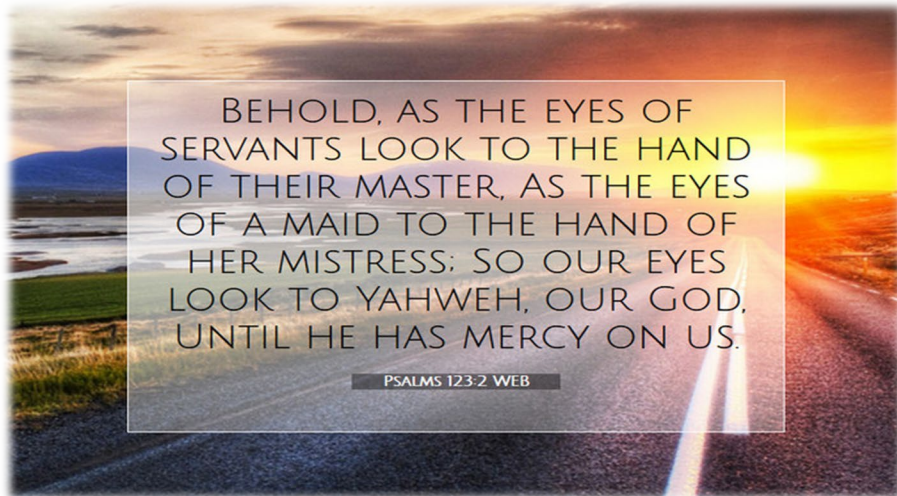


Like A Slave to His Master

Psalm 123

“God is good, all the time!” But if life doesn’t turn out the way I plan, or I don’t get what I pray for, will I still trust God? As Jewish pilgrims trekked to Jerusalem they sharpened their focus on God. Their concept of themselves in relation to God is one we need to take to heart.

- A walk of faith, preparing for worship
- In the presence of mine enemies (3-4)
 - *The sting of contempt and ridicule*
 - *How this can weaken our worship*
- Slaves looking to God for mercy (1-2)
 - *Who we are: Slaves and ‘maids’*
 - *Who God is: Our merciful Master*



1. Psalm 123 is one of fifteen psalms which constitute the part of the Hebrew Psalter (“Hymnal”) known as “Songs of Ascents.” Jewish pilgrims trekking to Jerusalem for annual feasts sang these songs on the way. To ‘walk along with them,’ read Psalms 120-134 over the next week (they’re all pretty short). Imagine you are traveling through unfamiliar country on your way to a worship celebration at the temple. What themes echo in these psalms?
2. The specific context of Psalm 123 is described in verses 3-4. Twice the psalmist notes the “contempt” (the Hebrew word here means to be “made a laughingstock”) they endured. They were treated with ‘scorn’ or ‘ridicule’ (mocked and derided). They had had their fill of it! This kind of spiritual attack can be overt – we can be publicly shamed, but it is often covert: Biblical and spiritual truths we hold dear are disparaged in the media, scoffed at in schools, lampooned in movies and on TV, and undermined by politicians. Have you felt the ‘sting’ of this kind of contempt and scorn? It is in these times that our experience of closeness and intimacy with God can be shaken. Have you ever found yourself pulled away from God because of the incessant ridicule of the world?
3. Sometimes the first step in overcoming the depressing weight of sin is just ‘looking up.’ The psalmist begins by volitionally lifting his eyes to God, “Who is enthroned in the heavens!” What would this simple ‘change in perspective’ do for a struggling saint? What would it remind them of? What does it remind you of?
4. Perspective is a powerful thing. How we view God ultimately will determine how often and how fervently we reach out to Him. How does the psalmist characterize us – God’s people – in relation to God? What does a master ‘owe’ to a slave, or a mistress to a maid? What does a slave do for his master? Unlike earthly masters, God is loving and merciful. What blessings have we received from the Lord? Can you number them? In light of this, how completely are you willing to trust Him with your life? Your future?