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## Favorite Psalms of the Biola Institute Hour Listeners: Notes for December, 1956

Chester J. Padgett

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### Recommended Citation

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# *Favorite Psalms*

OF THE

**Bible Institute Hour  
Listeners**

**Notes for December, 1956**

by

**CHESTER J. PADGETT, D.D.**

AS GIVEN OVER NETWORK BROADCASTS OF THE

***Bible Institute Hour***

**8:30 A.M. - MON., WED., FRI.**

**MUTUAL DON-LEE NETWORK**



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## THE REVIVAL PSALM

(Psalm 85)

Here is the prayer of a man who loved the Lord and loved His Church. His heart was burdened over the lack of spiritual warmth and power on the part of the people of God. In his Psalm he lifts up his voice to the Almighty pleading for a great out-pouring of spiritual blessing on the nation. You will note that vv. 1-3 deal with what God had done for His people in the past; vv. 4-10 deal with the thing David wanted God to do for His people in the present; and vv. 11-13 tell us what David anticipated for the future.

### GOD'S GRACIOUS WORK IN THE PAST

(vv. 1-3)

*He had been favorable unto the Land* (v. 1.) What Land? There is only one Land in the eyes of God, and that is the Holy Land. This does not mean that God is not interested in other nations, for He is. He loves the entire world of men (John 3:16.) But Palestine is of special value to Him. It was this land He gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to their seed forever (Gen. 12). Palestine is the "navel of the earth," and is destined in the purposes of the Almighty to become the capital city of the world during the coming millennial reign of the Lord Jesus (Isa. 2:1-5, etc.) The events now taking place in the Holy Land are fulfilling the prophecies of the Bible regarding the ultimate restoration of Israel, her conversion, and her spiritual ministry to the nations of earth during the Millennium.

*He had brought back the captivity of Jacob* (v. 1.) Some Bible students think that this is a Post-Exilic Psalm. If so, then this passage refers to the restoration of the remnant following the seventy years' captivity. Otherwise, the statement refers to the many wonderful deliverances God had granted to His people in their history. Despite their many wanderings, their constant murmurings, their steady rebellion, God was good to them and delivered them from their enemies. He chastened them, of course, because God cannot tolerate sin.

*He had forgiven the iniquity of His people, and covered their sin* (v. 2.) What God had done before He was able to do again. The writer is thinking of the great need of forgiveness as far as the nation of his time was concerned. The Psalmist trusted in the grace of God.

*He had removed His wrath* (v. 3.) This is a wonderful thing! If God's people had received their just desert, they would have been destroyed! But God, in marvelous mercy and love pardoned their sin, accepted the atoning blood, and did not utterly destroy His people. Because of Calvary the world still stands today! But for the willingness of God to forgive sinners on the basis of our Lord's sacrifice we would all now be bound for hell!



## THE PSALMIST'S REQUEST FOR THE PRESENT

(vv. 4-10)

In this section of the Psalm the writer pleads for revival. Why does he pray for revival? Because unless the people turned to God He would have to speak in chastisement. Note that He pleads with God to do the turning (v. 4.) Sin is so binding and so blinding that God Himself must take the initiative in promoting revival. This does not mean that His people have no part — they must become weary and sick of their sin; they must long for spiritual blessing and for the smile of God's approval. But revival is God's work, not man's. The Psalmist prays to the "God of our salvation." He alone is the author and finisher of our faith; salvation is from God *alone*.

Notice v. 6. This verse indicates very important things about revival. First, God is the instigator, the prime mover — "Wilt *thou* not revive us?" No man can revive himself. Second, he uses the word "again." What does this teach? It teaches that revival is periodic. Revival is never sustained, and for several reasons. For one thing human nature is not so constituted that it can live on a high emotional peak for an extended period of time, nor would it be good for this to take place. Again, sin has such a hold on human nature, even in regenerate people, that a pattern of declension exists which necessitates God's gracious work of revival.

Note the outcome of revival — ". . . that thy people may rejoice in thee." (v. 6.) This is always the result of genuine revival — God's people find a new joy and blessedness in the worship and service of the Lord. Joyless, dead, unresponsive congregations need a spiritual revival.

