

PSALMS 4

Evening Prayer of Trust in God

INTRODUCTION.

A. For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

THE TEXT.

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.

COMMENTS.

- A. [v1,2] “O God of my righteousness!” Albert Barnes understood this to mean that God is righteous, but Matthew Henry suggests that “God himself is not merely a righteous God in his own right but He is also the author of my righteous disposition.” He is even the source of our conscience and moral sense.
- B. “You have relieved... have mercy... and hear...” He bases his requests on past blessings. “O you sons of men” may indicate that this disposition does not come from their creator, but from degenerate man who has fallen and no longer even appreciate goodness. The KJV has “leasing” rather than “falsehood” and that is an old English word for “a lie.”
- C. [v3,4] “The Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly.” This pictures one of the greatest blessings that we can have. God separates for Himself, His very own people to nurture and cherish for His own children. He will hear them pray, and will bless and protect them.
- D. “Be angry, and do not sin” is quoted by Paul in Eph. 4:26 “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,” (NKJ). “Meditate within your heart on your bed” gives the basis for calling this psalm, “Evening Prayer of Trust in God.”
- E. “Meditate within your heart” is a good habit before going to sleep and before getting up.
- F. [v5,6] “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness” would be doing what God has commanded. Our sacrifices are different from theirs, but both show an active, obedient faith.
- G. “Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.” The literal Heb. word for “countenance” here is “face.” Moffatt renders it, “Smile upon us.”
- H. [v7,8] He pictures God putting “gladness in my heart” as greater than a bountiful harvest or material blessings. It takes more than food and drink to nourish the soul. We must “seek first the kingdom and His righteousness” that “our joy may be full.”
- I. “To lie down in peace and sleep” is a beautiful picture of the contentment of a confident and grateful child of God.