

A Psalm 35 Approach to Handling Fierce Opposition

Every true believer understands the pressure of life “under attack.” We are objects of the opposition of an enemy who hates our Savior. Because we are Christ’s prized possession, we are targets of the devil’s animosity. His intention is to “steal, kill and destroy.” He recruits willing subjects who foolishly comply with his evil intentions. The result is persecution, derision and disrespect from an unbelieving world against followers of Jesus. We can’t help but glance at these antagonists. They are an ever-present and growing voice in our society. But we must learn to fix our gaze on the Author of our faith, pleading for Him to speak powerfully to our souls in the midst of the struggle.

Unjust Persecution, Proper Perspective

This was David’s dilemma as he wrote Psalm 35. His emotions bounced back and forth between the injustice and hatred that pounded his soul and the greatness of God, who sustained his very being. He pleaded with God to contend on his behalf with his hateful enemies. These were malicious antagonists who repaid evil for good. He described them as “wretches” and “profane mockers” who “tore at him” like lions. These persecutors hated David “without a cause.” They devised “words of deceit” against him even though David had previously done good to them. This may sound overly dramatic and intense, but anyone who watches the cultural indicators knows that this will become the experience of modern day Christ-followers in increasing fashion.

David wisely fixed his heart toward the justice and power of God to confront these enemies and bring deliverance. He prayed eagerly for the day when his soul would “rejoice in the Lord” and “exult in His salvation,” praising God publicly “in the

great congregation.” With great faith he declared, “Great is the Lord, who delights in the welfare of his servant!”

But there is one line in this psalm that captivated me. David appealed to the Lord with these words: “Say to my soul, ‘I am your salvation!’” (Ps. 37:3b). What a fascinating statement. David cried out to God to speak plainly, powerfully, personally to his soul in the midst of the pain and perplexity. Like David, perhaps today you need to hear the Lord say to your soul, “I am your salvation.” I know I do.

“I Am Your Salvation”

As I meditated on this passage, I felt the power of each word of this reassurance David requested. Truly, this is a reassurance you and I need. These are words to cherish, embrace and receive at the deepest level of our soul, especially when the world confronts us and we are in need of our Lord’s deliverance and comfort.

“I am your salvation”—He is the great I am. He is the Lord of Hosts, Yahweh, Creator of the heavens and earth, Almighty God. He is eternal, faithful, good, gracious, holy, unchanging, impartial, incomprehensible, infinite, jealous, just, long-suffering, loving, merciful, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, righteous, self-existent, self-sufficient, sovereign, transcendent, truth, unchanging and wise. Much more could be said about His names, His works and His character. We could articulate the glorious names of our ever-sufficient Christ. We could review the names and works of the Holy Spirit. But in this moment, consider the wonder of our glorious triune God reassuring you with these words at the core of your being: “I am your God.”

“I am your salvation” – Right now, in this moment, He is your God. Yes, He has been your God in the past. He will be your God in the days to come. For all of eternity He will be your all in all. Yes, He was. He will be. But, hear His voice say

to you right now, “I am.” Stop. Pause. Receive this truth. “I am your salvation.” Oh, how we need to ask the Lord to say this to our soul today.

“I am your salvation” – Yes, our Lord is the Savior of the world. He has saved millions over the millennia. He saves family members, friends, enemies and strangers. But, in this instant, bask in the truth that He is your salvation. It’s been said that if you were the only person in the world, God still would have sent His Son to give His life for you. His work is personal, tender, tailor-made and intentional toward you. He is your salvation. Praise His name!

“I am your salvation – Salvation is the only hope for those who cannot save themselves. We are not our own deliverers. We were not able to save ourselves from the destruction and condemnation of our heinous sin and rebellion against God. Our great God and Savior did for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He delivered us by the power of His cross from the penalty of sin. He is saving us day-by-day from the power of sin. He will someday deliver us from the presence of sin. Right now, our Savior rescues us from our self-destructive and self-deceived thoughts and choices. He delivers us from the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the deceitful pride of life” (1 John 2:16). He lifts us from discouragement, despondency, depression and despair. He salvages our struggling relationships and horrible mistakes. He liberates us from our painful past, our unbearable present, and our anxiety-plagued future. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Oh Be Careful, Little Ears

As we all walk daily in the crosshairs of a very real and consequential spiritual battle we must tune our ears to the right messages. No doubt the “accuser of our brothers” (Rev. 12:10b) will whisper his devious lies. The world will spew its condemnation. Antagonists will dish out demeaning indictments. Secular pundits will announce our inferiority. Friends and

family may pound us with discouraging words. Even our own internal conversations might be misguided.

No doubt, the need is critical and prevailing. We must tune our ears to the voice of God above all the destructive noise. With David, let us resolve to cry out to our Lord with deep urgency and anticipation, "Say to my soul, 'I am your salvation!'" {eoa}

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