

July 27, 2025

Psalm 138:6-8:

“What?”

- I. Regards
- II. In the Midst of Troubles
- III. His Purpose for Us

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Psalm 138:6-8

Dear friends in Christ,

A long, long time ago, when I was in kindergarten, our teacher taught us the following poem: "Please, thank-you, and excuse me are the nicest words to say. Try them once, try them twice, you'll begin to talk that way." I'm thinking we probably won't hear anything like that in today's public schools. I'm thinking of Paul's words to Timothy:

. . . understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people (2 Tim.3:1-5).

A good number of us have lived long enough to see five generations, which includes our parents and grandparents; six generations if we remember great grandparents, seven if we're great-grandparents. I believe we can testify to the fact that what Paul wrote has truly intensified. A fellow by the name of David R. Chamberlain wrote, "Humanism vainly attempts to help people lift themselves by their own bootstraps, but the gains are only illusory. Humanity repeats Lucifer's sin of pride and self-sufficiency with equally tragic results."

The big concern is, "What about God's people?" Well, the Lord had Paul write to Timothy, ". . . preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching (2 Tim.4:2-3a)." So, what about us...

WHAT?

I. Regards

Our text states: ". . . But the haughty he knows from afar." Here are some synonyms for the word haughty: "proud, arrogant, vain, snobbish, superior." It's either the person whose too good to need God, or the person who sits in a pew and sees himself as superior to everyone around them. And though the haughty one thinks their thinking is unknown. God knows. The Scriptures say, "You discern my thoughts from afar (before we think them) . . . Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, oh Lord, you know it all together (Ps.139:2b,4)." The writer of Hebrews says, "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:13)." Let's never ask, "Does God know what's going on here!?"

And then there's the lowly. The people torn by sin and guilt, fear of death, struggling with life. So, how does God see you and me on a day-to-day basis: the good moments, the bad moments, the moments we would prefer to think that the one who sees everything isn't looking?

Our text says, "For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly." *Regards* meaning "attention to or concern for someone or something". The commentators Keil and Delitzsh note: "He has shown himself to be the exalted one who in his all-embracing rule does not leave the lowly ...unnoticed, but on the contrary makes him the special object of his regard. Gives attention to us, concern." (Commentary on the Old Testament, Psalms, Vol.5, William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989, p.340.)

II. In the Midst of Troubles

So, what does he see? David says, "though I walk in the midst of troubles, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me (v.7)." David had enemies, those who wanted to destroy him: Saul, other kings, his own son, Satan, his sin. And God consistently delivered him, though David consistently found himself walking *through the valley of the shadow of death*. And us: who are our enemies besides Satan and our sins?

Several years ago, this statement appeared on Soundscapes, a television music station; the author was not cited: "It needs to be said and heard: It's okay to be who you are." Well, that depends. In Psalm 131:1 David, in great humility, stated, "O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me." He understood who and what he was before a holy God. We must do the same. It's our sin that brings many troubles.

David's great confession is always ours: "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgement." All sin is first and foremost against God! My sin is my sin. It's my fault!

This is where the lowly live. This is us every day. Some might not like to hear or get tired of hearing that. If so, then "some" don't like Scriptures! As John writes, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is, faithful and just and to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I Jn.1:8-9)." And Jesus said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous (that is, the self-righteous), but sinners (Mk.2:17)." This is the entire issue of God's word from Genesis 3 through Revelation 22.

Keep in mind that he does not take the upheavals and struggles of life away. He uses them. God's word says, "if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Pt.1:6-7)."

III. His Purpose for Us

His regards for us will never allow us ultimate comfort with this world. It's too easy to get caught up in this world's ways and thinking. Our text states, "The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; Your steadfast love, oh Lord, endures forever; do not forsake the work of your hands." Nine years ago, Peter J. Leithart wrote the following:

The official ideology of late modernity (modern thinking) rules out divine judgment. Earthquakes are caused by more or less predictable breakages along a fault line. Tsunamis and cyclones are caused by atmospheric conditions. We can fine tune the markets and the rates to avoid economic catastrophes. Skillful diplomacy will keep another World War at bay. We have become blind to the very possibility of divine judgment. We are blind because we have been seduced by science. Science explains everything that primitives and medievals saw as divine interventions. Science gives us permission to rest easy, eat and drink and fornicate, and wait for the engineers to solve the problems ... (Touchstone, "Judgement Denied," by Peter J. Leithart, March/April 2016, p.5).

Well, that's the "baloney" of the day! Is it straight with us, Jesus' words, "... Nation will rise against nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places (Mt.24:7)?" And this: "And because lawlessness will be increased the love of many will grow cold." Sounds like today. It is!

So, what is the Lord's Purpose for us? To make us His. He covers our sin with his blood to assure us of his love and pardon. Over and over again, we are to remember that he stands before us in His written and spoken Word and the visible Word of Baptism and His Supper. Through these means He impresses on us His words: "For it is the will of my father, that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day (Jn.6:40)."

What is His purpose for us here? Do you remember how Ebenezer Scrooge was awakened to the ghost of Christmas past on Christmas Eve? Do you remember that the ghost of his old business partner, Jacob Marley, appeared to him, driven by a restlessness that would not allow him to stay in any one place for very long? "But you were always a good man in business, Jacob," excused Scrooge, who began to apply the story of the ghost to himself. "Business!" cried the ghost, wringing his hands. "Mankind was my business, the common welfare was my business, charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence. My dealing in trade was a drop of water in the ocean of the comprehensive demands of my business."

Presenting the Gospel to mankind is our business. It's always in front of me: "You are the salt of the earth (Mt.5:13)." Salt preserves food, as the Gospel preserves one to eternal life; the Gospel you and I possess. "You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Mt.5:14,16)." I can't ignore that.

Again, our text says, "For though the Lord is high, He regards the lowly." God's regards for us are incredible. The blood of Christ has washed away our sin, given us the promise of eternal life through faith in Christ, and the promise that the Lord will see us through the troubles of this fallen world. The question is always the same, and I have to ask myself, "What am I doing with what He has given to me?"

What?

Pastor Bill Abbott