

THE MORNING TIME
Psalm 143:8

Intro: The Scriptures, in many places, put a premium on the way in which the child of God uses the morning hours.

When the Lord led the children of Israel out of Egypt, He fed them with manna in the morning, and with quail at night. Every day they gathered the manna, except for the Sabbath. To provide for them on the Sabbath, the Lord gave them a double portion on the sixth day. If the people got up too late, or if they tried to save the manna from one day until the next (with the exception of the sixth and seventh days), it got wormy and spoiled. There are many wonderful lessons in Exodus 16 which have to do with what is often called the daily quiet time.

After the Tabernacle was built, there was one offering that was made every morning and every night. It was called, the continual burnt offering. Regardless of how many other offerings the people might make during the day, they were never, on any day, to omit the continual burnt offering. We read about this in Exodus 29:38-46.

David wrote in Psalm 5:3,

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord;
in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee,
and will look up.

In Psalm 55:17 we have more of David's words about the morning:

Evening, and morning, and at noon,
will I pray, and cry aloud:
and he shall hear my voice.

In Psalm 88:13 we have these words:

But unto thee have I cried, O Lord;
and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

"Prevent" means to be there to meet with Him. The Psalmist meant that he would be there to meet the Lord with his prayers.

Psalm 119:147, 148 reads like this:

I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried:
I hoped in thy word.
Mine eyes prevent the night watches,
that I might meditate in thy word.

Although we have noon and night mentioned also in these verses, yet there is an obvious reference in each case to the morning.

BUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MORNING HOUR COULD NOT BE ANY PLAINER THAN IS THE REFERENCE TO THE MORNING IN THE LIFE OF

OUR LORD. We have that in Mark 1:35, where we read,
 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day,
 he went out, and departed into a solitary place,
 and there prayed.

Our times with the Lord cannot, of course, be limited to any particular time in the day, but there is little doubt but that we need to be concerned about how our days begin.

Now let us look at our text. It is found in Psa. 143:8. I committed this verse to memory many years ago. And I read it again this past week. That is why I have chosen to speak on it tonight. I trust that when I have finished, you will feel that it has been the Lord's will for us to look into the meaning of this verse tonight. I do not know that I have ever used it as a text before. Maybe I have, but I do not remember doing it.

Psalm 143:8:

Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning;
 for in thee do I trust:
 cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
 for I lift up my soul unto thee.

Note, first of all,

I. THE CHARACTER OF PSALM 143.

It is a Psalm of trouble, of affliction, a Psalm in which the Psalmist is depressed and oppressed and exhausted and feeling deserted with the trials that were upon him. This Psalm is a prayer, an urgent prayer, a desperate prayer. David had sought for some cause within himself for his trouble, but had not found anything in particular. He had been thinking about the attributes of God, and about the ways of the Lord in the past-- apparently when the Lord had come to deliver His people in their times of great need. But at the time in which this prayer was made, things were as hopeless as ever. David realized that the Lord was his only hope.

But notice another thing:

II. ONE PRESENT BENEFIT ARISING OUT OF DAVID'S TRIALS.

We can see this from the fact that David was praying. Anything that brings us to our knees is good for us. When things go smoothly, we are inclined to neglect prayer. The Lord may withhold blessing and help so that we will be able to learn just how much we really do, or do not, trust the Lord. But the Psalm makes it very clear that David was praying.

We will not have the time tonight to consider all of the Psalm, but there is much for us to learn about prayer, and about THE MORNING TIME from what we have in verse 8. And so let us examine

III. THE TEXT (Psa. 143:8).

The first thing that is apparent is

A. David's dependence upon the Lord.

It is so easy for us to come to the Lord, to spend time reading the Word in preparation for prayer, and yet not recognize how dependent we are upon the Lord for what we will get out of it. Just because we get up a little earlier, read our Bibles, and pray, is no guarantee that we are going to profit from it.

David said, "Cause me ... cause me ..."

This is a part of the verbs to hear and to know. David was not trusting in himself to hear and to learn what he needed to hear and to know. There was a conscious recognition on his part that only the Lord could open his heart to hear and to learn.

This is good for us to say also. Saying it helps to impress it upon our hearts.

So we can say a second thing about this prayer.

B. David's desire for the Lord to minister to him.

Often when we go to the Lord in prayer the main thing that we are thinking about is what we are going to say to the Lord. David talked to be Lord. There is no doubt about that. But he was far more concerned about what the Lord was going to tell him than he was about what he was going to tell the Lord.

Sometimes, because life can often be very hurried, we do not get to pray the way we usually like to. If our time is limited, which is most important--for us to talk to the Lord, or for the Lord to talk to us? Should we just pray, and skip the reading of the Word for that time if we have time for only one, but not both?

I think that David would tell us that the most important thing is for us to hear from the Lord. That is what he seems to have been saying in this verse. It is very important for us to pray according

to the will of God. But if we do not know the Word, how can we know that we are praying the way the Lord wants us to pray?

And besides, it is in seeing the Lord that our hearts are set at rest regardless what the needs of the day might be.

But now let us look at the requests.

C. The two requests compared.

1. The first request had to do with the Lord.
2. The second request had to do with himself, and how he was going to live that day.

This is the right order: the Lord first, and then ourselves.

And this was David's request "in the morning" and, as Matthew Henry rightly said, for "every morning" (Vol. III, p. 768).

D. The first request.

Why was David concerned about the "lovingkindness" of the Lord? What is His "lovingkindness"?

It is His zeal to be kind, to show love, to take pity upon, to exercise compassion. Again quoting from Matthew Henry, he said, "Let my waking thoughts be of God's lovingkindness, that the sweet relish of that may abide upon my spirits all the day long" (Ibid.).

Look at what David wrote in Psalm 145.

And David concluded this request with the words, "For in thee do I trust." The Lord is moved by our faith. We need to learn not to question Him when things go wrong, but to be assured that, whatever the Lord is doing, His purpose is good and His love never changes.

E. The second request.

Being assured of the "lovingkindness" of the Lord, David each morning for every day sought to know how to walk that day so as to please the Lord and never to be guilty of bringing reproach upon His holy Name.

And this was no idle request. He concluded this

verse with, "For I lift up my soul unto thee."

In David's life his great desire was for the Lord, to be able to walk in fellowship with Him, to know Him better, to trust Him more completely. And that, it seems, was a primary reason for the trials which were upon him.

Concl: Does this help you with your MORNING TIME. Are we spending time with the Lord each day? Is the morning time as important to you as it was to the Lord, and to David, and as it has always been to the people of God who really wanted to trust Him and to live for Him?

There really is nothing in any of our lives that is of any greater importance, and I trust that concentrating on this one verse has helped us to see how important it should be with us.

Why not memorize it? And then pray that the Lord will make it your prayer as it was David's prayer. That is one reason it has been recorded for us by the Holy Spirit.