Now on what basis did the Psalmist expect God to answer his prayer for revival? The answer is given in vv. 7-10. Revival can come because God is the God of mercy (v. 7.) Revival can come when God's people have an ear open to hear what God has to say (v. 8.) Revival can come because God stand ready to visit with His salvation (v. 9.) Revival **can** come and is possible because of Calvary — at the Cross the mercy of God and the truth (justice) of God met together (v. 10.) There too, the righteousness of God with its demands met the peace of God which flows from His grace to poor sinners (v. 10.)

## THE PSALMIST'S FORWARD LOOK

(vv. 11-13)

Ultimately there will be no need for periodic revivals. When the Lord Jesus returns to earth and the millennial kingdom is established, all hearts will be fully in tune with Him, and truth shall cover the earth (v. 11.)

There will be rich blessing in that wonderful day for the entire world, just as today there is the blessing of God upon those who love Him and obey Him (v. 12.)

In that day righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (v. 13.) Even so, come Lord Jesus!

## THE CENSUS PSALM

(Psalm 87)

We are all familiar with the periodic census taken in our nation. The purpose of the census is to ascertain how many citizens live in our country and how many aliens there are.

Our Psalm tells us that God, too, takes His census, and happy is the man who is a citizen of God's country!

This Psalm speaks of the capital city of God's kingdom. In this present dispensation there is no earthly center because Christ is now in Heaven, and Heaven is the capital city of the saints. But when the Saviour returns, as He is going to do one of these days, Jerusalem will become the capital city of the world (vv. 1-3.)

The Holy City is called the "foundation" of God (v. 1.) This is because out of Jerusalem as the center of God's ancient people Israel came the Word of God and the Son of God according to the flesh. When the Lord Jesus returns, Jerusalem will be the "foundation" of world government and world peace.

The Holy City is God's peculiar delight (v. 2.) Some spot on the surface of the earth had to be chosen as God's earthly headquarters — that spot is Palestine and the Holy City — one of the most beautiful pieces of real estate in the world!

For the Hebrew there was a thrill of pride in his soul if he could say that he had been born in the Holy City — this was a boast coveted by every child of Abraham (vv. 4-6.) But how much better to be able to say, in this present dispensation, that you are born into the family of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! My dear friend, have *you* been born again? Has Christ become real to you? Do you know that *you* are a child of God by faith and that *your* name is inscribed in God's holy register, and that when He makes His census *you* are enrolled in His family?

If you belong to God there is a happy day ahead for you (v. 7.) Not only are you happy now, but in that glorious day of His appearing there will be singing never heard by mortal ear. What will this singing be about? It will be about the Lord Jesus Christ — "all my springs are in thee." (v. 7.) There will be no boasting in Heaven, no pride in human works, efforts, or achievements — Christ will be all and in all (cf. Rom. 3:27; Eph. 2:8-10.)



## THE MIDNIGHT PSALM

(Psalm 88)

This is the gloomiest Psalm in the Bible! There are other dark passages of Scripture, but they all end in the light. This Psalm begins in the darkness and it stays there. Why do you think the Spirit of God gave us such a Psalm? May I suggest that one reason is this — the book of Psalms is evidently intended to describe every possible emotion and situation known in human experience. It is understandable then that there should be one Psalm at least to describe the condition of the man who suffered from perpetual depression of spirit — and there are many even among God's people.

This Psalm was also given, no doubt, to encourage these depressed souls and to let them see that others of God's people go through the same dark experience, and that God will ultimately bring them through their "valley of the shadow of death" and into the bright sunlight on the other side.

Again, this dark Psalm should serve as a tremendous promoter of gratitude on the part of those of God's people who have been blessed at birth with a happy and a sunny disposition. If this has been your lot, how happy you should be, and how grateful to God, and how patient and sympathetic with those who are less fortunate! Now, let us analyze the Psalm.

