

The Past Gives Us Confidence for the Future

Psalm 21

O Lord, in your strength the king rejoices,
and in your salvation how greatly he exults!
You have given him his heart's desire
and have not withheld the request of his lips. *Selah*
For you meet him with rich blessings;
you set a crown of fine gold upon his head.
He asked life of you; you gave it to him,
length of days forever and ever.
His glory is great through your salvation;
splendor and majesty you bestow on him.
For you make him most blessed forever;
you make him glad with the joy of your presence.
For the king trusts in the Lord,
and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved.

Your hand will find out all your enemies;
your right hand will find out those who hate you.
You will make them as a blazing oven
when you appear.
The Lord will swallow them up in his wrath,
and fire will consume them.
You will destroy their descendants from the earth,
and their offspring from among the children of man.
Though they plan evil against you,
though they devise mischief, they will not succeed.
For you will put them to flight;
you will aim at their faces with your bows.

Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength!
We will sing and praise your power.

The past gives us confidence for the future.

In the first half of this psalm, we hear of what God has done for the king in the past. Great things! Many blessings!

The second half of this psalm, however, speaks of the future; what God will do, but hasn't yet. Maybe there is a threat to the king or the country. Maybe a secret uprising or the rumor of one. What is the king to do in the face of such threats? In the face of such danger?

Maybe you have the same questions or concerns. You are facing troubles. Your future is uncertain. You have heard rumors of bad news coming. What shall you do? What will God do?

Well, the past gives us confidence for the future.

In the psalm, the king knows of the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord in his past. God has blessed him abundantly! Should he doubt that God will continue to do so? No! God will fulfill all His promises. And so even in the threat of danger, there can be confidence in what the Lord will do. For what He has promised, that He will do.

And so too for you. *We look to the past to give us confidence for the future.* We look to the Old Testament and how God provided for His people and cared for His people. Even when they rebelled and were unfaithful to Him, He remained faithful to them. Yes, He disciplined them, but always in love. And when He did, He restored them as He said He would. The people living through that didn't always realize what God was doing, but we have the advantage of hindsight - and we can see how God was keeping His promises.

And then we also look to the New Testament and see how God provided for His people and cared for His people by sending His Son - just as He promised. And His Son, Jesus, did exactly what was promised - He went to the cross. The horrible and gruesome cross, to bear the sin of the world - your

sin and my sin - to save us. *We look to the past to give us confidence for the future.*

And then we also look to the apostles and how God used them to spread His Word and establish His Church - just as He promised. It didn't always go as they planned or probably even hoped, but God does things His way. And His way is always better than our way. But what He says He will do, He does. You can count on that.

So when facing an uncertain future, when facing problems or challenges in your life, *look to the past to receive confidence for the future.* See how God has always kept His promises, and know that He will surely keep His promises to you. Maybe not as you expect or want, but He will. And maybe, just maybe, it will be better than you think. Maybe one day in hindsight you will be able to see it that way. But for now, with the psalmist, we sing and praise the power of the Lord. The power of His promises. The power of His cross. The power of his faithfulness. The power He will use *for you.*

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your great faithfulness to us. While our words are uncertain and unreliable, Your words are true and Your promises certain. Help us to trust in You, that all that You have said You will do. Strengthen our faith as we look to the past and know that as You did for Your people then, so You will do for us now. Especially give me confidence in my Saviour, Your Son, Jesus Christ, to know that my sins are forgiven, I am Your child, and the future You have promised me in heaven is certain. So let me fear no thing in this world and life, for You are mine and I am Yours. Amen.