

Psalms 4

No copyright materials are used in this text

The summary and interpretation of the specific chapter and verses are from the Bible, they are religious text that is in the public domain.

Free to Copy and Distribute: Spread the Word!

(Peter Lok) 駱沅祺

lokpeter@outlook.com

Bibleao.com

Daily Bible devotional; Daily Rice 2024 October 09

Psalms 4

YouTube Prayer Link

Lie down and sleep peacefully

Psalm 4

This psalm is called "Vespers" and is a continuation of Psalm 3. The poet looks back on the difficulties of the day in the twilight and finds great satisfaction. His heart was filled with sweet peace and tranquility as he felt that God had always sustained him through the hour of suffering. He will protect him through the night. The fourth is prayer, which is suitable for evening devotionals; The fifth is a supplication, which is suitable for morning worship. The tone of both poems is the same.

"Leader" refers to the leader, conductor, and foreman of the singing group.

In David's day, the chief was responsible for administering the work of praising and thanking God. This poem is sung with a silk instrument, and the timbre is relatively soft. The genre of this article is the same as that of the third one. There are eight verses, and every second verse has a Selah. The background of this psalm is likely to be connected to the third psalm: 4:8 and 3:6, 4:6 and 3:2, so this psalm may have been written immediately after the third. The third is David's morning prayer, and the fourth is David's evening prayer.

In Psalm 4, we can think of what happened to the poet David. Knowing the author's situation, Psalm 3 explains that David wrote the poem while fleeing Absalom, so we can look at the historical context to better understand the meaning of the poem and outline the situation. When Absalom rebelled, David fled from Jerusalem in fear, spent the night under God's protection, and got up in the morning to write the third psalm. At night, he was able to sleep peacefully, and it was a real experience of David's faith. He thought of his condition before God and the situation he found himself in: after he sinned, his conscience was rebuked, and he knew that he had sinned against God.

David was in trouble. David's hardships can be summarized into two levels: first, when he was chased by Saul and fled for his life; 2. He was pursued by his son Absalom and fled from Jerusalem in a hurry. "Thou hast enlarged my heart" refers to the days when David was pursued by Saul, and God came to his rescue in many scenes. What God did in David's life was to bring out what David did in secret. David's humiliation was self-inflicted because he abused his power as king, robbed his wife, Bathsheba, and put Uriah in danger on the battlefield, and designed his death. At that time, God turned David's honor into humiliation, so his situation was actually very hard.

"How long will ye love vanity, and seek falsehood? Selah" (v.2b). "Vanity" refers to the pursuit of things that are not true, and what is not true is vanity. And how long will it take for these people to pursue vanity and falsehood? But misfortune happened again, and now that he was being pursued by Absalom, why should he think that God would hear his prayers when he was in this low position?

The first time David experienced the days of flight after Saul, David was anointed to be king of Israel, so he was on high at that time. But this time he was chased and killed by Absalom in a low place, completely losing his mental strength to resist the disadvantage, and his heart was full of guilt. He also learned that "Absalom was on the flat roof of the palace, pitching a tent, and in the eyes of Israel, close to the concubines of his father David, and the scene after scene really broke his heart, and the old David was on the run, and the people around him could not help but be a little shaken, and the environment and the hearts of the people were really terrible, but in this bad scene, David slept peacefully, and his heart was so peaceful." Yet David said, "God who justified me," asking God to reveal his righteousness, blot out his transgressions, and cover his unrighteousness with his righteousness! David was full of regret and guilt at this time. Yet he is praying to God now because he believes in God's faithfulness and justice and that God will hear his prayers.

Psalm 4. It is a psalm that is very encouraging in the midst of suffering. Not all of our lives are smooth sailing, and we all go through highs and valleys. They may even experience unfairness, injustice, and being framed and plotted. Then we may ask, "Why does God want us to go through these tribulations?" Romans 5:3 gives us the answer. Paul says, "Not only so, but also in tribulation rejoice; For knowing tribulation produces patience, and patience produces sophistication; Hope for the sophistication; Hope is not to shame because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Let's learn from

David's prayer psalm how to develop endurance, sophistication, and hope in the midst of affliction.

This is David's prayer for trust in God. In this psalm of trust, he prays to God for three things under persecution: (1) to answer him, (2) to have mercy on him, and (3) to hear his prayers; Then he warned his enemies not to sin and exhorted them to trust in God.

Relying on Yahweh to pray (4:1-2)

"Answer me, O God who justifies me, when I cry! Thou hast enlarged me in my affliction; Now have mercy on me and hear my prayers! How long will you turn my honor into reproach, you noble men? How long will you love vanity, and seek falsehood?"

David cried to God in faith: v. 1, asking for God's answer to him and mercy was the way to seek God: "O God who justified me" shows that God is just, and many condemn David, but David knew what God was like to him, and he cried out to God after experiencing God. "Was" that was an experience in the past. "Please" indicates the urgency of prayer.

