

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: God is looking out for you: Psalms 149:1-9

No Shouting for Him

Johana Omari says: "I want to be like the little donkey our Lord chose to ride on to enter Jerusalem. They laid their robes on it and shouted, but the shouting was all for the Lord Jesus whom he was carrying. As believers, we often praise the method or the messenger of Christ, when all the world needs to see is Christ" (Ephesians 1:6,7,12).

How comprehensive is the love of Jesus! There is no part of His people's interests which He does not consider, and there is nothing which concerns their welfare which is not important to Him. Not merely does He think of you, believer, as an immortal being, but as a mortal being too. Do not deny it or doubt it: "**The very hairs of your head are all numbered.**" "**The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord:** and he delighteth in His way" It were a sad thing for us if this mantle of love did not cover all our concerns, for what mischief might be wrought to us in that part of our business which did not come under our gracious Lord's inspection!

Believer, rest assured that the heart of Jesus cares about your **meaner affairs**. The breadth of His tender love is such that you may resort to Him in all matters; for in all your afflictions He is afflicted, and like as a father pitieth his children, so doth He pity you. The meanest interests of all His saints are all borne upon the broad bosom of the Jesus. Oh, what a heart is His, that doth not merely comprehend the persons of His people, but comprehends also the diverse and innumerable concerns of all those persons! Dost thou think, O Christian, that thou canst measure the love of Christ? Think of what His love has brought thee—**justification, adoption, sanctification, eternal life!** The riches of His goodness are unsearchable; thou shalt never be able to tell them out or even conceive them. Oh, the breadth of the love of Christ! Shall such a love as this have half our hearts? Shall it have a cold love in return? Shall Jesus' marvelous loving-kindness and tender care meet with but faint response and tardy acknowledgment? O my soul, tune thy harp to a glad song of thanksgiving! Go to thy rest rejoicing, for thou art no desolate wanderer, but a beloved child, watched over, cared for, supplied, and defended by thy Lord.

The Highest Lesson

Andrew Murray wrote the following anecdote on humility: "The highest lesson a believer has to learn is humility. Oh, that every Christian who seeks to advance in holiness may remember this well! There may be intense consecration and fervent zeal and heavenly experience, and yet, if it is not prevented by dealings of the Lord, there may be an unconscious self-exaltation with it all. Let us not learn the lesson—the highest holiness is the deepest humility; and let us remember that it comes not of itself, but only as it is made a matter of special dealing on the part of our faithful Lord and his faithful servant."

God's Blessing and Man's Yearnings (90:13-17) Moses Prayers

This final section contains a series of prayers that God will bless His people and crown their lives with glory. Man is not just an animal that lives and dies. **He is made in the image of God, and he yearns to have his life accomplish something and mean something.** Multitudes of people today are caught in a

meaningless existence without purpose or challenge. How they need to yield to Jesus Christ and say with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Moses prays for God's favor (v. 13). Of course, God does not "repent" as man does, for God never sins. When God repents, He changes His dealings with His people. Exodus 32:12 and Deuteronomy 32:36. God had just judged Israel; now Moses prays that He will forgive Israel and restore them to the place of favor and blessing.

He prays for joy (vv. 14-15). Imagine facing forty years of constant wandering and death. Imagine having to bury hundreds of people day after day. How could there be any joy or gladness in such a situation?

Only through the Lord. Verse 14 can carry the meaning, "**Satisfy us in the morning with Your mercy.**" What were the Jews to do every morning? Go out early and gather the heavenly manna. Exodus 16. Moses is saying, "Meet us each morning, Lord, as we awaken to the new day. Feed us on Your Word. Give us joy in Your presence." It is just as important for the NT Christian today to start the day with the Lord, reading the Word and praying. In v. 15 Moses asks for gladness in proportion to the sorrows they have tasted. As Christians, we have an even greater promise in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (v. 17, NJKV). Paul's statement in Romans 8:18.

Moses prays for God's work to be done (v. 16). He longs to see God's power work on behalf of the people. Historically, of course, this referred to Israel's possession of the land of promise; see Moses' argument with God in Numbers 14:13-19. It was certainly no glory to God while Israel wandered in the wilderness; however, it was to His glory when Israel crossed the Jordan and claimed her inheritance in power. Moses in v. 16 is more concerned with God's glory than his own enjoyment.

He prays for God's blessing on man's work (v. 17). There is a wonderful connection between vv. 16 and 17: "**Your work — the work of our hands**"; "**Your glory — the beauty of the Lord our God upon us.**" **The word "beauty" means "God's grace and kindness."** In Psalms 27:4, we behold the beauty of the Lord, but here we share the beauty of the Lord. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:1-2). What does Moses mean when he prays about the work of our hands? Simply this: that our lives might not be wasted, but that God would guide us and bless us so that what we do will last for eternity. "He who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17). As Moses watches the Jews wander in the wilderness, their lives seem so wasted and useless. Being a man of God, he does not want his life to be wasted; he wants it to count for God's glory. Therefore, he prays that God would establish his works in and through His people. Jesus had the same idea in mind in the Parable of the Two Builders (Matthew 7:21-29).

Apart from Jesus Christ, life would be unbearable. Why endure the trials of life if there is no God and no glory? Then we would be like the sinners who say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Corinthians 15:32). But life is not a burden, a sigh, a sleep in the night. With Jesus Christ in control, life is an adventure, a challenge, an investment for eternity. "Teach us to number our days, Lord, and help us to live every day for Jesus Christ with Your wisdom!"

Psalms 149:1-2 Everything that God's people do in serving and glorifying the Lord must flow out of worship, for without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). The most important activity of the local church is the worship of God, for this is the activity we will continue in heaven for all eternity. This psalm is a primer on worship and gives us the basic instructions we need.

