

SBC – June 8, 2025
Psalm 71:1-13 (NKJV)
“God’s Help in Old Age”

Many commentators believe this is a Psalm that David wrote in his latter years – perhaps while fleeing for his life from Absalom. Certainly, there are echoes of David’s writings throughout the Psalm, but we cannot be certain of who the author is because it is left anonymous. If you have to have an author, David should be your first guess, but we can’t be certain.

This Psalm contains many references or allusions to other Psalms.

Slide # 1

- *Psalm 71:1-3 is quoted almost exactly from Psalm 31:1-3.*
 - *The thoughts of Psalm 71:5 seem to be suggested by Psalm 22:9-11.*
 - *Do not be far from me (Psalm 71:12a) echoes Psalm 22:11.*
 - *My God, make haste to help me! (Psalm 71:12b) takes the thought of Psalm 70:1.*
 - *Psalm 71:13 is similar to Psalm 35:26.*
 - *Psalm 71:18 carries the thoughts of Psalm 22:22 and 22:30-31.*
 - *Psalm 71:19 uses the phrasing of Exodus 15:11.*
- (Source: David Guzik)*

Whoever the writer was it would appear that he knew his Bible well and made ready use material from earlier Psalms, especially the Davidic Psalms, albeit with various alterations.

It is reasonable to think that the author of this Psalm had made the study of Scripture a major priority in his life, as reflected in his quotation of other Scripture throughout. He had lived in the Scriptures, and this is what comes out in his appeal to God.

One of the features of the Psalms is that they meet us where we are in life. The concern of this Psalm relates to old age. You might think that as you get older things would get easier. The Psalmist here begs to differ. Even in old age, one faces situations that require an ever deeper trust in the Lord.

Slide # 2

Psalm 71

“God’s Help in Old Age”

- vv. 1-3 Trusting God for Deliverance
- vv. 4-6 God's Constant Care
- vv. 7-11 A Strong Refuge Through Life
- vv. 12-13 Hasten to Help by Confounding the Enemy
- vv. 14-16 Rising Hope and Praise
- vv. 17-18 Strength in God from Youth to Old Age
- vv. 19-21 Looking to God to Revive Again
- vv. 22-24 Singing God's Praises

Psalm 71 (NKJV)

1 In You, O LORD, I put my trust; Let me never be put to shame.

The very first line states the writer's trust in YHWH, the covenant-keeping God of Israel. This is the premise – the very foundation of his entire life. This is where life with the Lord begins, and the Psalmist affirmed this is where he was at.

And based on this trust in the LORD, he asks God to never let him be put to shame. To be put to shame is the idea of being exposed to public disgrace. In this case, it would involve mocking the Psalmist for putting his trust in God as if to say, “A lot of good your trust in the Lord does you.” So he is asking that God vindicate his trust in Him.

2 Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; Incline Your ear to me, and save me.

The writer boldly asks God, because of His (God's) righteousness (faithfulness), to deliver him from imminent danger. He asks that God listen – that He respond and save him in fulfillment of this request.

Footnote: God's righteousness is mentioned 5 times in the Psalm (v. 2, 15, 16, 19, 24). It refers to an attribute of God in the sense of His “rightness,” but also to His faithfulness.

3 Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.

The writer here looks to God to be his safe place - a source of continual comfort and safety. And then he expresses a sense of assurance that God indeed is his rock and fortress.

And right in the middle of this strong affirmation of confidence in God he says, “**You have given the commandment to save me.**” Where did God give this command, and exactly what did it entail?

Admittedly, we could wish that he had elaborated on this.

Slide # 3

[You have] given commandment to save me - There was some command, or some promise, on which the psalmist relied, or which he felt he might plead as the ground of his appeal. This may refer to some "special" promise or command made to the author of the psalm - and, if the psalm was composed by David, there were many such; or the reference may have been to the general commands or promises made to the people of God as such, which he felt he was at liberty to plead, and which all may plead who are the friends of God.