"The upper class": those who love falsehood, look for falsehood, turn right and wrong, confuse black and white, the poet calls them the upper class. God who justifies me" - the truth of the gospel has been in the Old Testament for a long time, what is the center of the gospel? That is, man cannot be justified by his own merits, nor by the law, but can only be justified by the righteousness that God has given man. Here David knew that he had no hope of justification, but only by God who justified him. The justification of self is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament.

David relied on Jehovah. When he came to God, he called Him "God who justifies me." When people come to know God in this way, their hearts have calmed down a lot. Because he knows that there is a person in the world who knows him and understands him, we must pursue holiness and have a good conscience before God, otherwise we will be full of guilt before God. In fact, if we are willing to confess our sins and forsake our sins, we will be able to be fearless before God. In today's society, which is full of vain cultures, we can only maintain stability and build a life of dependence on God by relying on Jehovah and praying and calling on Him.

God justified David. When people criticize and attack him, God sees righteousness in him and immediately reveals his righteousness. Then David felt that God had accepted him, and that he had hope and courage to cry out to God in the midst of trouble. In fact, people have many layers of defense, and if the defense line falls one after another, it will be very miserable. But David had a very strong line of defense, and that was his relationship with God. When David was still in Jerusalem, the high people were very good with him, but now they are in exile, and the high people turn their backs on him and follow Absalom, which is the love of vanity, the search for falsehood, people see David as worthless, but God sees David as righteous and knows his piety, and under this relationship, he prays to God, and God will hear. When people fall into suffering, everyone betrays their relatives and leaves, like a tiger falling into Pingyang and being bullied by dogs. In particular, powerful people take the opportunity to turn our honor into humiliation, and

make us instantly look like a great sinner. That's when we're most vulnerable, lonely, unhappy, and hardest to sleep.

Reminder (v.2-5)

In prayer, we can express our frustration with those who bully us and remind us to think of God. "Pious people" does not mean that we are all right. God values our relationship with Him, not what we do in His name. Those who grasp God or are caught by God are "godly people" in His eyes. We have a real relationship with God, and we know that we have been renewed by God's Spirit and cleansed by the Blood of Christ, so we have an indescribable intimacy with God. Because of this relationship, we know that God hears our prayers!

God hears prayer (v.2-3). "Know ye that the LORD hath separated the godly unto himself; I will call upon Yaho, and he will hear me," reminding people that God hears prayers and avenges Avenging, for God is a God who understands things and the truth. He is innocent and clean before God, and God will hear him. When we are faced with contempt, lies, and slander in the midst of "affliction," we should "know" that God has "separated" us from the world in order to "return to God Himself." Therefore God will hear me and hear our prayers

Fear God (v.4). "Fear, and do not sin; When you are in bed, think of your heart and be still," reminding people that they should fear God. It is because people are not afraid of God that they do things that should not be done and say things that should not be said. In the dead of night, examine and reflect on yourself, lest you live in sin all the time. Paul said the same thing: "Be angry, but do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26).

When we feel the beginning of the movement of the flesh in the midst of 'distress' (v.4), we should not impulsively 'sin' or 'think' about what is on our minds, but rather 'think' of God, know Him, 'be quiet' before Him, look to Him from a position of righteousness, and 'trust in Jehovah' alone. "Silt settles only in still water, and dew drips only in the still night. In the dead of night, when only God's eye is on us, we can make our prayers pleasing to God.

Turn unto God (v.5). "Offer a righteous sacrifice and trust in the Lord," reminding people to be reconciled to God and to turn to Him. When a man turns to God, he will not and will not dare to bully or insult others, because he knows that one day he will have to give an account to God. David told others to rely on God's values. He imparted heavenly ideas and culture, teaching people to follow a godly path. But when we have a life of trusting Jehovah, others see not just a truth, but a true testimony of life. The "sacrifice of righteousness" is to offer a righteous motive to God with a just heart, to humbly listen to God's Word and trust Him.

Sacrifices can be tangible or intangible. The visible sacrifice is a financial offering, while the invisible sacrifice is living a life dependent on Jehovah. When we choose to live a happy life before God, we are already a sacrifice. Therefore those who rely on Jehovah can have heavenly peace and lie down and sleep in peace. Without any fear or panic, this is the peace that God gives to all that is beyond expectation. Build a deeper life in Jehovah. When we do this, we will be able to live a life of "consecration, hearing prayer, fearing God, not sinning, and being quiet in our minds," and then live a life of joy.