### THE NATURE OF THIS MAN'S DARKNESS

*It was total darkness* (v. 3.) No one knows the horror of midnight in the soul who has not experienced this dreadful thing! The Psalmist does not say that he had known trouble, or that at the present moment he was in some kind of trouble, but he says that his soul is "full" of troubles! Could this be a prophecy of our Lord Jesus who was forsaken even by the Father as He died on the Cross as Substitute for sinners?

*This was de-energizing darkness* (vv. 4-6.) This man felt terribly helpless, like a falling person. He was so despondent that he gave up trying. The depressive spirit robs of activity and of the will to keep going. Some of God's dear people are psychologically so constructed and must constantly fight this terrible tendency to defeatism. Our Saviour suffered this as He took the sinner's place.

*This was an intense darkness* (v. 7.) It was like some awful pressure seeking to squeeze out the very life, if possible. The Psalmist felt as if he were tied to a cliff and the mighty waves of the ocean kept rushing in to smite him in his helplessness. The Son of God knew this feeling both in Gethsemane and on the Cross.

*This was a lonely darkness* (vv. 8, 14.) Loneliness can be almost unbearable. There is nothing so tragic as a lonely soul! Inmates of

penal institutions are willing to endure any kind punishment if they can escape that of solitary confinement. God made man not to be alone — and loneliness kills him. How precious is the fellowship of the saints to the child of God! How gracious of our Lord Jesus to know the loneliness of death for our sin that we might never have to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

*This was the darkness of despair* (v. 9.) The Psalmist felt, not only that all mortal help was gone, but that even God refused to hear him! What is left? But, thank God, He never leaves us nor forsakes us. It may be that sometimes His presence is not as real to us as at other times, but behind the shadows He stands keeping watch above His own.

*This darkness was perpetual* (v. 15.) All of us have known temporary periods of depression of spirit and darkness of soul, but we should thank God that light has burst in on our midnight and the joy bells began to ring again. But, for some of God's people, the darkness persists, the depression remains, the gloom never lifts, and soul never rises above the gloomy mists of midnight! Poor souls! But God has a purpose even in this and will some day make it plain.

### THE CAUSE OF SOUL DARKNESS

*There seems to have been a morbid fear of death* (vv. 3-6, 10-12.) This is more common than we know. In the Old Testament days we can understand why God's people should have dreaded the experience of death — they did not understand the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the full teaching of the New Testament. Today the child of God sees death as the vestibule of glory.

*There was some physical affliction* (vv. 7, 9, 15.) Our bodies and our souls are more closely linked than we know. What affects one affects the other. A healthy body is usually the home of a healthy soul. Much mental trouble is no doubt caused by illness or some kind or another in the body. If we have our health how we ought to thank God, how we should pray for others who are ill, and how patient we should be with depressed spirits, depressed because of bodily sickness.

*There may have been an acquired depressive tendency.* It would seem that this was the case with the Psalmist. He refers to his younger days as being full of trouble (v. 15.) I am convinced that many depressive personalities are inherited from parents, and that some of these are destined to be perpetual. This does not mean that there cannot be some relief — certainly the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God and the Holy Spirit can and do make a difference. But the fact remains that personalities do not change radically from the character received at birth, and if there is a depressive strain this may remain as in the case of the Psalmist who wrote this Psalm.



*There may have been a sense of guilt* (v. 7.) The guilt complex is responsible for much depression and unhappiness of spirit on the part of most people. The child of God cannot be happy if he is living in known sin or if he has not confessed previous sin to the Lord and received His forgiveness. It is best to admit our sin, to confess it to God, to repent of it, turn from it — and then the joy of the Lord will flood the soul.

Others reasons for this man's depressed and gloomy spirit come to us — he may have been too inquisitive with regard to the unanswerable questions of life (v. 14.); he was perhaps too introspective; he may have lacked a balanced theology — maybe he stressed the wrath of God and minimized the love and grace of God. These are possible reasons.

### THE SUSTAINING POWER IN HIS LIFE

As I read this Psalm, the thought comes to me, How could this poor man keep going through life with this awful burden, this terrible depression of soul? The answer is contained in the Psalm.

