

## Daily Encouragement from Gordon – Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June

### Psalm 74

This Psalm appears to have been written after the Babylonians overran Israel in 587 BC, destroying the Temple and taking the Jews into exile. Read about this in 2 Kings 25, and see Jeremiah's grief in the book of Lamentations.

We can relate to this in two ways

1. We are strangers and pilgrims in a world that doesn't know God, speaks a different language and lives by different rules. We sorrow over this and long for God's deliverance.
2. Christ speaks of his body as the temple (John 2v19 - Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."). So here we see something of the sufferings of Jesus and the glory of his resurrection.

1 O God, why have you rejected us for ever?

Why does your anger smoulder against the sheep of your pasture?

"Sheep of your pasture" is a lovely description of God's people. We belong to him, he cares for us, feeds us, watches over us. I guess the picture meant even more to those living in a pastoral society.

If you have time, follow the phrase in Psalm 79v13, 95v7, 100v3. There is also Isaiah 40v11, Ezek 34v31, Jer 23v1, Micah 2v12. And of course Psalm 23 and Jesus in John 10 'I am the good shepherd'.

2 Remember the nation you purchased long ago,  
the people of your inheritance, whom you redeemed –  
Mount Zion, where you dwelt.

The Psalmist looks back to the passover/exodus. For us, it is always good to remind ourselves of how Jesus purchased our forgiveness on the cross.

3 Turn your steps towards these everlasting ruins,  
all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary.

4 Your foes roared in the place where you met with us;  
they set up their standards as signs.

5 They behaved like men wielding axes  
to cut through a thicket of trees.

6 They smashed all the carved panelling  
with their axes and hatchets.

7 They burned your sanctuary to the ground;  
they defiled the dwelling-place of your Name.

8 They said in their hearts, 'We will crush them completely!'

They burned every place where God was worshipped in the land.

This happened when Jerusalem was invaded. It pictures the attack on Christ as he was hated, abused and nailed to the cross.

The wanton destruction of the Temple showed it was only a temporary thing. But when evil put Christ to death, in God's amazing plan this opened the way into God's presence for us, a way that can never be destroyed.

9 We are given no signs from God;  
no prophets are left,

and none of us knows how long this will be.

10 How long will the enemy mock you, God?

Will the foe revile your name for ever?

11 Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?

Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!

The Disciples must have thought this before they encountered the risen Christ. Perhaps sometimes we feel abandoned too?

12 But God is my King from long ago;  
he brings salvation on the earth.

But the God who saved us will keep us.

- 13 It was you who split open the sea by your power;  
you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.  
14 It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan  
and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert.  
15 It was you who opened up springs and streams;  
you dried up the ever-flowing rivers.  
16 The day is yours, and yours also the night;  
you established the sun and moon.  
17 It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;  
you made both summer and winter.

And it was You who raised Jesus from the dead and promises to raise us to eternal life too.

- 18 Remember how the enemy has mocked you, Lord,  
how foolish people have reviled your name.  
19 Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts;  
do not forget the lives of your afflicted people for ever.  
20 Have regard for your covenant,  
because haunts of violence fill the dark places of the land.  
21 Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace;  
may the poor and needy praise your name.  
22 Rise up, O God, and defend your cause;  
remember how fools mock you all day long.  
23 Do not ignore the clamour of your adversaries,  
the uproar of your enemies, which rises continually.

We trust in the living God who saved us and promises to keep us safe. We show that trust by looking up through the darkness. God honours that trust by giving us strength now, and promising glory to come.

God is my King (v12). Listen to [That's my King](#). It's not a song, but it says so much about Jesus

Gordon