Then David spoke to another group of people, the bystanders. When they see that society is disordered, that there is no order, and that the wicked are in charge, they cannot help asking: Who can show us what good? They really can't see anything good in society. The psalmist's answer is that the good things are with God, so he asks God to "lift up His face to man and enlighten us" (6). David, who had been in the midst of hardship, was now enlightened by God, and he rejoiced in God, even though the circumstances were still bad. He testifies, "Thou hast made my heart glapier than he that reapeth the grain and the wine" (v.6) There are those who have a great deal of grace in their lives but do not see it, and are often in a state of wrath, feeling that God is not good to him because he cannot deal with what he considers unjust. God can show us the good, and we have to say to God: I have received these graces that You have given me! So, we have to count the grace, otherwise it will be difficult to perceive what God is doing. When David prayed, "Lift up thy face, O Lord, and shine upon us," the more he prayed, the more relaxed he became.

(7) "The man who reaps the grain and the new wine" is the powerful and powerful. He could not sleep in his afflictions, but now he can "lie down and sleep in peace, for you, the Lord, alone have made me dwell in safety" (v.7) If the mundane things of the grain and the new wine are no longer enough to bring joy to our hearts, we are to count the things that exceed the grain and the new wine, for God has kept and blessed me in these small things. When we count the grace, the joy of the heart will come out. (8) When he says "uniquely," he means that only God can give peace. v.8) When we have trouble falling asleep at night, we can pray like David, and slowly we will be able to lie down and sleep peacefully, which is the adjustment of the whole heart. Although David did many wrong things, God gave grace throughout the process, preserving his life and letting David know that God loved him. When we think like David, we can lie down and sleep peacefully! In the midst of difficulties, we cannot solve problems, but we must assume that God is the only one who will make us live in peace. We need to focus on God and turn our focus from our difficulties to God!

This psalm of David shows us that the environment is not the focus, but the attitude of our hearts. Just as Jesus was able to lie quietly on the stormy sea. What peace His heart needed! And His peace of mind came from faith in God, knowing that His Father was the God who was in charge of all things and life in the universe. The mindset with which we look at the experience of tribulation is very important. Do we give up on ourselves, complain or even lose our temper when we encounter trouble, or can we choose to come to God and tell our loving Abba Heavenly Father: I am willing to go through it, because God has God's will in everything; I am willing to obey because I know that the Lord has made me; I am more willing to give it, for the Lord will give me peace to lie down on the green pasture, and bring me to rest by the water.

We pray:

Lord, illuminate the soul and take away the afflictions of your heart. Pray that the Lord will strengthen and stand firm in God's presence. Thank you that you are a God who works justice. I want to be godly in the Lord and blessed with joy and a peaceful dwelling.

Pray that God will grant peace and joy to the heavens, for God has God's good will in all things. Be thankful for God's grace in our lives, big and small. Let's live less "why, know earlier, why, how... And be thankful for the grace God has already given. Pray that we will always pray and call on God in times of trouble, preach the gospel with our testimonies, and build up a life that trusts in Jehovah. that in all circumstances we may always rejoice in the Lord and lie down and sleep in peace

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, amen

Psalm 4 is a psalm of David, often considered an evening prayer or a psalm of trust. It is set during a time of distress and uncertainty, where David is calling upon God for relief from his troubles. This psalm reflects David's deep faith and trust in God as his protector and provider of peace. The psalm also teaches about the futility of relying on false gods or wealth and emphasizes the importance of righteousness and devotion to God.

Text of Psalm 4 (KJV)

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Important Verses and Their Meaning

Verse 1: "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer."

Meaning: David begins by calling on God for help. He acknowledges that God has relieved him in the past during times of distress and asks for continued mercy and favor. This verse shows David's dependence on God for deliverance and righteousness.

Verse 3: "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him."

Meaning: David reassures himself and his listeners that God favors those who are faithful and godly. The confidence that God listens to the prayers of the righteous is evident here, showing that the relationship between God and the believer is personal and secure.

Verse 4: "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah."

Meaning: David advises self-reflection and repentance. The instruction to "stand in awe" means to be in reverence before God, and "sin not" emphasizes turning away from sin. This verse encourages quiet reflection, inner peace, and trust in God's will.

Verse 5: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord."

Meaning: This verse urges offering sincere and righteous sacrifices to God, which is symbolic of a life lived in obedience to Him. Trust in the Lord is essential, as it signifies faith in God's justice and provision.

Verse 8: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

Meaning: David ends the psalm with a declaration of peace and security, attributing this to his trust in God. Despite the troubles around him, David is able to sleep peacefully because he knows that God alone provides true safety.

Themes and Key Takeaways

Trust in God: David's confidence in God's protection is unwavering. Even in distress, he knows that God will hear his prayers and provide relief.

Inner Reflection and Righteousness: Psalm 4 encourages self-examination and repentance, calling for personal integrity and trust in God's provision over material prosperity.

Peace in God: The psalm reflects the inner peace and joy that come from trusting God, contrasting it with the fleeting happiness that comes from worldly gain (represented by "corn and wine" in verse 7).

