Light and Life Class

Psalm 123: “Have Mercy upon Us, O Lord”

May 26, 2019

Goal of the lesson: that you and I might learn the lesson of this psalm to be quicker and more consistent in seeking “sovereign favor” from the hand of God with a completely humble and dependent attitude

Outline

1. context

* Psalm 121: outside the walls of Jerusalem looking up
* Psalm 122: inside Jerusalem looking around in wonder
* Psalm 123: in the Temple area bringing prayer before the Lord

2. the psalmist’s situation (vv. 3b-4)

* suffering “contempt” and “scorn” from “those who are at ease”
* from foreigners or fellow Israelites? Cf. example of Jesus
* contempt for being a true follower of the Lord
* the surprise the world does not love us (explanation in John 15:18)

3. the psalmist’s posture (vv. 1-2)

* eyes lifted up to God (cf. 121:1-2)
* his description of God: “O you who are enthroned in the heavens!”
  + all powerful, all sovereign
  + but for how God exercises that sovereignty, see Exodus 33:18-19; 34:6-7
  + an example of the operation of this principle in Joel 2:12-13
  + and he is our Heavenly Father (Matthew 7:7-11)
* the metaphor comparing the psalmist and his fellow believers to servants
  + dependent humility and humble dependence
  + Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, p. 60
  + How the Apostle Paul learned the lesson of humble dependence in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

4. the psalmist’s prayer (v. 3a)

* the verb *chanan*: “Have mercy” or “Be gracious” (“Show favor”)
* the *Kyriē* of the Mass
* seeking the Lord for sovereign favor
  + and leaving the form of the favor in his hands
  + and glorifying him in the asking and receiving
  + and watching the wisdom of his ways in our lives