

They cry unto the Lord in their trouble

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[0 : 0 0] we may now turn we shall turn to words in the chapter we read in the book of Psalms in chapter 107 and verse 28 the 107th Psalm and verse 28. Then they cry unto the Lord in their troubles and he bringeth them help of their distresses we shall try to follow the thought set before us in these words as simply and in as practically away as we can this evening taking particular notice first of all of the path that men from the psalmist here speaks were no stranger to what he calls trouble they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and the other term he uses in the plural he bringeth them up to their distresses the first one is singular the second is plural as if he wanted us to understand that their lives were in a sense characterized by this sort of experience and as if he also wanted us to understand that they were not singular or few in number but that there were many their distresses and then there is secondly in the verse the answer to the question what did those people do in their trouble and in their distresses and the answer is in very few words and very simply understood he tells us that they cry unto the Lord and thirdly thirdly we are given an answer to the question of what was the result to those people of their crying in the midst of their trouble and distress and again the answer is in very few words he tells us that the Lord bringeth them out of their distresses and he bringeth them out of their distresses in regard to this condition no one who has read this psalm needs telling that from the beginning we have very graphic descriptions of the condition that is

crystallized for us in the few words of this version first of all we have a verbal picture of people who are depicted as scattered as wandering in a wilderness and who are suffering hunger and thirst even to the point of fainting they wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way they found no city to dwell in hungry and thirsty that all fainted in them and then we find the psalmist following that description with one of men who find themselves as if in a prison house sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death and bound he tells us as if in chains chains made of affliction being bound he says in affliction and iron and suffering in such a way he tells us that their heart was brought down with labor and when they fell there was no one to help and then he goes on to tell us about a foolish people who were afflicted to the point where they had no taste for food they poured all manner of meat and naturally came near to the point of death and then firstly we have a picture of mariners finding themselves in the very midst of a storm of sea a storm that had lifted up the waves so that they were buffeted as we read in verse 26 they mount up to the heaven they go down again to the depths their soul is melted because of trouble they reel to and throw and stagger like a drunken man under other wit's end men these are the various pictures verbal pictures that the psalmist gives us here under the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit of men in trouble and in distress and you will see how after each dramatic description there is this testimony made concerning them first of all in verse 6 then they cried that is those who were scattered and wandering hungry and fainting they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them out of their distresses in verse 13 after the description of men who were as prisoners in darkness and in chains falling with no one near to rescue them then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses and in verse 20 after the description of those who had poured all manner of meat and who had drawn near unto the gates of death then they cried unto the

Lord in their trouble and he saveth them out of their distresses in verse 28 at the end of the picture of the buffeted mariners in the midst of the storm we are told also of them that they cried to and to the Lord in their troubles and he bringeth them out of their distresses and we have a result following after each account of their desperate crying unto the Lord he led them first first of all by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation Warren theirs those ones out of darkness and the shadow of death and break their bounds insunder in verse 20 he sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction and in verses 29 and 30 He maketh a storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still then are they glad because they be quiet so he bringeth them unto their desired haven

These are the accounts the psalmist has given us of the experiences of troubled souls in these very dramatic scenes that he so powerfully depicts for us from nature and we are to relate this to our own particular day and generation and although you as an individual and I too may at times be free to a very great degree from deep trouble none of us can leave this life without experiencing our own share of trouble and of distress Troubles and distresses now as ever are many

[10 : 40] Oh there is a great weight in the fact that the plural is used by the psalmist here as well as the singular trouble and distresses Troubles in this life are many and they are varied They are many and they are varied in their nature There are so many different kinds which men are subject They are many and varied in their degree The degree of their weight their intensity They are many and varied as to the stages of life at which they are experienced There is no stage in life There is no stage in life when many are not subjected to different kinds of trouble and distresses

They are many and varied as to their interrelatedness to other associated afflictions that can accompany one main affliction They are seldom come singly They are many and varied in the many complications that can be set a patient's life as a result of one kind of affliction coming into its experience and they are many and varied as to their effects on different individuals Ministers of the gospel They learn the truth the down-to-earth truth concerning the nature of man's life as troubled and afflicted week after week And every one of us Not just ministers but I mention ministers because by the very nature of their work they are so related to people's lives to every side of people's lives and perhaps as far as this life experience is concerned especially associated with people in their affliction

