Light and Life Class

June 23, 2019

Psalm 126: “Like Those Who Dream”

A. Goal: I think the Lord wants to use Psalm 126 in our lives, by his grace, to show us how he builds faith and hope in us to help us face times of challenge, difficulty, and/or suffering.

B. Setting: The Israelite pilgrims were facing a time of difficulty, challenge, and/or suffering serious enough that they felt the need to cry out in prayer: “Restore our fortunes, O LORD” (v. 4).

C. How does God mean for Psalm 126 to teach us to face—by his grace—situations of difficulty, challenge, and/or suffering?

1. vv. 1-3: **God wants us to exercise our spiritual memory of his faithful acts in the past when we face present challenges, difficulties, and/or suffering.**

a. Three other passages on the power of spiritual memory of the great acts of God.

i. OT: Joshua 3:21-24; Psalm 44:1-3, 23-26

ii. NT: Matthew 16:5-12

b. Note the pilgrims also remember the extraordinary joy that accompanied the past act of God’s deliverance.

i. Eugene Peterson on where and where not to seek joy in this life

ii. A similar joy in revival, from Jonathan Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God” (1737)

c. If these OT saints could recall past acts of God restoring them (to what event do the people refer?), then how much more do we who are NT saints have reason to remember?

d. What are some ways we can become better at remembering God’s great works in our lives and in the lives of other Christians?

e. Note in v. 2b that the past acts by God of restoring his people also acted as a witness to the unbelieving nations.

f. The people in v. 3 also experience gladness in the present for God’s act of restoration in the past.

2. v. 4: **God wants us to pray for his restoration when we face situations of difficulty, challenge, and/or suffering.**

a. Prayer in such times greatly glorifies God.

b. Note how the words of the prayer in v. 3 correspond to God’s past act of faithfulness, as told of in v. 1. The psalmist prays on the basis of God’s immutability (does not change).

3. vv. 5-6: **God wants us to experience the renewal of hope and faith for his work of restoration that comes from spiritual memory and prayer during times of difficult, challenge, and/or suffering.**

a. Note the lesson on these verses from John Piper, “Talking to Your Tears”

b. Tim Keller prayer based on vv. 5-6, from *The Songs of Jesus*: “Lord, I am praying for my church, my country, and several people that I love—that they will be spiritually empowered and renewed. Help me to rest in your timing, knowing that my tears in prayer are like seeds that will come to fruition in the lives of those I care for. Amen.”