– ***Barnes' Notes on the Bible***

Psalm 31:1-3a (a Psalm of David) is very similar to Psalm 71:1-3. One exception is the word “continually” as found here in Psalm 71. Throughout Psalm 71 the writer wants to emphasize that God has continually been faithful at every point throughout his entire life (cf. v. 6, 14).

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

The people threatening the Psalmist are wicked and cruel. Wicked refers to those in rebellion against God. The person (s) in view are wicked, unrighteous, and cruel. There is no mercy or kindness here! The writer specifically asks God to deliver him from this person!

5 For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth.

The Psalmist reviews that from his youth he has put his trust in the Lord and affirms that indeed his hope is the “Lord God”. Lord God is literally Adonai YHWH. Adonai is the idea of Master and YHWH refers to God as the unchanging covenant God of Israel. Thus, he recognizes God as his sovereign Master Who is ever faithful.

He knows WHO God is and this forms the basis of his hope and trust. And note how personal it is. It's not just that his hope was in Master YHWH, but rather that Master YHWH is his hope! This puts the emphasis in hoping in the very character of God for Who He is and not merely what He can do for him.

6 By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.

The Psalmist recounts God's care of him from the very beginning of his life. God was there bringing him out of the womb. It was God who brought him into this world. It is God who has continually upheld him throughout life.

Thus he recognizes his dependence upon God and His continual faithfulness to bring him to this point and consequently he resolves to praise God continually. God's care has been continual and so shall be his responding praise!

Think about all that God has brought you through! You did not get here by accident! From the very beginning God has upheld you and brought you through to where you are now. The only appropriate response is continual praise!

7 I have become as a wonder to many, But You are my strong refuge.

"A wonder" refers to the trials he is going through. The idea of "a wonder" is that of "a marvel" and can be understood in the sense of an "ominous sign".

Slide # 4

Some explain, "as an object of God's singular favour from his youth" (Kay, Cheyne); others, "as a marvellous example of God's punishments" (Schultens, Hengstenberg, Professor Alexander, Canon Cook). The latter explanation is supported by [Deuteronomy 28:46](#), and, on the whole, seems preferable. – **Pulpit Commentary**

Job's friends are ever present! It seems that many who saw the sufferings of the Psalmist regarded him as a typical example of one who is under the discipline or judgment of God. Bad things happen to bad people, so he must be bad and his sufferings are proof God's displeasure.

"The believer is a riddle, an enigma puzzling the unspiritual."

– **Charles Spurgeon**

But the Psalmist remains unshaken, affirming that through it all God is his strong refuge. "Strong refuge" here refers to God being a "shelter from danger" (cf. Ps. 14:6; 46:1; 61:3; 62:7-8; 73:28; 91:2, 9).

The writer's life, with all its trials, has been a subject of wonder, but he finds solace and security in God's unwavering protection. Yes, the Psalmist has faced many daunting situations but God has proven Himself as a faithful deliverer over and over.

Slide # 5

2 Corinthians 1:10 (NKJV)

10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,

Paul emphasizes God as a delivering God. He has delivered in the past, He delivers in the present, and He will deliver in the future. Past, present, and future, He is a God of deliverance. The greatest way God brings glory to Himself is in bringing about salvation/deliverance.

God often allows us to get into trouble so that He might glorify Himself in our deliverance! The greater the deliverance the greater the glory to God!

So, when you are going through a hard trial, think of it in these terms: How is God to glorify Himself in bringing me through this situation? He delivers us from all kinds of perils and ultimately delivers us to our home in heaven, where we will experience final victory!

8 Let my mouth be filled with Your praise And with Your glory all the day.

What a great verse! Yes, the Psalmist feels the pressure of trial, the pressure of the wicked pressing in on him, but he chooses to FOCUS on God. He affirms God as his "strong refuge" and desires that his mouth be fill with praise to God's glory all the day.

When our mouth is filled with praise to God all the day it prevents us from getting sidetracked into sinful thoughts, actions, or words.

But the Psalmist is human, and being human, we have weaknesses and fears that we struggle with.

9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails.

The psalmist knew the faithfulness of God through his younger years, and now asks that God be with him as his strength fails in his latter years.

