**The Believer’s Response in Time of Crisis:**

**From Anxiety to Assurance**

***Psalm 4:1-8***

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: Psalm 4 has the title (or superscription): “To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David.” There are titles heading 116 of the Psalms, of which Ryrie says, “They are editorial titles, added after the psalms were written, but are historically accurate.” The chief Musician is the choir director & this designation is used of 55 psalms “suggesting that a collection of psalms existed for the choir director, possibly for use on special occasions” (Ryrie). The word “Neginoth” refers to playing on stringed instru-ments. David is again the author, & as we noted last week, Psalms 3, 4 & 5 are connected. Psalm 3 has been called “a morning psalm” (see 3:5), while Psalm 4 is called “an evening psalm” (see 4:8), & Psalm 5 is considered to be written about the same time. The setting of these psalms is during David’s flight from his son Absalom who has rebelled & declared himself to be king (see II Samuel 15:13 – 17:22). I believe application came be drawn from this Psalm to the day in which we live: The believer’s response in time of crisis: from anxiety to assurance. The word *“Selah”* occurs twice, perhaps dividing the psalm into 3 parts. I see here David’s calls (:1-2), David’s counsels (:3-4), & David’s confidences (:5-8).

I. David’s **calls** in a time of crisis (:1-2)

A. David calls upon God for help (:1)

1. To whom does he call? *“O God of my righteousness,”* the only time this title for God is used:

a. God is righteous.

b. God clothes men with righteousness (see Gen. 15:6; Isa. 61:10; & II Cor. 5:21).

2. Why does he call?

a. His previous deliverance – *“enlarged me”* > given relief; Ryrie suggests, “made room for

me in tight places” & note *“distress” >* “pressed into a corner.”

b. His growth when in difficult situations? See Ps. 18:19, 36; 31:8; 118:5; & 119:32.

3. For what does he call? *“Mercy”*

a. He understood that he didn’t “deserve” help.

b. “The best of men need mercy as truly as the worst of men. All the deliverances of saints, as

well as the pardons of sinners, are the free gifts of heavenly grace” (Spurgeon).

Summary: David first speaks to God, then to men. “Surely we should all speak the more boldly

to men if we had more constant converse with God” (Spurgeon).

B. David calls for his enemies to heed (:2)

1. Who? *“Sons of men”* – men of rank; leading men of David deceived by Absalom.

2. What? *“Turn my glory”* – his trust in God as his glory (see 3:3).

3. Why? They *“love vanity, & seek after leasing”* – worthless, empty conceits & lying.

*“Selah”* > “Surely we too may stop awhile, & meditate upon the deep-seated folly of the wicked,

their continuance in evil, & their sure destruction; & we may learn to admire that grace which has

made us to differ, & taught us to love truth, & seek after righteousness” (Spurgeon).

II. David’s **counsels** in a time of crisis (:3-4)

A. He gives 2 explanations in verse 3:

1. The Lord secures His people (*“godly”* – also translated saint, faithful one, or holy).

2. The Lord answers prayer (*“the LORD will hear when I call unto Him”*).

B. He gives 3 exhortations in verse 4:

1. *“Stand in awe”* – tremble & sin not (see Eph. 4:26).

a. “To tremble or shake in the fear of the Lord so as not to sin; Isa. 32:10-11” (MacArthur).

b. “Believers who fear the Lord need not fear anything else” (Wiersbe).

2. “Search your heart” (*“commune with…”*) – ponder, reflect, meditate, examine; take inventory.

3. “Shut your mouth” (*“be still”*) – be silent; don’t seek personal revenge.

Summary: “Surely a thinking man might have enough sense to discover the vanity of sin & the

worthlessness of the world. Stay, rash sinner, stay ere thou take the last leap. Ask counsel of thy

pillow, & let the quietude of night instruct thee!” (Spurgeon).

III. David’s **confidences** in a time of crisis (:5-8)

A. His confidence in accepted sacrifices (:5)

1. Contrast with the wicked sacrifices of Absalom (II Sam. 15:12).

2. Compare with the accepted sacrifices of believers:

a. Each O.T. sacrifice pointed to the coming Sacrifice, the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

b. Trust is in the Lord, not the sacrifice, per se, but in obedience to God’s command (cf. Psalm

51:17-19 & see Psalm 50:14-15). See also Hebrews 13:15-16 for N.T. sacrifices.

B. His confidence in approved “success” (:6)

1. David’s followers ask: *“Who will shew us any good?”* – suggesting: “O that we might see

some good” or “Can anything good come out of this?” or “Who can get us out of this plight?”

2. David asks for the smile of God’s favor: *“Lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance”* –

a. Compare the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26.

b. Consider the song “Living for Jesus” – verse 4, “Living for Jesus thru earth’s little while,

my dearest treasure, the light of His smile…”

C. His confidence in abundant satisfaction (:7)

1. *“Gladness in my heart…”* – discouragement replaced by joy.

2. *“More than…”* – referring to great joy at weddings & harvest time.

D. His confidence in assured safety (:8)

1. *“Peace”* – more than just the absence of conflict; it carries the ideas of adequacy for life,

confidence, fullness of life. “When a person’s life with God & with everything else is in

ordered harmony, both physically & spiritually, & all is well” (ESV note).

2. *“Thou, LORD, only…”* – “God alone was his keeper, & that though alone, without man’s

help, he was even then in good keeping, for he was ‘alone with God’ “(Spurgeon).

Summary: “A quiet conscience is a good bedfellow. How many of our sleepless hours might be

traced to our untrusting & disordered minds. They slumber sweetly whom faith rocks to sleep.

No pillow so soft as a promise; no coverlet so warm as an assured interest in Christ” (Spurgeon).

Conclusion: How should we respond in a time of crisis? Are we given to anxious thoughts or to assured trust? In David’s crisis, he called upon God to hear & unto his enemies to heed. He offers counsel, by explaining that the Lord secures His people even as He answers their prayers. David exhorts us to: *“stand in awe”*; to search our hearts; & to shut our mouths (*“be still”*). David’s confidences can be ours as well. Confidence in accepted sacrifices (Heb. 13:15-16), approved “success” (God’s “smile”), abundant satis-faction (*“gladness”*), & assured safety (*“peace”*). We see in this Psalm David’s total trust in God in the time of crisis! How will you respond in your time of crisis? Can you sing from your heart, “It is well with my soul”?