

Thinking Biblically, Part 2: Pep-Talks

By Dr. George Zemek

During these days of less scheduled social routines due to the restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 virus we believers have been provided more time to focus on personal spiritual growth. This is a primary goal for such divinely orchestrated testing periods.

One of the ways that the psalmists demonstrated God-honoring responses of faith to such trying circumstances was by having regular pep-talks to themselves. These were foundationed upon the biblical realities of the sufficiencies of the LORD-God in view of the insufficiencies of themselves. When severe tests came upon them they reminded themselves where to go for hope and help.

At this time of crisis when the world is in panic mode we can learn from the psalmists' examples. Therefore, by eves-dropping on their personal talks to themselves while they were under their severe circumstances, by faith we need to emulate their responses; for example, meditate upon Psalm 42: 5-6, 11 (NAS):

⁵ Why are you ^[a]in despair, O my soul?
And *why* have you become disturbed within me?
^[b] Hope in God, for I shall ^[c]again praise ^[d]Him
For the ^[e]help of His presence.
⁶ O my God, my soul is ^[f]in despair within me;
Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan
And the ^[g]peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar...

¹¹ Why are you ^[i]in despair, O my soul?
And why have you become disturbed within me?
^[j] Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him,
The ^[k]help of my countenance and my God.

Also, listen to the more dynamic rendering of the CSB:

⁵ Why, my soul, are you so dejected?
Why are you in such turmoil?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him,
my Savior and my God.
⁶ I ^[a] am deeply depressed;
therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan
and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar..

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you so dejected?
Why are you in such turmoil?

Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him,
my Savior and my God.

That the LORD had listened and responded favorably to such transparent self recognitions and requests as documented in passages like Psalm 116:7:

⁷ Return, O my soul, to your rest;
for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

Furthermore, after your soul's recognition of God's unwavering faithfulness throughout life's severest challenges, the time will come for you to personally direct your soul in worshipping Him. That's the major focus of Psalm 103: 1,2, 22 and Psalm 104: 1, 35 (CSB):

Psalm 103

The Forgiving God

¹ My soul, bless the LORD,
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

² My soul, bless the LORD,
and do not forget all his benefits.

²² Bless the LORD, all his works
in all the places where he rules.

My soul, bless the LORD!

Psalm 104

God the Creator

¹ My soul, bless the LORD!
LORD my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with majesty and splendor.

³⁵ May sinners vanish from the earth
and wicked people be no more.

My soul, bless the LORD!

Hallelujah!