

19-143-01.wpd --The Son Behind the Clouds

faith, trust, meditation, prayer

Psalm 143:7-8

Life may be stormy, but God's Son is still there behind the clouds.

INTRODUCTION: (All of **Psalm 143** for Scripture Reading)

--Almost everyone loves a sunshiny day! We may not like it when it gets too hot, but generally, most of us like it when the sun is out.

--In the last few years I have been getting lots more sun than I did in past years, because I learned about the many ways it helps our health, if we don't overdo it. So, in sunny weather, I've been sunbathing, and it has greatly reduced the number of days I call in sick to work from sore throats and the flu. I just get a good feeling when I am laying out with the sun on my skin. It's very relaxing.]

--When our life is *sunshiny*, when we're *feeling good physically*, when everything is *going smoothly*, faith is easy for Christians. But when the *skies are overcast and stormy*, when the *sun is behind the clouds*, our faith is tested. **TITLE. HOM.idea**

--Psalm 143 was written when David was out in the wilderness fleeing from King Saul, who was trying to find and kill him. That was a dark time in David's life, and he prayed in Psa 143:7-8, *Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit. Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.*)

--There are some things in these two verses that can help us when the face of Christ seems hidden behind storm clouds...

I. Our First Response Should Be to Pray

A. The usual human reaction to *cloudy weather in life* is worry, and the fear that fuels worry:

1. Someone has said, "Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due." Sometimes it's even an *overpayment*, and there's no refund, if the thing feared never happens.] Worry wastes the energy that could be used to do something about the cloudy situation.
2. Our first reaction should be *faith* [the "Fear & Faith" acrylic done in art class: *Fear is darkest when it emerges from the storm into our sunny life of faith, and faith shines brightest in the midst of the dark storm clouds*].

B. *Faith* has a language: prayer (what David was doing):

1. The stronger the faith, the more powerful the prayer, and faith is strengthened by something David did in **v.5**, "I remember the days of

long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done."

2. Faith in God's present faithfulness is fed and sustained by a remembrance of His faithfulness in the past.
 3. This is **not** a brief recalling of past blessings, but a *meditation* on the character and outcome of God's loving actions toward us.
- C. Prayer overflows from a faith that meditates on God's goodness:
1. BUT the prayer itself can be *intense* and *urgent* and *emotional*: "*Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails.*" (this sounds desperate, because the situation David faced was desperate.)
 2. When clouds dim the light from God's Son on our pathway, our downhearted feelings and depression can be expressed freely in prayer: "*Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.*" (This is the safest way to deal with downcast emotions, because we are directing them to the true Source of help.)

TRANS: If we are worrying during the storm, *that's human*. If we are afraid of what will happen during the storm, *that's normal*. If we can't see the sunny face of our Lord, because of the clouds, *that's how life is*, sometimes. **But remember**, no matter how dark the sky is, the s-u-n is still shining behind the storm. **Life can be very dark and stormy, but God's Son is still behind the clouds**. *Our first response is prayer....*

II. Our Second Response Should Be to Hope

- A. Look at the way David phrases his prayer in v.8a, "*Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love*" (His first priority in prayer is to ask for what would build up his faith.)
- B. Why not ask for deliverance, or for sunny skies? Why ask only a "*word*," a *sign*, a *promise*, a *message*? Because a "*word*" from God is all we need. That's the currency of a faith-based relationship.
 1. David's trust in God is expressed in the phrase (think about that a moment)... In the midst of danger, with God's face is hidden from view, he is declaring the basis of his hope: "*for I have put my trust in you,*" a trust that the love of God is "unfailing"
 2. Worry meets its death when confronted by a solid trust in the "unfailing love" of God.

TRANS: Life has its storms, but God's Son hasn't gone anywhere. He's

still right there behind the clouds. The *prayer-lines* are never down, even if it seems like the *power-lines* are. We can still talk to Him and we can still receive a "word" of His "*unfailing love*." That gives us hope for today and tomorrow. But it's still dark, the storm is still raging....

III. Our Next Step is to Seek Guidance

- A. Our prayer must eventually come down to this: "What, Lord, do I do? What path do I take? -- v.8b, "*Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.*"
- B. Christians are not alone in seeking guidance.
 1. Everyone faces all kinds of decisions and feels the need for help in choosing the right one. [algorithms, thought out in advance and standardized, are used in healthcare-giving decisions,] No algorithms for the storms of life.
 2. In the midst of life's storms, those who do not know the Lord, sometimes go to the wrong spiritual guides [psychics and mediums], but there is only one sure Guide through this life: the One who brought us into it.
- C. There is one prerequisite for getting guidance from God, and David stated it: "*Show me the way I should go*" - Why would God do that? "*for to you I lift up my soul.*" (If God's intended goal for us is relationship with Himself, then guidance from God will always be rooted in relational commitment. (If God has our soul, we will have His guidance.)

CONCLUSION:

--Life may be stormy, but God's Son is still there behind the clouds.

Let's keep our souls lifted up to Him whose unfailing love is our hope.

--(from the hymn, whose chorus will be sung after the benediction)

1. When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

4. And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Psa 143 (NIV) A psalm of David. O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. {2} Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you. {3} The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead. {4} So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed. {5} I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done. {6} I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah {7} **Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit. {8} Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. {9} Rescue me from my enemies, O LORD, for I hide myself in you. {10} Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. {11} For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble. {12} In your unfailing love, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.**