that being biased against because truth is sacrificed in the name of “friendship.” Beware of God’s warning in **Proverbs 27:6**, “Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.” The Name of Christ is also badly tarnished. Doing what is right according to Scriptures will result in many enemies. It is better to have men as one’s enemies than to have God as one’s enemy! David was a friend of God but he had many enemies! Servants of God today face the same challenge. Doing God’s will according to Holy Scriptures can result in a very lonely life. Those whom we think are our friends can become the worst enemies when they do not like the truth. We must continue to help all men regardless of their reaction and response to hurt or to kill. This is right. Christ walked this path and so must all His faithful disciples.

The purpose of David’s enemies was to destroy his soul. This means to get David to be angry with the LORD. The attack may be physical but the real target is the heart, which means it is spiritual. David must never stop believing and trusting in his LORD. When David could not hide inside Israel because almost everyone in Israel reported to King Saul out of fear or reward, David had to hide in Philistine territory. He had to feign madness to get himself out of very dicey situations with the Philistines. To be driven out of Israel meant “that the God of Israel did not protect His own when they were in Israel.” To hide in Philistine territory meant that David might as well have trusted in the gods of the Philistines since they were “protecting him” in Philistine territory and not the God of Israel! This was the thinking regarding the localised gods in Old Testament times. David held on to his LORD as his many psalms testified. These psalms were written when he was in hiding. It appeared as if the LORD did not protect David but thank God he persevered on in his trust in his LORD until deliverance. These enemies can never take away the believer’s salvation but they will try to take away the believer’s witness. Having to face false witnesses whom we once helped before is painful and most discouraging.

Verse 13 (synthetic parallelism) – The believer must realize that he can only control what he can and must do but not the actions of his enemies. These evil men will do evil as it is their nature. But God’s people must do good which is their nature. Hence David confessed, “But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth.” He would NOT allow his enemies, regardless of their false witness against him, to cause him to fall into sin. One of the best ways, if not the best way, is to pray for them. If bitterness entered into David’s heart or he wished evil upon them, then the enemies and Satan would have won. They would have succeeded in causing David to sin against God. This means that David’s fellowship with the LORD was gone. His prayers would not even be heard by God. **Psalms 66:18-20**, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*: **19** *But* verily God hath

heard *me*; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. **20** Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.” David must not let that happen. David was sincere when he shared this with us. He not only prayed for them but he also mourned for them. There is no joy in the punishment of our enemies, only sadness. It is a very sad condition to be in, to be used by the Devil and not be aware of it. What is there to rejoice in such a tragic circumstance? David mourned and prayed for his enemies when they were sick. He wanted the best for them. What is best for them must be in accordance with God’s holy and perfect Word. This would include their repentance and turning away from their sin and turning back to God. This means praying also for their salvation in Christ after having realized the errors of their ways. Satan will end up in the Lake of Fire and there is no basis for the Christian to pray otherwise. However, the men, women and children used by him are to be prayed for and pitied. Praying for God’s grace and mercies to abound in their lives to save them is biblical. Just as Christ pitied all the sick and demon possessed who were brought to Him for healing, so must we. There is no joy in the punishment and death of one’s enemies, only sadness and sorrow.

David humbled his soul with fasting and he began to pray earnestly as the phrase “my prayer returned into mine own bosom” signifies. David’s head was bowed down like a man whose head is bowed toward his own chest in deep sincere prayer. David was very sincere when he shared this very vital truth. This will help all believers to remain holy and have the right response to the evil of false witnesses. Fasting is a rare experience in the lives of God’s people today. This is a sad reflection of our carnality and lack of deep spirituality. To fast means that the believer wants to spend a longer uninterrupted time with his LORD in prayer.

Verse 14 (synthetic cum emblematic parallelism) – David shared sincerely that even though they were his enemies, and when they were down, he bore them no ill will but truly wanted the best for them according to God’s truth. He states here that he behaved himself as though the enemies were his friend or brother! We all know how David and Jonathan his best friend related to each other. They wanted the best for each other according to God’s will. They sacrificed for each other for the glory of Christ. David wanted the best for his enemies according to God’s grace and mercies and justice. Desiring for the best in terms of God’s grace and mercy would mean wanting them to repent and turn from their sin. It also means that their eyes would be opened so that they would no longer be deceived by Satan. Salvation is the first act of God’s grace in such a person’s life. Then with the Holy Spirit indwelling the person’s heart, his eyes will be opened to the truth and the errors of his ways, just as the apostle Paul experienced when he thought that he did the will of God by persecuting believers of Christ. David knew that the sickness of his enemies was probably due to the hand of his LORD. He also knew that unless the LORD opened the eyes of his

enemies they would never be able to see the truth. David wanted the best for his enemies according to God's holy Word.

He would weep for them like one who mourns for his mother. The mother is usually the one who loves children the deepest and most unconditionally, even more so than the father. This is because mother carried the baby in her womb for nine months. There is a bond and attachment between mother and child that is not found in any other human relationship. David said that he mourned for his enemies who were sick, like mourning for one's sick mother. This is the demonstration of Christ's love. This is exactly how Christ loves sinners. David loved his enemies the same way, not because they did any good to him, in fact they wanted to kill him and lied about him. Yet when they were down David wanted the best for them and mourned for them like a loving son mourning for his sick mother!

