



“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 2949

Psalms 116:3 "The cords of death encompassed me and the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow."

Our passage today was written by David. As dark and as sad as our verse looks, staying with the chapter shows us the deliverance God provided and the thankfulness within David's heart. Twice he would declare, "I am Your servant." But before we get to the deliverance, there are "the cords of death, the terrors of Sheol" around David. Those words would make a great promo for a haunted house.

Have you noticed how many times in David's life that death was next to him? Before Goliath, David told King Saul that he fought a lion and a bear. He took a lamb out of the mouth of the beast and seized it by its beard. That's close. That's too close for most of us. David could have died. And, then there were the times when Saul threw spears at David, once pinning him to a wall. That's close. Then there was the dowry of Philistine foreskins he had to get. That was close. Later in life, Absalom tried to kill him. That was close. David looked into the eyes of death more than once.

Most of us live fairly safe every day. For us, a near car wreck is about as close to a calamity that we ever see. Death doesn't seem to encompass us. And, the terrors of Sheol is something that most of us don't have a clue about. And, while it is good to be safe, secure and protected, maybe that has isolated us from needing God.

The end of this passage is most interesting: "I found distress and sorrow." Now, that's something we know. And, most don't go looking for these things, they seem to find us. And, when they do, it certainly changes our schedules, flips our moods around and hangs like a dark cloud above us. Distress and sorrow. I found them. Many could say that. Once you found them, what do you do with them? Typically, people wait for them to leave. Distress and sorrow can take a long time to leave. Some try to hide these things by doing fun things, taking a vacation, or finding relief in a bottle.

David helps us. David looked into the face of death more than once. His words are worth paying attention to.

(OVER)

First, David prayed. The following verse says, "Then I called upon the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, I beseech You, save my life!' And, we know God did. There are times that only the Lord can help you. No one else can. No one else understands. No one else is capable. Don't wait until you have exhausted every option before you pray. Pray first. Pray hard. Lay the problems before the Lord. Let the Lord know that Sheol is terrifying you. Tell the Lord of your distress and sorrow. Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Second, David was thankful. He was saved by God. "The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me" (v. 6). And, "For you have rescued my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling" (v. 8). God was there. God delivered. David recognized that it wasn't an accident that he was saved. He understood that the power wasn't within himself. It was the Lord who rescued him. He not only understood that, but he thanked the Lord because of that. David prayed and God answered.

Third, David honored God by following Him. David was in a mess. God pulled him out of that. David didn't go on his way until the next time he needed God. Too often that's how some act. Not David. Stay in this chapter and notice the expressions that follow.

- I shall walk before the Lord (v. 9)
- I will call upon the name of the Lord (v. 13)
- I will pay my vows (v. 14)
- I am Your servant (v. 16)
- I will praise the Lord (v. 19)

Having been rescued by God, David felt compelled to honor God and stay with God.

Three simple things: prayer, thankfulness and honoring God. When distress finds you and sorrow follows you, this is what you need to do. Don't allow distress and sorrow to ruin your relationship with God. Don't allow those ugly twins to keep you from praising God and worshipping Him.

As one looks at this Psalm, it sure appears that sorrow and distress were not only defeated, but they did not accomplish what they wanted. Rather than keeping David from God, they pushed David closer to the Lord. And, that's just what hard times and bad news will do. Satan thought those things would lead Job to cursing God. Instead, Job worshipped the Lord. Distress and sorrow will either cripple your faith or it will propel it to soar to new heights. The choice is up to us. The decision is based upon our actions. Are we reaching out to God or ignoring Him? Do we allow distress and sorrow to keep us home or do we get out to worship? Are we bitter or better because of them?

I found distress and sorrow...and, so will you. What will you do when you find them?

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