Worship the Lord Intelligently (vv. 1-2)

Worship is something that we must learn to do, and we will be learning all of our lives. In times of corporate worship, the saints do minister to one another (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), but the primary focus must be on the Lord, glorifying and extolling Him. Yes, we may worship the Lord in solitude, and we should (v. 5), but we must not forsake the assembly of the saints (Hebrews 10:25). As members of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13,27), we belong to each other, affect each other, and need each other. We need both the old songs and the new songs (see on Ps 33:3), which suggests an intelligent balance in worship. The church family has young and old, new believers, and seasoned saints (1 Timothy 5:1-2; Titus 2:1-8; 1 John 2:12-14), and nobody should be ignored. The old songs bear witness to our stead-fastness in keeping the faith, but the new songs give evidence that we are maturing in the faith as we grow in the knowledge of His Word and His grace (2 Peter 3:18). A maturing faith demands mature expressions of worship, just as a maturing marriage demands new expressions of devotion, but we do not abandon the old and major only on the new. "Let us press on to maturity" (Hebrews 6:1, NASB). The old and the new must be integrated or we will not be balanced believers (Matthew 13:51-52). We must walk in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-21) and grow in knowledge of the Word (Colossians 3:16), learning new truths about the old truths and having new experiences of blessing from both.

The church today can join with Israel in saying, "God is our Maker and our King" (95:6; 100:3; 10:16; 24:7-10; Ephesians 2:10; Revelation 15:3; 19:16). How He has made us is His gift to us, and what we do with it is our gift to Him. We must remind ourselves that we came from the dust, but because of God's grace, we are destined for glory! "Soon and very soon / we're going to see the King."

Psalms 149:3-4 A very expressive people, the Jews used musical instruments, songs, and dances in their worship of the Lord. The dances, of course, were not modern ballroom or disco dances but rather interpretive dances that pointed to the Lord and not some person's talent (see Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 18:6; Jeremiah 31:4). We find no evidence that the New Testament church patterned its worship after the Jewish temple. Their pattern seems to have been the local synagogue worship, with its emphasis on prayer, the reading of the Word, exposition and exhortation, and singing hymns. However, spiritual fervency must not be confused with fleshly enthusiasm. There are false worshipers as well as true worshipers (John 4:22-24; Colossians 2:16-23), and some people who think they are filled with the Spirit are really being fooled by the spirits. Bringing false fire into the sanctuary can lead to death (Leviticus 10:1-11).

Our purpose is not to please ourselves or to demonstrate how "spiritual" we are. Our purpose is to delight the Lord (147:11), and humility is one virtue that brings Him great joy (Isaiah 66:1-2). The Lord gives spiritual beauty to those whose worship brings Him delight. Worship ought to be beautiful, for we are beholding the beauty of the Lord (27:4; 29:2; 90:17; 96:9) and becoming more like the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18). Worship must focus on God, not on us, and it must be enrichment, not entertainment. The experience of true worship can help us experience deliverance from the bondage of sin and the world.

Worship the Lord Gratefully (v. 5) "Let the saints rejoice in this honor" is the New International Version translation, the "honor" being the privilege of worshiping the true and living God. God gave His Word and His glory only to the nation of Israel (147:19-20; Romans 9:1-5), and this Word and glory have been passed on to the church (John 17:8,14,22). When the believer's private worship and the church's

corporate worship become routine, the Spirit is grieved and the blessing is gone. Worship ought to mean so much to us that we sing even on our beds! The word is "couches" and could refer to someone reclining at the table or resting in bed. Singing at the table or in our bed can bring joy to the Lord. Instead of the bed "swimming" with tears (6:6, NKJV), it is filled with "songs in the night" (42:8; 77:6). Even while lying in a sickbed, we can look up to God and worship Him. Without private worship, we are but hypocrites at public worship.

Worship the Lord Triumphantly (vv. 6-9) Worship and warfare go together, as the book of Revelation makes very clear. Satan has always wanted to be worshiped (Isaiah 14:12-15), and he is willing to pay for it (Matthew 4:8-11). Satan is constantly at work enticing the world to worship him (Revelation 13), for he does not mind if people are "religious" so long as they leave out Jesus Christ and the truth of the gospel. In recent years, some denominations have eliminated the "militant songs" from their hymnals and their worship, and this is disappointing. Whether we like it or not, the church is an army, this world is a battlefield, and there is a struggle going on for the souls of lost sinners (Matthew 16:17-18; Ephesians 6:10 ff; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), is also the Conquering Warrior (45:3-7; Revelation 19:11-21), and like the workers in Nehemiah's day, we must have both tools for building and swords for battling (Nehemiah 4:17-18). Our weapons are prayer, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12), and hymns of praise to the Lord. Worship is warfare, for we are singing soldiers! Did not our Lord sing before He went out to the cross to do battle against the devil? (See Matthew 26:30; John 12:31-32; and Colossians 2:13-15.)

God has declared in writing that "the day of the Lord" will come when He will send judgment to a world that has rejected Christ and chosen to worship Satan (Revelation 6-19). God's people will appear to be the losers, but in the end, they will conquer the enemy and reign with Christ (Revelation 19:11 ff). Today, the sword belongs to human government and its agents (Romans 13), and God's servants do not wield it (John 18:10-11,36-37). But the day of the Lord will come "as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2 ff), and then Christ will "gird His sword ... and ride prosperously (45:3-5). Until then, the church must take worship very seriously and realize that worship is a part of the believer's spiritual warfare. To ignore worship, trivialize it, turn it into entertainment, or make it a routine activity is to play right into the hands of the enemy. It is an honor to serve in the Lord's army of worshipping warriors!