In the first place, *he knew that God was the God of salvation* (v. 1.) And this was a personal salvation — "my salvation" (v. 1.) He may have had little faith, and he may have lacked he inner power to rise above his depressive nature, but he did have the faith that claimed the promises of God for salvation and for the future.

*Again, he kept on praying* (vv. 1-2, 9, 13.) Even when his head rebuked him, his heart led him to pray. Even if God did not answer in the way he would have liked, that is, with the gloom lifted — yet he trusted God to do the thing that was best for him.

Once more, *he acknowledged the hand of God guiding him even in his darkness of soul* (vv. 6-8, 14, 16.) This Old Testament saint instinctively felt what we New Testament saints know to be true — that after we have suffered a little for awhile, there is glory on ahead (II Cor. 4:17-5:1; I Peter 1:5-7; Rom. 8:18.)

### THE PSALM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

(Psalm 89)

This is indeed a precious Psalm! It speaks throughout of the unmerited faithfulness of God to His people. Read through the Psalm and underline or encircle each reference to His faithfulness and you will see how this great truth thrilled the heart of the Psalmist.

Another word of vast importance in this Psalm, and, in fact, in the entire Bible, is the word "covenant" (vv. 3, 28, 34.) This word means promise and promising certain things which He purposes to accomplish.

The entire message of the Bible is summed up in two covenants — this is the meaning of the word "testament." We have the Old Testament, which is God's promise to provide the Redemer; we have the New Testament which is God's promise to receive into His family all who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Back of both of these covenants is the covenant God made with His Son before the worlds were, namely, the covenant of grace. Let us remember that God allowed sin to enter into the world, although He is not the author of sin.

Now, note some of the tremendous truths in this Psalm: First, reference is made to the covenant God made with David regarding Israel (v. 3ff.) This promise God is keeping as we witness in the recent establishment of the nation Israel in Palestine, and the subsequent events all favoring Israel in their own Land. God is going to keep every promise He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in a literal sense. His purposes for Israel cannot and will not miscarry.

What should be the attitude of God's people toward the covenant-keeping God? "God is to be feared (reverenced) in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (v. 7.) His promise does not cancel His purity. He must judge sin even when it is found in His saints. He will perfect the thing that concerns His people, but this does not forbid the chastening process. We witness the recorded history of Israel as an illustration of this fact (v. 14, 29-37.)

Sometimes circumstances may seem to contradict the promises of God (vv. 39-52.) But ultimately, in the providence of God, He will bring His purposes to fruition to His own glory and the good of His covenant people (cf. Eph. 1:10-11.) How earnestly may each believer sing with the poet:

My life is but a weaving  
Between my Lord and me;  
I cannot choose the colors  
He worketh steadily.

Ofttimes He weaveth sorrow,  
And I in foolish pride  
Forget He sees the upper  
And I, the underside.

Not till the loom is silent  
And the shuttles cease to fly  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful  
In the Weaver's skillful hand  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern He has planned.



## THE PSALM OF THE SECRET PLACE

(Psalm 91)

This Psalm, together with the 90th, is one of the most popular with the people of God. It speaks of the guardianship of the Almighty, and this is a comforting truth in days of wars and rumours of wars.

The Psalm promises the covering shadow of God over His own (vv. 1-4.) But notice that the divine canopy is only for those who  *dwell*  in the secret place of the most High (v. 1.) It is true that God watches over us even when we wander, but we have His blessed Presence and His protection only as we stay close under His shadow.

The place of abiding is called the "secret place" because none but the child of God knows where it is. The unsaved are not dwelling in that place, for no man can approach God except through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6.) It is a "secret place," too, because the enemies of God and of His people cannot molest there. As the hymn-writer has said:

There is a place of quiet rest,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where sin cannot molest,  
Near to the heart of God.

A place where we our Saviour meet,  
Near to the heart of God,  
There is a place of comfort sweet,  
Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where all is joy and peace,  
Near to the heart of God.

In this place of quiet rest the believer has no fear (vv. 5-14.) Fearlessness is a gracious gift of God. This is a world of fear. Nearly all people in the world are afraid of many things — they fear the future with its uncertainty; they fear death in all its mystery; they fear sickness, poverty, loss of loved ones, and many other things. Now these are all experiences common to man, even the child of God, but with this difference — the Christian knows that a Hand of love is guiding his life and will bring him safely through!