Now we might say: Where is your faith? Will not the God who has been so faithful through years, be with you to the very end? And of course the theological answer is YES, God is faithful always and forever. He can always be counted on to never forsake His own.

But again we are human and being human we struggle with thoughts and fears. Again, and again we have to come back to what we already know is true. Again, and again, we have to affirm our faith and our trust in the Lord.

Old age has very special challenges! And we need God special care. The psalmist here recognizes that reality.

Slide # 6

To grow old gracefully calls for more Grace than Nature can provide. Old age is a new world of strange conflicts and secret fears; the fear of being left alone, the fear of being a burden to loved ones, the fear of becoming a helpless invalid, the fear of losing one's grip, the fear of being imposed upon. These fears are not new. The psalmist is thinking aloud for the encouragement of all who are in the autumn of life. – ***Daily Notes of the Scripture Union***

Old Age is a humbling reality! It forces us to more and more depend on God. Psalm 71:9 is a recognition of this reality. The psalmist knows God is faithful. He has seen it. He has resolved to trust in God, and yet in his humanness, he has fears that he wrestles with as he, in effect, voices out loud.

**10 For my enemies speak against me; And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together,
11 Saying, "God has forsaken him; Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him."**

The wicked and the cruel have no mercy! They have no problem taking advantage of the elderly and vulnerable.

These enemies speak against him, really wanting to take him out. They take counsel together saying, "God has forsaken him; pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him."

The wicked totally miscalculate God! They totally misread the situation! Just because a child of God is going through some really hard times does NOT mean God has abandoned him. It might feel that way. It might look that way, but in truth God has not forsaken him.

But in the thinking of the wicked, this is their opportunity! They think God has forsaken him and so they can take advantage of the situation and God will not come to his rescue!

Jesus knew what it is like to have people, in effect, say, "God has forsaken Him".

Slide # 7

Luke 23:35–37 (NKJV)

35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine,

37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

Jesus on the cross did have a "God forsaken" experience that is beyond what we can ever comprehend.

Slide # 8

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**"

In His humanness this was the experience of Jesus as the sin of the world was placed upon Him. God can have no fellowship with sin (1 Jn. 1:5). God cannot look upon wickedness (Hab. 1:13). And so in some indescribably way God abandoned Jesus on the cross as He paid in full for our sin.

But Jesus went through this, so we will never have to. Indeed, in both the OT and the NT God's people have the specific promise that He will never forsake us.

Slide # 9

Deuteronomy 31:6 (NKJV)

6 Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. **He will not leave you nor forsake you.**

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, **“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”**

How comforting in old age – when everything seems to be leaving you. Your strength, your assets, your abilities, etc. And then come the hounds of Satan trying to slanderously spreading the idea that God has forsaken you. Under that weight we need God’s assurance and help!

And so the psalmist cries out...

12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!

He desires God’s presence and His help! He is looking to God, relying on God to see him through. The situation is urgent! This is a crisis!

The psalmist first says “O God” and then a more intense grip of faith he says, “O my God”. He is desperately reaching out to God from his heart of hearts.

It is grand pleading when we so grasp God with the personal grip of faith that we cry, ‘O my God, make haste for my help.’

- Charles Spurgeon

13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt.

Very simply, the psalmist prays for two things. 1) He asks that God deliver him speedily, and he asks that God destroy his adversaries in disgrace.

The psalmist had to deal with the fact that as his years advanced, his troubles did not go away. The problems remained. This is a significant test for some believers, but the psalmist understood it as compelling his constant and more personal trust in God. – **David Guzik**

Now friend, if you are a senior citizen, let me say this to you: Don't go into a corner and sit in a rocking chair. God hasn't forsaken you, and right down to your dying days He has kept you on this earth for a purpose. ... I want to be active for the Lord right down to the end of my life. – **J. Vernon McGee**

Yes, as we get older, the challenges in some sense become greater. But our God has always proven Himself faithful, and that will never change. In the challenges of old age, God has promised to be there for you!

God is ever faithful! And that will never change!

God help us to faithfully look to Him in all things and always!