God's Favor on the Righteous: The psalm highlights that God sets apart and favors the righteous, assuring them of His guidance and protection.

Psalm 4 serves as a powerful reminder of the peace and security that come from living in close relationship with God, particularly in times of difficulty.

Psalm 4: Theological Thought and Spiritual Influence

Psalm 4 is rich in theological and spiritual dimensions, offering profound insights into the nature of God, human relationships with the divine, and the spiritual practices necessary for a faithful life. As an evening psalm traditionally linked to times of distress and contemplation, it speaks to several core theological themes.

1. The Nature of God and His Righteousness

The psalm opens with a direct appeal to God: "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness" (v. 1). This invocation underscores a key theological point: God is the source of righteousness. David, the psalmist, acknowledges that any righteousness or justification he has comes from God alone, implying a strong sense of divine sovereignty.

God as the Justifier: The phrase "God of my righteousness" reflects the idea that God not only requires righteousness but also provides it to those who trust in Him. This echoes throughout biblical theology, especially in the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith (Romans 3:22-24), where righteousness is seen as a gift from God through faith.

God as a Deliverer: David reflects on how God has delivered him in the past, enlarging him in times of distress. This affirms God's active involvement in the life of the believer, providing relief and mercy in difficult times. Theologically, it underscores the notion of God as both protector and redeemer.

2. Divine Favor and Human Faithfulness

In verse 3, the psalmist declares: "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him." This points to the special relationship between

God and His faithful ones, showing that God has a unique covenantal relationship with those who live according to His will.

Election and Covenant: The idea of being "set apart" suggests themes of election—God’s special choosing of His people. This echoes God’s covenant with Israel and, in Christian theology, the idea that believers are chosen and set apart for God's purposes (1 Peter 2:9).

The Assurance of God’s Response: The psalmist’s confidence that “the Lord will hear” implies the doctrine of divine providence, which teaches that God is attentive to the needs of His people. This intimate connection fosters trust and devotion, reinforcing the covenantal relationship between God and the faithful.

3. The Call to Righteousness and Reflection

Verses 4-5 provide a call to inward reflection and righteous living: “Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.”

Repentance and Holiness: The exhortation to "stand in awe and sin not" suggests the importance of reverence toward God and the need for repentance. The command to "commune with your own heart" speaks to the spiritual discipline of self-reflection and examining one's conscience. This mirrors themes in Christian spirituality regarding confession and penitence (1 John 1:9).

Righteous Sacrifice: Offering "the sacrifices of righteousness" refers to living a life in obedience to God, rather than mere external rituals. In theological terms, true worship is seen as offering oneself wholly to God, aligning with Paul’s call in Romans 12:1 to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. This is not about ritual observance but about the heart's alignment with God's will.

4. Joy and Peace Beyond Circumstances

The psalm emphasizes that true joy and peace come from God, not from material prosperity: “Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased” (v. 7). David finds greater joy in God’s presence than in the prosperity others experience.

Spiritual Joy: The contrast between spiritual joy and worldly abundance is central here. The psalm reflects the theological truth that true contentment comes not from external circumstances but from an inner relationship with God. This theme is echoed in New Testament teachings, particularly in Philippians 4:7, where Paul speaks of the “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.”

Peace from God: In the closing verse, “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety” (v. 8), David expresses a profound sense of security. Theologically, this points to God as the ultimate source of peace, echoing themes of divine protection found throughout the Psalms. It emphasizes God’s sovereignty over every aspect of life, including protection from danger, which invites believers to trust God deeply, even in times of crisis.

5. Spiritual Influence on Personal Devotion and Prayer

Psalm 4 has been influential in shaping spiritual practices, particularly around prayer and meditation. It is often considered an evening prayer, making it a staple of spiritual reflection at the end of the day, when believers lay their concerns before God and trust Him for peace and safety through the night.

Meditative Prayer: The psalm’s call to “commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still” has resonated in Christian contemplative traditions. This verse encourages introspection, silence, and reflection on God’s presence and guidance—practices found in spiritual disciplines like *Lectio Divina* and monastic prayer.

Trust and Surrender: The declaration of trust in verse 8, “for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety,” has provided comfort to countless believers. It speaks to the deep peace that comes from surrendering anxieties to God, influencing prayers of trust, particularly in times of uncertainty.

Conclusion

Psalm 4 offers a rich blend of theological and spiritual insights that have influenced both Jewish and Christian traditions. It affirms God's righteousness, His covenantal relationship with His people, and the importance of righteous living. Spiritually, it teaches trust in God's providence, the joy that comes from God’s presence, and the peace that transcends worldly understanding.

As an evening psalm, it models how believers can approach God in times of need, reflecting on His faithfulness and finding rest in His protection. Its themes of prayer, trust, and peace continue to resonate in personal and communal worship practices.