

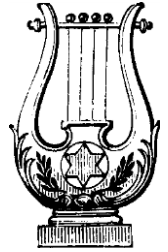


Meeting God in the Psalms

Summer 2017

Psalm 71 Secure at Every Stage

(sermons: July 30)



Introduction

There is no heading to this psalm but the first 3 verses are the same as those of Psalm 31 that is attributed to King David; other verses echo other psalms of David. In this psalm the writer also experiences strong opposition but he seems to have lived longer and to be more sure of God's faithfulness and care for him; perhaps he has learned to trust in God by making David's psalms part of his own spiritual life – and as he reaches old age, he is able to say that God is utterly trustworthy, and he wants to pass this faith on to future generations.

Psalm 71:1-4 Turning to God

1. What problems is the psalmist facing? What does he ask God to do for him?
What does he say about God (his character and what he does) that gives him confidence?

Psalm 71:5-13 Faith in Youth and Old Age

- v.7 I have become like a portent to many – a solemn warning: some of his opponents are saying that his suffering is a well-deserved punishment, a false accusation that makes it even worse; so he turns to God to vindicate him.*
2. How long has the psalmist known God? *If you want to*, share what you remember about your experience of God when you were younger – and how your faith has developed since then.
 3. Read *verse 9*. Do we understand why older people might feel like this, or do we expect them to have an untroubled confidence in God? What might challenge our faith as we grow older? What can we do to help those who are older to continue to share in the life of the church?
 4. Can we be upset, whatever our age, by hostile words that undermine our faith, as in *verses 10-11*.
How does the psalmist deal with this opposition? What can we learn from him and from each other?

Psalm 71:14-24 Passing On the Faith

- v.20 you will restore my life again – the psalmist is probably hoping for his health, security and good name to be restored in this life; after Jesus' resurrection we can also be sure of eternal life*
- v.22 lyre – small portable harp played with a plectrum (picture at top right of page)*
5. Could we speak about God's help throughout our lives? What opportunities do we have to do so?
 6. Do we share the psalmist's determination to pass on our faith '*to the next generation*' (v.18)?
What are the different ways that we can do this individually, and as a church?
 7. *If you want to*, share an example of a way that God has '*restored your life*' after a period of trouble; what have you learned from any experience such as that in *verses 20 & 21*?
 8. Why do you think does the psalmist want to sing, and to play a musical instrument, as well as using words on their own (*verses 22-24*)?
What different means of prayer and worship help us to meet God with our whole selves?