

## Psalm 143

The psalms are about hearts in transition. Many psalms begin with fear and dread; and somehow end in praise. Each psalm is a view to a path of one man getting better. God has physical medicine; that frequently has a bad taste, but has a good aftertaste. We focus on the physical and the emotional; while God is focused on the spiritual development. The spiritual development requires humility on our part. All that God wants is a humble heart of worship and a thankful response.

*O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise. (Psalm 51:15-17)*

These mini-crises we have can serve to get men to a place of thankfulness and humility. I have a friend who was a Christian. He was a very busy and successful salesman. He was always on the move. One day he hurt his back; and had to stay in bed for months. It was difficult to be tethered down, after having that level of activity. The net result was a much deeper and more prayerful faith. God has ways to mature all of us. The process is normally something that goes against our grain.

This psalm could be a continuation to the last two previous psalms. David is being hunted by evil men; and he's coping with strange circumstances. He is hanging on for dear life. He is on the run from King Saul. He has gone from national hero to *national zero*. Here is an outline to Psalm 143:

1. I really need some direction here. This situation is just not sustainable.
2. I fully recognize that I am a sinner; and that I could have easily done something wrong to end up in this situation. I do not doubt that for a second. Regardless, please give me a pass.
3. My situation at hand cannot be ignored. I am pursued to such a degree that I am just *done*. I am diminished and wiped out, living like a zombie in hiding. If I died in the bushes, nobody would know or care. I have no quality of life to continue on. I have gone from public recognition to non-existent.
4. I can recall the blessings of the past, when I just focused on your great works. I used to just muse over your creation and how you delivered our ancestors. Things were more enjoyable when my life was simple.

5. I really need to somehow get back to a place where my sense of purpose and life vigor and energy return. I am literally like a man whose destiny seems to be controlled by his enemies.

**Read Psalm 143: 1-4:** Most of the people are either people of thought, or people of action. David is fairly unique. David is a man of prayer, a musician, a warrior, a shepherd and a writer. David is a man of thought and action. He has been called a warrior poet. David's life essence and energy and zeal are all laid out for us to inspect and consider. David is a man of highs and lows. Some even wonder if he was bi-polar. He does not see this as a mere season of life. He is in it; and he has no hope. That zaps all of your energy. He is sending very low-energy *smoke signals* to God. All of these things make his diary valuable to us today.

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4)*

We all need impossible deliverances. David is a poster child for faith; and he is full of lessons on how to maneuver life's struggles. He is a living testimony to all believers to take hope. Everything has been stripped away from him. He is trying to reconnect with God to get that *life force* and energy coursing back into his weary body. He needs a miracle. Our society also needs to have examples for hope during dark times.

Cartoonist E.C. Segar created a cartoon character during the Great Depression, intended to encourage the American people to *step up and do the right thing* in a crisis. This motivational character became even more popular during World War 2 as the evil Axis Powers were still successfully taking over the world. We needed to pull together and fight against evil. This character was based on a real person known for standing up against evil men. He represented the common man occasionally getting his brains beat out; and in need for superhuman strength. Popeye the Sailor Man was a series written about a real man named Frank 'Rocky' Fiegel. Rocky spent some time in the Coast Guard before spending 20 years in the Merchant Marines. He later became a bouncer at a bar. He was a lively storytelling and well-liked man. Rocky shared his vivid life experiences with the young cartoonist. During that time a nutritional study on spinach erroneously magnified the health benefits of spinach by a ten-fold factor, making spinach seem like a miracle food. Popeye was used to promote healthy eating during a time of food lines and national starvation. Popeye alone increased the national

consumption of spinach by 1/3. David was like Popeye in his fearless fight against evil. David's spinach was the power of the Spirit that came through prayer.



David is very mindful of anything that he may have done (or neglected to do) for God that could be a contributing factor. When we feel awful, we are quick to self-diagnose any off-track choices that we have made. We want to stop the test immediately. He cannot even go out of his cave and stretch his legs. He is probably buried in weeds and covered in the dirt, like a sniper behind enemy lines. The caves he was in are being inspected by Saul's posse. He cannot even leave evidence that he was recently there...or the trackers would stay. That means no campfires or normal food preparation or footprints. David can only hang on to being close to God in this situation. David is best known as God's friend. You could say that he was hanging onto his friendship with God for dear life.

*But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin." (Romans 4: 5-8)*

**Read Psalm 143:5-6:** We all seem to have a disconnect between our trust in God; and saving our own skin. We enjoy reading about the crazy things that happened to David or Elijah or Joseph. Somehow that rich history of deliverance evaporates when it gets close to us. We can even recall great things that he has already done for us. How we process the past and the present is important to our sanity and peace of mind.

We have talked in prior psalms about how God is trying to get us to *savor our past blessings*. We can get a lot more satisfaction and mileage out of what God has already done for us. This world's forces try to keep you so busy that you can only think about what comes next. It is normal to base our attitude on our anticipation of what is on our calendar. The bible and the Psalms (in particular) is a book full of reflections and recollections. God wants us to be *more thankful* over what we already have. A rushed prayer time might only consist of a wish list. A relaxed quiet time before the LORD includes thanksgiving for what we have been given and blessed with.

David is musing over the great things that God did throughout biblical history. Moses had much to record. Almost everything that Moses wrote is supposed to be meditated on and contemplated to this day. Abram had a lot of journeys and faith experiences. Abraham is our written example of faith. David also gives us plenty of his own experiences and writings to contemplate.

David is a colorful writer. He captures the scenery and the emotion of the situation. Most biblical writers merely record a narrative and *play by play*. The Psalms are uniquely from the emotions amidst the recorded events.

**Read Psalm 143:7-12:** David has had a lot of supernatural deliverances. He wants to get back on track. He does not want God to blink and lose track of his safety. He is essentially saying: "Come and get me." We think of David as a superstar if we read 1 or 2 Samuel we think of David as invincible. If we read the Psalms, we see David as being all over the place, and in turmoil.