

Psalm 4

To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

1 Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress;

Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

2 How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame?

How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood? Selah

3 But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly;

The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

4 Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the LORD.

6 There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?"

LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

7 You have put gladness in my heart,

More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;

For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

f. General Outline of the Psalm

- a.* Author is King David
- b.* The background setting is the same as Psalm 3 – in the midst of the crisis of Absalom’s rebellion
- c.* Considered by scholars to be “An evening prayer of Trust in God”
- d.* Psalm has 3 parts – part 1 consists of verse 1 and is directed to the Lord, part 2 consists of verses 2-5 and is directed toward men, and the final part consists of verses 6-8 and is directed again to the Lord
- e.* In this psalm we see the psalmist’s cry for help to God, his frustration with the ungodly, and a reaffirmation of trust that God will deliver him and keep him safe in the midst of the storm he is currently enduring

f. Verse by Verse Analysis

- a.* Verse 1 –

Hear me when I call – The word “hear” used in the KJV actually means – “answer, respond or speak”

O God of my righteousness – this is the only place in the Bible where this name for God is utilized

You have relieved me in my distress – this is a pleading of past deliverances as a basis for current help – David understood this secret of remembering God’s past assistance and reminding God of it as a basis of

faith for God to move on his behalf again! The word “distress” here means affliction, pressure or “dire straits”

Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer – pleading with God to hear and answer his prayer on the basis of God’s character of Divine mercy is a wise approach!

b. Verse 2 –

How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame?

The psalmist turns and speaks to men, and the term “sons of men” means someone noble. The question implies why do men of value (whom God created) criticize as shameful what God has said is good and glorious. In Isaiah 5:20 there is a similar theme: **Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!**

How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood? This question addresses the vain pursuits of ungodly men which frustrate the man of God.

c. Verse 3 –

But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly – the meaning of “set apart” is to be distinct, marked out, be separated, be distinguished as God’s favored vessels for his protection and help and both the godly and the ungodly are to take note of it!

The LORD will hear when I call to Him – the writer reiterates his confidence that because of the former truth, His God will answer his prayers!

d. Verse 4 – 5

Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the LORD. The writer exhorts the ungodly to turn to God – to seriously consider his spiritual condition and then make a wise decision of placing trust in God. In the KJV – the first part of verse 4 says “Stand in awe and sin not.” It means to tremble – have reverence – quake before God. The idea is one of a person seeing God and himself in the true revelation of his own condition.

e. Verse 6 -

**There are many who say, “Who will show us any good?”
LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.**

The psalmist turns his focus back to the Lord and tells Him that the world says everything is pitiful – but he trusts God to shine His face upon His servant.

f. Verse 7 –

You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. In the midst of trouble the psalmist is able to say that God has given him greater joy than people in the world are joyful when they have a fat bank account. Spurgeon said it this way: “Christ in the heart is better than corn in the barn and wine in the vat.” Or the Message translation says - ***I have God's more-than-enough, More joy in one ordinary day, Than they get in all their shopping sprees.***

g. Verse 8 –

***I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;
For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.***

This is the true test of faith – sleeping in the midst of pressures, enemies, threats, trials, troubles on every side, yet able to rest in the faithfulness, and goodness of the Lord, confident that all will be well despite what is seen with the natural eyes.

In 1555, Nicholas Ridley was burned at the stake because of his witness for Christ. On the night before Ridley's execution, his brother offered to remain with him in the prison chamber to be of assistance and comfort. Nicholas declined the offer and replied that he meant to go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life. Because he knew the peace of God, he could rest in the strength of the everlasting arms of his Lord to meet his need. So can we!

[Source Unknown.](#)