

Answer Me, O LORD!

Psalm 69:16-18

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The 69th Psalm is thought to have been written by David as a cry of distress to the Lord because of his many adversaries. David apparently thought the Lord had forsaken him and, as you read, you can almost hear the complaint in David's words. He felt alone, and he pleaded earnestly for the Lord's help. There are many thoughts in this psalm worthy of study, but today let's look only at verses 16-18. Please read with me:

Answer me, O Lord, for Thy lovingkindness is good;
According to the greatness of Thy compassion, turn to me,
And do not hide Thy face from Thy servant,
For I am in distress; answer me quickly.
Oh draw near to my soul and redeem it;
Ransom me because of my enemies!

Had the Lord deserted David? David thought so, even if He hadn't. Sometimes, we also feel as though the Lord has turned His face from us, that He is withholding His loving kindness and His compassion in our time of need. At those times, we do well to carefully examine our lives in light of God's word and ask, "Am I living according to His will?" Remember, we can separate ourselves from God by our sin and when that happens, the only way to draw near to God again is to repent and seek His closeness by submitting to His will. In David's prayer, he acknowledged that God knew of his sins. He said, "My wrongs are not hidden from Thee" and so it is with our own wrongdoings. God sees our most secret acts and hears our most intimate thoughts. How terrible it is when God is not near and the reason is our own unfaithfulness!

But the thrust of David's prayer is a complaint regarding unjust treatment from human enemies. Sometimes we too are mistreated. And sometimes we feel as though we are all alone, that God doesn't care. My friend, God does care. His care is first and foremost for our spiritual well-being. What that means is that physical suffering such as is brought on by human enemies is not as important to God as our spiritual health. In fact, it may be needful at times that we suffer physically in order that our faith be tested and made to grow stronger in the process. At such times, it is easy for us, like David, to assume that God is not there, that He has turned and hidden His face from us. Remember the suffering of Job? He thought God had deserted Him, and his wife and his friends were convinced of it. But God was there all the while.

God doesn't leave us. He is always the same. If, in reality, there is a gulf between you and God, it is because of your sins. He is always near your soul; He has already paid the price to redeem it from the only true enemy we all have - Satan.