And we see that there are many bodily afflictions that make life troubled troubled for many every day of the year bodily infirmity Some suffering from deformity Some suffering great pain Some suffering from weakness Some suffering from the effects of stroke Some suffering from the effects of heart attack Some suffering from some suffering from some suffering from some suffering from afflictions that prove to be terminal illnesses such as cancer which is becoming so common in our own days Some suffering in youth Some in childhood even in youth Some at the prime of life Some in old age to the point where many in our days and I had intended to take out with me this evening a book from which to quote in which we have which we could find expressed the views of some concerning the best way in which to deal with those who in old age are suffering deeply and over prolonged periods that the answer is what we call euthanasia that is the merciful killing as they put it ending of the lives of those suffering people

Now that itself which is accepted by many to be a means of deliverance from trouble and distress is a thing in itself that causes much trouble and that ought to cause deep distress to Christian people that in a so-called Christian culture or nation men should advocate such a non-Christian an unbiblical an ungodly wicked solution to the sufferings of their fellow men but many hold this view in our day and I say that instead of it being a means of reducing the trouble in people's lives and the distress caused by illness in the experience of elderly people the so-called solution ought itself to be felt as a cause of trouble and distress to our hearts and minds and there is no harm in my mentioning cases in my own recent experience everyone here knows cases within our own community at this very time where people are suddenly struck down when as far as their own feelings are concerned they are as sound in health as ever they were and trouble comes almost without any warning whatsoever and they are brought low as we read in the psalm and they find themselves in distress and a few days ago

I had occasion to speak to one who told me she was she was a middle-aged lady that when she had at a time not long ago when she had felt as sound in health as she had ever been in her life she was suddenly struck with this disease which almost overnight left her without any strength in any of her limbs so that she is helpless left upon the care of others to help her as long as she lives as far as is known to her because there is no one known to her who can offer her any cure or help in her condition now that is that must be a cause of distress to the faint heart of any man or woman to have to face life in the knowledge however long or short it might be and it might be very many years when they have to be dependent wholly upon the kindness and the nursing and care of other people and we are living in a world where people have trouble and distress domestically maybe through the illness of a family member we know all of us that there are many burdened heavily because of the sufferings of members of their families which require self-denial makes them to have a burden of caring and nursing daily and nightly there is no knowing what pain people have to endure because of the sufferings of others

[18 : 42] I have often over the years when thinking of trouble and distress recalled a day when travelling on a plane I was asked to sit beside a young mother a person whom I had never seen or heard of in my life and after speaking to her for a while I mentioned the matter of salvation to her and as soon as I had made that reference I felt that she suddenly tensed and I wondered what kind of a response I was going to get well what she did was to raise the arm of the baby that she had on her knee and she said to me in an angry tone voice how she said do you expect me to believe in

God in a God or to trust in a God who does that sort of thing and when I looked at the hand of the child it had a stump just a little stump in the place of the three middle fingers of the hand and it didn't take a great deal of thought to understand and to sympathize with a mother who was faced with that kind of malformation in the kiss of a recently born child that's only an example of the kind of afflictions that come to people for which they are not prepared they come unexpectedly from such as which they do not look for distress or trouble but to which they look for joy and pleasure and satisfaction and there are so many other kinds of experiences in life experiences that people call acts of

God there are the experiences of widows left alone in the world and over the past 24 years if anything has been indelibly impressed upon my mind it is this that there is one kind of experience that no one can enter into with very much understanding the experience of widowhood it is beyond the understanding the real understanding of anyone surely except those who have had to endure it God it is who ordained marriage and made the marriage union a union that endures as long as life endures until death do them part therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and be joined unto his wife he shall cleave unto his wife and they too shall be one flesh and when that union is broken severed once and forever the natural union well it is bound to be a new experience a kind of experience that no one can have had before except those who have already endured it there are circumstances that people call acts of

God with which we are becoming more and more familiar destruction of lives and of homes by fires by storms by earthquakes suffering caused by famine by war and terrorism of which we hear week after week that afflict the lives of men throughout this world unemployment bringing a sense of uselessness inability to achieve anything in life I was reading just two days ago the admission made by very talented young men and women students who had not only tried to advance in life by entering higher education but who had achieved what they set out to achieve and then came up looking for suitable careers for which they were not qualified and failing for years to get any satisfaction now there was a cause for trouble and for distress in the hearts and minds of young people there are the effects in families of what are now universally recognized as curses in society curses that have spawned many others

I refer to alcoholism and to drugs leading people into trouble and into distress causing crushing sorrow in the hearts and lives of those connected with them as a whole because of these evils things a disease like AIDS exposes and focalizes the moral decadence of the nations in our time and such a fearful manifestation of evil comes with it comes profound sorrow however much pity is evoked in Christians they must not but feel distressed that so many live such debased repulsive lives and they can but feel distressed at the realization surely that much of what appears to be respectable living is only a kind of shroud under which lies a rotting corpse that might sound strong language but they are words that come easily and freely to one to describe the kind of reaction one feels against the exposure of immorality in our generation and then there are world events that cause trouble and distress in the hearts and minds of many