IV. **The Plea for DELIVERANCE (vs. 15-17)** – However, David admitted that his enemies would not reciprocate in the same manner. David knew that his enemies would rejoice if he fell! This was the case when FEBC lost at the first judgement in the High Court. LBPC sang songs of praise at their Tuesday night prayer meeting, rejoicing in the “demise” of FEBC. However, when the verdict was overturned and the judgement of the Appeal Court ruled in favour of FEBC, there was silence and solemnity on Tuesday night. FEBC simply thanked God for His grace and mercies in delivering and defending His College. During the Great Tribulation the end time evil world will rejoice at the death of the two witnesses sent by God to do miracles to point sinners to Christ. **Revelation 11:7-10**, “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. **8** And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. **9** And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. **10** And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” [emphasis added] The enemies of God and God's people demonstrate their depravity by their response of joy in doing evil successfully. However, the children of God demonstrate their salvation and newness in Christ by a solemn and subdued demeanour as they see evil people suffer for their transgression. There is absolutely no joy in seeing evil people suffer. David's expression of their response is sad but very real. They rejoiced in David's calamities and they gathered together to do more mischief. They would not cease and were not contented with the calamities that God's people suffered but they would add to that suffering with more calamities.

The use of synthetic parallelism supports this understanding of the action of the evil ones. They are called “abjects” here by David. “Abjects” are smiters. They gathered together to

smite David by ambushing him. They tore at David like a ravenous wolf tearing into a carcass. They continued with their tearing, without ceasing, until their ravenous evil appetite for God's people was satisfied. Similarly, Christ was crucified because He told them the truth about Himself and their sin; they arrested and killed Him. These agents of Satan are in fact doing Satan's will no matter how they deceive themselves and the gullible ones into thinking that they are doing God's will. Their actions reveal what they really are rather than their words. Their words are lies uttered to deceive.

Verse 16 (synthetic parallelism) – They attended David's feasts and entered in as his "friends". They even said the right flattering words to deceive the gullible. But their real agenda was to destroy and kill David. David described them here as, "Hypocritical mockers in feasts." These feasts that these hypocrites attend must not be limited to feasts organised by David but also the holy feasts commanded by God. These evil men would also bring all the right Levitical offerings to garner an appearance of spirituality and religiosity so that they would be accepted by the religious elite. In the name of doing God's will, they persecuted David by their false accusations. These are the effective tactics of the Devil that are very much in use today. They are very effective because many do not know God's will and are easily deceived by feelings and emotions. They see these evil men as "religious." They saw David as "evil" because they believed in the false accusations against David. This is also the trend today. All who want to serve the LORD like David must also be prepared for such attacks. They must not respond in sin but in sincerity, kindness and truth. This is Christ's way. All Christians must follow the way of Christ.

They gnashed upon David with their teeth like wild beasts. The word "gnashed" means that like a wild beast they will not let go of the flesh that they bit into no matter how hard the victim might try to shake the beast off. This was how David felt regarding his attackers. He was boxed in many times until the LORD delivered in His time. The load of persecution that David carried was definitely not enjoyable but onerous to say the least. Yet David refused to be bitter and to sin against God. He prayed for his enemies just like a son who prays for his mother.

Verse 17 (synthetic parallelism) – David cried to the LORD, "How long wilt thou look on?" The length of David's suffering in the hands of his enemies caused him to ask the LORD this rhetorical question! This is a common response when the trial seems to be endless. It could go on for years and not months! The stress and strain on the mental and spiritual well being of the child of God like David was real. Just because David prayed and fasted for his enemies when they were sick does not mean that David enjoyed the wicked deeds done upon him by these same enemies! David asked for the LORD's intervention to bring this part of his painful life to an end. Joseph did his best in the Egyptian prison and bore a godly witness for Christ; but he also asked the chief butler to speak to Pharaoh upon his release from prison, for he

told him that he was innocent (cf. Genesis 40:20-23)! Trusting in the LORD faithfully during times of painful persecution does not mean that the believer does not want the LORD to end these painful trials. The believer will continue to endure as long as the LORD sees fit but that does not mean that he cannot pray and ask the LORD how long more he must endure!

David asked the LORD to “rescue his soul from their destructions.” David knew that his service on earth unto the LORD was not done yet. He knew that this was a time of testing to prepare him to serve the LORD faithfully. Yet it was biblical for him to ask the LORD to rescue him from these evil men. David’s soul, darling or beloved refers to David himself. He knew his LORD intimately. He was not being presumptuous. He was being natural in his relationship with the LORD. David constantly and continuously expressed his feelings before the LORD under all circumstances, and he knew that the LORD saw him as His beloved. He simply asked his LORD who loves him to deliver him. Here, David called his enemies lions. This describes their ferocity and greatness. His enemies were great men who wielded great power. As children of God today, we must also be prepared to face such powerful enemies. No matter how powerful they are, we must remember that none is more powerful than the one living and true God. There is nothing to fear. Cry to the LORD for rescue in times of great trial even as we endure faithfully with the love of Christ in our hearts towards our enemies.

To be continued