

Preaching the Psalms Series

(17)

Psalm 4

How to Get Relief from Adverse Circumstances,

Psalm 4:1-8

Psalm 4:1-8 (NASB)

¹ “Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

² O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? *How long* will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah.

³ But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him.

⁴ Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the LORD.

⁶ Many are saying, “Who will show us *any* good?” Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O LORD!

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine abound.

⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.”

(Psalm 4:1-8) Introduction: few know the name Eppie Lederer, but she achieved fame through writing an advice column for hundreds of North American newspapers using the pen name *Ann Landers*. Millions of people sought her advice on every imaginable subject. She is quoted as saying, “If I were asked to give what I consider the single most useful bit of advice for all humanity it would be this: Expect trouble as an inevitable part of life....”

Trouble never ceases in this earthly life. And no person ever understood or expressed this fact more succinctly than Job: “**Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil**” (**Job 14:1 NASB**).

Many of the psalms deal with various problems and adverse circumstances because we experience so much trouble throughout life. As a matter of fact, most of us have spent many restless nights crying out for God’s help. Thus the Holy Spirit has inspired numerous psalms of lament to help us when we struggle with difficult circumstances.

The author of **Psalm 4** is identified as David, but the specific occasion for its writing is not provided. Some commentators link it with **Psalm 3**, which would mean that it was written during Absalom’s rebellious attempt to overthrow his father. Similarities between the two psalms and the appropriateness of certain statements favor this opinion. *To the*

chief musician or director of music means it is intended for congregational use.

Neginoth indicates it is to be accompanied by stringed instruments.

As in the previous psalm, David finds peace through prayer and through trusting God to help him. After pouring his heart out to God, he is able to sleep in spite of the overwhelming trouble facing him. Like [Psalm 3](#), this psalm is a pattern to follow in trying times. This is, *How to Get Relief from Adverse Circumstances*, [Psalm 4:1-8](#).

1. Call upon the God of righteousness (v. 1).
2. Call upon the godly to repent (vv. 2-5).
3. Call upon God to be good—to let the light of His face shine upon you (vv. 6-8).

3. ([Psalm 4:6-8](#)) Call upon God to be good—to let the light of His face shine on you.

Psalm 4:6-8 (NASB)

⁶“Many are saying, “Who will show us *any* good?” Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O LORD!

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine abound.

⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.”

David again addressed the Lord directly. Notice that he did not entreat God for himself, but rather for the faithful followers who had placed their lives and livelihoods on the line to support and fight for him. They were discouraged, gripped by fear and despair.

Hear the godly king’s plea to the Lord: “Look upon us. Turn your face toward us. Let us see your light in the midst of our darkness. Give us a glimpse of your glory and loving favor. Let us see your face.” David’s plea is not to see God’s hand—he does not call upon God to act powerfully and decisively on their behalf. He beseeches the Lord to show them His face. He desires, more than anything, a manifestation of God’s presence among them.

a. Because many question if anyone can help them (show them any good) ([v. 6](#)).

Psalm 4:6-8 (NASB)

⁶“Many are saying, “Who will show us *any* good?” Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O LORD!”

David’s loyal supporters were sorely discouraged. Having left their homes to flee with their godly king into the wilderness, they were now cold, hungry, and scared. The majority of the Israelites, both leaders and followers, were supporting Absalom. David’s followers were in the minority and suffered every possible disadvantage in the fight. “The tense of the verb indicates that this discouraging statement was repeated again and again by the complainers, and the more they complained, the more others took up the strain.” David

called upon the Lord and shared the remarks that came from their downcast and uncertain hearts. Nothing would encourage them like a glimpse of God. The only thing that could lift their downtrodden hearts was for God to lift up His countenance upon them.

b. Because God alone can fill your heart with joy (v. 7).

Psalm 4:7 (NASB)

⁷“You have put gladness in my heart, More than when **their grain and new wine abound.”**

David asked the Lord to do for his faithful followers what He (God) had done for him. God had transformed David’s spirit from fear to faith, from darkness to light, from despondency to hope, from sorrow to joy. The Lord had given David victory in his spirit. His dark night radiated with the joy and glory that can only come from a manifestation of the presence of the Lord ([John 14:21](#)).

John 14:21 (NASB)

²¹“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

Nothing could compare to it, not even an abundance of grain and wine in the kingdom. Note the pronoun **their**. David does not refer to a personal abundance, but a season of abundance in his kingdom, a time when his people’s barns and tables were full. He desires a joy for his faithful, discouraged followers that surpasses any material prosperity or abundance they had ever known. He wants them to experience the unparalleled joy of the Lord’s countenance.

c. Because God alone can give you security and enable you to sleep in peace (v. 8).

Psalm 4:8 (NASB)

⁸“In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.”

The threatened king poured his heart out to the Lord. God’s unfathomable peace flooded his heart and mind ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)).

Philippians 4:6-7 (NASB)

⁶“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

He simply stated, “I am going to bed.” What would the troubled king do under the dark cover of night? Would he stand guard, armed and ready to defend himself? What would he do about the fight he was facing tomorrow? Would

he spend the night strategizing and laying out a plan for victory? No, he would lie down and sleep soundly, without terror of what the night could bring. He was encouraged by the Lord as he faced the battles of tomorrow. God and God alone was his source of safety, and that was enough. God was awake, so David could sleep—and so can we.

Thought 1. Always remember that we need God’s presence more than we need His power. We need Him more than the things He can do for us. All too often we seek God’s hand rather than His face. For this reason, God sometimes allows trouble in our lives to arouse us to seek Him. God is all-powerful; He can do “**exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think**” ([Ephesians 3:20](#)).

[Ephesians 3:20 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁰“**Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.**”

We undoubtedly need His help when we are caught in the midst of some trouble. But more than that, we need Him, the very light that only a glimpse of His face can bring. It is this revelation of Him that enables us to “count it all joy” when we fall into various trials and tribulations ([James 1:2](#)).

[James 1:2 \(NASB\)](#)

²“**Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.**”

[Hebrews 13:5-6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵“**Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,”**

⁶so that we confidently say, “**THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?**”

[1 John 1:3 \(NASB\)](#)

³“**What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.**”

[Genesis 28:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵“**Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.**”

[Numbers 6:24-26 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴“**The LORD bless you, and keep you;**

²⁵**The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you;**

²⁶**The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.**”

[1 Chronicles 16:10-11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁰“**Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.**

¹¹**Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.**”

Psalm 34:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.”

Psalm 80:3 (NASB)

³“O God, restore us And cause Your face to shine *upon us*, and we will be saved.”

Isaiah 43:2 (NASB)

²“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.”

Jeremiah 29:13 (NASB)

¹³“You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart.”