[26 : 50] I read on one occasion someone who said of America of the United States of America during the Vietnam War that the country was fraught with a disillusioned spirit of despondency over the atrocities and in seeing needless suffering and imprisonment of prisoners of war and that a feeling of well-being filled the country at the end of these hostilities and after the return of military men to their own families it was said that the contrast in the national mood was perceptible in a matter of weeks but then the mention of war reminds us of the threat of mass destruction hanging over mankind reminds us of the inability of men to live in peace in so many parts of the world reminds us of the turbulence that characterizes so many areas the agitation the heartbreak and torment endured by so many and it all daily adds to the common stock of trouble and of distress in the experience of men and along with all these

Christians surely are sad over the extent to which so much of Christendom has apostatized over the denial of so many fundamentals of the faith in the visible church and the readiness of so many men to compromise these truths with which God has been pleased to save his people and to edify his church in every generation surely we feel some measure of distress in the spread of the false faiths that are so common in the world and the spiritual blindness in the world that has resulted even in many consigning themselves to eternal woe unless they are given the grace of repentance by devoting themselves to the worship of Satan surely that ought to distress right thinking people in our country and in our generation and in addition to these surely there is a measure of trouble in a

Christian's life due to a sense of his own inner corruption of his own inability to attain to the moral standards inwardly and outwardly that he loves because of the temptations of Satan who at birthed as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour for our inability to serve God as faithfully as diligently as we would wish to do and then there is depression I was reading recently about the trouble known as depression one writer says that and he wrote just several years ago an American who maintained that in his own nation 125,000 people were hospitalized with depression that another 200,000 were being treated by psychiatrists in addition to those who were in hospitals that there were unrecognized cases numbering four to eight million annually and many researchers we are told are of the opinion that depression causes more suffering than any other disease affecting mankind it is universal it is no respecter of passion it is not caused by circumstances possessions or position in life we are told all are susceptible to it no profession is exempt if anything people with the highest

IQ are more vulnerable to it than others people try to offer cures for mental depression and it is not a subject to be laughed at but one is at times almost compelled to smile at the disagreements among the experts medical men psychiatrists as to what is the solution to mental depression some would recommend this others would recommend that others would disagree with them with both parties and claim that a third cure is the only one that ought to be tried trouble and distresses and we are

I think it is proper to say living in a troubled and in a distressful generation what did these people do well we are told that they cried unto the Lord they cried unto the Lord showing us surely that they had discovered that in themselves there was no help and you know how we are so naturally inclined to self dependence to resorting to our own resources when we find ourselves with any trouble or in any distress that surely it is we who have to discover for ourselves and in ourselves within the range of our own capabilities some means of rescuing ourselves of deliverance out of our trouble but obviously those described by the psalmist had been made to conclude that in themselves they were without hope they were without hope that is the first thing and you and I must examine ourselves it matters not whether one is young middle aged or elderly we have to examine ourselves in the light of that one that first observation when you are in trouble when you are feeling distressed for whatever reason do you still persist in looking to yourself is your own understanding your own wisdom your own ability to discover solutions to your trouble is that your confidence are you living on the basis of self assurance and self confidence some people will say nobody is as foolish as that well let me tell you that some people consider it an abomination to suggest for anyone who speaks publicly to suggest to his audience that they ought not to have confidence in themselves that kind of thinking is abomination to many in our generation if you are going to deal justly and fairly if you are going to offer any help to your fellow men build up their confidence make them to have some self assurance make them to realize who they are to realize that they have talents and powers divinely given or if you do not believe in

[36 : 44] the existence of the divine being that you have evolved to a stage of development that makes you well able if you only use your talents are right and apply your wisdom and understanding are right to solve all of your problems and if you do not have a clear solution to them be a stoic a man who is strong enough to accept anything that comes your way without murmuring or resistance those people didn't find their self assurance or confidence sufficient and again it is clear surely that they were compelled if they had not otherwise been willing they were compelled to come to the conclusion that they must not look to any of their fellow men or women either and you and

I also have that side to our nature concerning some at least of our fellow men or women if all others should fail us so and so is still there on whom I can depend as my strength and my comfort as long as I live well obviously the people described here by the psalmist had learned that none of their fellows not one of their fellows or all of them put together were resourceful enough to deal with their situation of course there were the wise people who had been made wise people who had discovered that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and they realize in every place and in every generation that there is no one with the power there is no one with the wisdom not in all creation is there anyone with these combined with the love and the compassion that can extend to all situations of life providential and spiritual into which we may be led by

