

What to Do When People Lie About You

A pastor friend in China was falsely accused. In 1956 the government sent him to prison for nine years and then kept him on probation another sixteen years. Twenty-five years is a long time to remain falsely accused, forbidden to preach the gospel, or conduct services.

I have visited with this pastor three times in the past several years. For me, he represents the vast sector of the Church outside the Western world where Christians suffer greatly and endure much false accusation solely because they believe in Jesus.

We may ultimately face such a time in America. Before the German Nazis began to exterminate Jews and Gypsies around WWII, they caricatured and dehumanized them through ridicule and false accusation. In America, evangelical believers committed to biblical stands on morality are commonly typed as intolerant, hateful, or even dangerous.

Hurt

Psalm 7 is written for the believer who has been falsely accused. You sense the pulsating hurt as you pray this psalm with David. An air of desperation prevails; you feel hunted and about to be torn in two. (See vv. 1,2.) The false accusations of betrayal and robbery hang in the air. (See vv. 3,4.)

The rotten treatment given David is undeserved. (See v. 5.) His actions have been blameless in regard to those who have wounded him, and he pleads with God to affirm his integrity and convene the court of justice against those who treat him wrongly. (See vv. 6–9.)

We know nothing of David's nemesis except he was Cush, a Benjamite, Saul's tribe, who had been bitter enemies of David. (See 2 Samuel 16:5–14; 19:16–23; 20:1–26.)

Pain is hard enough to bear when you are mostly or partly responsible; it becomes a heavy cross when you are not at all to blame.

Trust

Have you been falsely accused or lied about?

Like David, you may be completely powerless to do anything—other than trust in God. That is what you must do: trust.

The pastor in China and suffering saints through the ages survived because they lifted their eyes from their circumstances to the Lord who reigned over the circumstances. Man may be against us, but God is for us.

David begins Psalm 7 terrified and panic stricken; but as he prays, calm and confidence enter. He sees a different future. He would not be torn to bits; God would shield him. Those who hunted him would themselves be targets for the flaming arrows of God. (See vv. 10–13.)

Confidence

David inwardly resolves his pain by knowing those who dug the pit for him would themselves fall into it. Those who sow trouble will reap it on their own heads. (See vv. 14–16.)

How can we be so confident that in the end everything will turn out all right? Because the Lord is righteous, and in the long run He will not let evil prevail. Therefore, with David, we declare our faith even before an external change has occurred in our condition (v. 17).

My friend in China was officially exonerated in 1980. By the

time he assumed leadership again of his congregation in 1983, he was seventy-five. The church had dwindled to thirty. Now he is eighty-seven, and in these twelve years some six thousand adults have been added to the Lord and baptized in water.

Such would have never happened had he not continued to trust in Jesus during the long winter of undeserved imprisonment. But God intended to more than compensate for the lean years by giving him an abundant spiritual harvest at the end of his life. Through nearly ten thousand days of suffering he never permitted vengeance, blame, or self-pity to rule his spirit. If he had, he would have emerged from the experience a useless and bitter old man rather than an incredibly fruitful pastor.

Keep praying and trusting during the period of false accusation and the desperate loneliness. It may not change your circumstances, but it will stabilize your spirit. And, remember, you have a basis for confidence since God himself is righteousness. In the end His justice and fair play will abound toward you as well. So, like David, worship Him even before you see the resolution of your circumstance. Despite your present need you have a great future . . . in Christ.