The spiritual "cliff-dweller" (v. 1) has another rich privilege of answered prayer (v. 15.) The man who is close to God gets answers to his prayers. He is aware of God's presence in times of trouble; he experiences wonderful deliverances through the power of the Lord; he

is honored of God; he is blest with a long life, all things being equal (v. 16), and he is ultimately shown God's full and wonderful salvation (v. 16.) Surely these things justify any man receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. What do Satan and the world offer that is commensurate with these great treasures?

## THE PSALM OF THE PALM-TREE CHRISTIAN

(Psalm 92)

This is a good Psalm for Thanksgiving day, but  *every*  day for the believer is a day of thanksgiving, so it is a good Psalm for every day (v. 1.) I am not going to develop the thought of thanksgiving in this brief message, but I do recommend that each of you take a few minutes to meditate on the truth of the opening statement of the Psalm — why is it a good thing to give thanks to the Lord? Make a list of reasons and you will find a powerful message for your own heart.

As you read through Psalm 92 you will note the contrast between two types of men — one is called a "brutish" man (v. 6.) This man is not much better than the beasts of the forests and fields when it comes to an acknowledgment of God! The other man is called "righteous" (v. 12.) This does not mean that he is righteous in himself, for this no man can be (Rom. 3:23.) It means that he has been accounted righteous through faith (Rom. 5:1), and that he is being made righteous through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8.)

You will also be struck by the use of the palm tree as a type of the Christian life vv. 12-14), and it is this symbol I want us to consider now.

Two words stand out in my own mind as perhaps summing up the teaching of these verses — they are  *planting*  and  *production* . The believer has been  *planted*  in the house of the Lord (v. 13.) Now this word planted speaks of the sovereign act of God. No palm tree plants itself — this is an act of God; and it is an act of God that it continues to grow and to produce. How true this is in the Christian experience! No man gives himself a new heart and a new life — this only God can do (Eph. 2:1.) He is the Heavenly Gardener.

The word planted also speaks of position. The believer is planted "in the house of the Lord" (v. 12.) Some gardeners are also landscape artists and can do wonders with plants and shrubs around a home and grounds. But none can compete with the ability of the artistry of God. Every believer is placed in the body of Christ to serve a definite function both of utilitarian nature and for the purpose of beautifying the Church. Study Rom. 12, Eph. 4 and I Cor. 12 in this connection.

Again, planting speaks of purpose. This is not just a random planting. God has a purpose for each one of His elect. As mentioned above, it

may be for beauty (Psalm 27:4; 90:17); it may be for shade — and such the believers life should be, bringing comfort and blessing to those around him ;it may be for fruit-bearing (John 15); it may be for fragrance (II Cor. 2:14.)

Planting speaks of provision. No gardener who loves his work will plant shrubs and trees and flowers and then leave them to wither and die for lack of care. God nourishes and cultivates and prunes and cares for every believer (John 15.)

The second word of importance in giving an exposition of our text is *Production*. The Holy Spirit tells us that the believer is like a palm tree, not only in the matter of its planting but also in the matter of his producing.

The palm tree produces in the desert. This is a wonderful thing. Where other trees would die the palm flourishes! In a place of death and desolation the palm tree provides an oasis! Such is the believer's life. In this cemetery world (Eph. 2:1) the Christian provides a place of beauty and refreshment.

The palm tree differs from every other tree in appearance. It is tall and stately and straight, reaching ever toward heaven. All its energies are devoted to building one great shaft that reaches toward God, and at its very summit is a cluster of fruit! My dear friends, the palm tree Christian differs from all other men for he is a new creation in Christ (II Cor. 5:17.)

The palm tree is an enduring tree. It grows and keeps on growing for many, many years, and during all this time it never loses its ability to produce! It is true of believers that "they shall still bring forth fruit in old age. . . ." (v. 14.) We have the promise of God that "he that had begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:16.)