God in his mysterious dealings with us but there is one left out with the number of the creatures beyond the creation the creator himself the lord of heaven and earth he it is who is worthy to be trusted and again he is not like the gods of the heathen like the god Baal worshipped in the days of Elijah who could neither hear nor answer the crying of those who appealed to him no he is a living god these people discovered they remembered that there was one who had an open ear to the cry of the troubled and of the distressed and who had power to more than answer their crying to him who had wisdom by which he knew how to give away of his escape as surely as by his wisdom he had brought together all the circumstances that created the distress in their hearts and minds there were people who knew that it is

God who is in control of all things that there is no agency in all creation that can resist him so that no matter what the depth of your trouble is how painful your distress might be to you how baffling your circumstances in the midst of your pain and trouble there is still one one only no doubt but there is still one who is able and who is willing to resolve your difficulty now in dealing with the question what did he do he bring them out of their distresses I shall refer to several examples of the people of

God who knew for themselves the readiness as well as the power of God to bring them deliverance I was reminded of Moses of whom we are told in the book of Numbers who was so burdened with the people entrusted by God to his care that he complained to God when he asked should I have flesh to give they weep unto me saying give us flesh that we may eat I am not able to bear them alone and he said to God in the midst of his trial out of the depths of his distress if thou deal thus with me he said to God kill me

[42 : 58] I pray thee out of hand if I have found favor in thy sight and let me not see my own wretchedness did you ever know that Moses had given an utterance to such word in the presence of his God well Moses knew what trouble was he knew what it was to be distressed but he also knew there was one resource to which he could come with hope and you remember how the Lord commanded him to gather 70 of the elders how the Lord found the solution that was so fitted to the need of the occasion that caused Moses pain and he caused his own spirit that was already on

Moses to come upon them and he said they shall bear the burden and at that time also worried that miraculously quails came and fell by the camp of Israel an answer to the murmuring of the people which had directly resulted in grief and sorrow in the soul of Moses that compelled him to say to the Lord it is almost unbelievable if I have found favor in thy sight kill me I pray thee out of hand and let me not see my wretchedness you remember how Elijah set off into the wilderness one day and sat under a juniper tree he too requested

Elijah of all men requested God that he might die it is enough oh Lord take away my life for I am not better than my father but then an angel came we are told and touched him and placed a cake and a cruise of water by his side and he ate and drank and he laid down again we are told but a second time the angel came and touched him and said arise eat and he went in the strength of that meat forty days and nights Job declared my soul is weary of my life I will leave my complaint upon myself I will speak in the bitterness of my soul I will say unto God do not condemn me show me where thou contendest with me but we all know how the dealings of

God with Job ended so that he was exalted in God's good providence and blessed in such a way that he had visible proof before his own eyes and before the eyes of all his friends false comforters and others that there is a living God who has a near open to the cry of his people you remember how there were two men in a despondent dejected perhaps near to a despairing mood journeying on the first Lord's day of the new dispensation from Jerusalem to Emeas one joined them and asked them what manner of communications are these that he have one to another as he walk and are sad the risen

Lord asked them they did not know their questioner at the end of their journey you remember how they pled with him because it was toward evening and the day far spent that he would join them and as he sat at meet with them he took bread and blessed it and break it and gave to them and their eyes were opened and they knew him later they said one to another did not our hearts burn within us when he spake to us in the way and opened for us the scriptures I will say of the Lord he is my refuge and my fortress my God in him will I trust surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noise and pestilence he shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust his truth shall be thy shield and buckler that is the promise words that we sang from the 91st psalm these

[48 : 58] I should say are promises spoken by the Lord promises that cannot fail promises that shall be proven true and faithful by by all who out of their trouble and their distresses cry unto the Lord may he bless these thoughts to us let us pray enable each one of us Lord now to call upon thee for there is salvation according to thy holy word for all who call upon thee we thank thee that thine ear is open to the prayers of the needy perishing sinners such as we are afflicted by all the many and varied troubles that we encounter on life's journey we bless thy name that thou art the

God of all grace and comfort and that there is no God like unto thee who pardoneth iniquity we bless thee for thy compassion towards sinners unworthy even to be spared and mercy's ground but thou dost bestow upon all who come to thee out of thine own fullness we thank thee that everlasting glory shall be the portion of thy people who have come out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb pardon all our sins heal our backslidings and love us freely and the glory shall be thine forever Amen Amen