

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

CXLI: A Godly Longing For Holiness

(Psalm 141:1-10)

I. Introduction

- A. 1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV states, "But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"
- B. Holiness is simply defined as separation from sin, and David in Psalm 141:1-10 yearned for it because of the long-term effects of sin versus the long-term effects of righteousness. We thus view this psalm for our insight:

II. A Godly Longing For Holiness, Psalm 141:1-10.

- A. The introductory notes are part of the first verse in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1097), so the numbering system of the Hebrew text is the same as that of the English Bible.
- B. We then translate Psalm 141:1-10 as follows:
 - 1. "A Psalm of David. O Jahweh, I call to You; come to me. Hear my voice when I call to You," Psa. 141:1.
 - 2. "May my prayer be set before You like (acceptable) incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the (acceptable) evening sacrifice," Psalm 141:2.
 - 3. "Set a guard over my mouth, O Jahweh; keep watch over the door of my lips," Psalm 141:3.
 - 4. "Let not my heart be drawn to any evil thing, to take part in wicked deeds with noblemen who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies," Psalm 141:4.
 - 5. "Let a righteous man strike me -- it is a kindness; let him rebuke me -- it is oil on my head (as an honored person), my head will not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against the deeds of evildoers," v. 5.
 - 6. "Their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs, and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken," Psalm 141:6.
 - 7. "(They will say) 'As one plows and breaks up the earth, so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave,'" Psalm 141:7.
 - 8. "But my eyes are fixed on You, O Jahweh Adonai; in You I take refuge -- do not give my life principle over to death," Psalm 141:8.
 - 9. "Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers," Psalm 141:9.
 - 10. "Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I myself (emph. pron.) pass by in safety," Psalm 141:10.
- C. We note significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. H. C. Leupold (Exposition of the Psalms, 1974, p. 957) claims this psalm is a "petition to be kept from rash words and wicked deeds . . . motivated by a look into the future which serves both as a deterrent and as a wholesome encouragement. The sad overthrow of the wicked is briefly recalled, only to be contrasted with the hopeful outlook of the righteous."
 - 2. In other words, in **view** of the long-term consequences of sin versus the long-term consequences of righteousness, David yearned to be **separate from** sin, to be **holy** in heart, word (v. 3-4a) and deed (v. 4b).
 - 3. To that end, David also desired to avoid fellowship with evil noblemen who could influence him to sin, the phrase "let me not eat of their delicacies" referring to fellowship via a meal of appealing delicacies that are eaten in the presence of wicked noblemen, v. 4c. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 141:3-4)
 - 4. David's expressed desire to be corrected and rebuked by the righteous (v. 5a) immediately following his expressed desire to part fellowship with the wicked and their evil deeds (v. 4b) indicates that the path to a truly holy and thus a truly blessed life involves submission to Scripture even if it involves painful costs.
 - 5. In summary, then, the path to long-term blessing runs through one's separating from sin in word, heart and deed regardless of the pain and cost. Since Scripture defines what is righteous, the path to long-term blessing runs through holiness which in turn runs through obedience to Scripture and the Biblical corrections and the rebukes of the godly.

Lesson: David yearned for God's holiness, His separation from sin, in word, in heart, in deed and in fellowship with others, for the long-term blessings of righteousness are far more desirable than the long-term destructions of sin. To that end, David eagerly even yielded to the Biblical corrections and rebukes of the godly.

Application: The long-term, contrasting effects of sin and righteousness make separating from sin in word, heart, deed and fellowship worthwhile regardless of the pain and cost. May we then long to be holy in every way.