

Answer me!

- There are few things as frustrating as not being answered!
 - whether its a small child engrossed in their game...
 - a teenager watching the TV...
 - an adult reading a book...
 - a letter that's gone unanswered...
 - a phone call never returned...
- Especially when the matter is urgent or important, when the need is pressing!
- Setting for this Psalm appears to be David's flight from his son Absalom, who was presuming to claim his father's throne!
 - David and his entourage had fled, their lives on the line
 - there were ample reasons for distress!!
- Things aren't going well...!
 - is God paying attention?
 - have David's prayers up to this point gone unanswered, unnoticed?
 - various of the deities worshipped by contemporary cultures were thought to be asleep: you had to wake your God up, hence drums etc!
 - cf Elijah's taunts on Mount Carmel!!
 - *At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." (1 Kings 18:27)*
- So how does David respond?

To God... (vs.1)

- *Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer*
- First of all by talking to God!
 - doesn't give up or walk away, but comes to God...
- His prayer is urgent
 - its important, its a priority, there's an insistence - not so much to give God a hard time, but to meet with God, to enter into the conversation with him that worship is
 - there is no sense of "I'll get round to praying sometime...!"
- His prayer rests on the righteousness of God, not his own righteousness
 - David, of anyone, knows this and is conscious of this
 - remember the whole Bathsheba thing!!
- His prayer is specific
 - not vague, "God bless" - partly specific to the situation, but generally a good thing to do in prayer!
- His prayer is dependent on divine mercy
 - again, no thought that he has anything to do with the answer...

To Absalom's Court... (vs.2-3)

- *How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? <Selah> Know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD will hear when I call to him.*
- He's grappling with the situation he's in:
 - it would appear he's doing it by staging an imaginary encounter with members of Absalom's court
 - the problem is that there are people who have reversed the God-given glory of the king of his people, and turned it to shame; David is the God-anointed king, Absalom is not
 - these people love lies and deception, not the true God and the truth he brings ("false gods" should be "falsehoods")

- David contrasts their behaviour with the "Godly":
 - a rich word designating those whom God loves with an unchanging love and who love him back, who respond
 - and, addressing those in Absalom's court who are not behaving in a godly manner, he is both calling them to change and declaring displaying an impressive measure of trust in God to justify him!
- This is the core of his distress, and he has brought it to God:
 - he has complained to the management!
 - he has worked things through to see the true problem - not that just the fact that his life is in danger, but that the ungodly have turned God's glory to shame;
 - in his deep trust there is almost a sense of implicit warning here:
 - "do you guys realise what you are doing? You're not just pushing me off the throne, but you are opposing the living God!!"

To David's people... (vs.4-6)

- *In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. <Selah> Offer right sacrifices and trust in the LORD. Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?" Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD.*
- As he faces the situation he "looks around" at his companions
 - he's addressed God, he's addressed his foes in Absalom's court, and now he addresses his own entourage...
 - and encourages them, too, to turn to God
 - to not sin in their anger
 - to trust rather than doubt or fear
- David has certainly not denied his fear, the pain
 - but he has, and is encouraging us to use the time we have to come into God's presence
 - to let the light of his face shine upon us

To God again... (vs.7-8)

- *You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*
- Psalm finishes with David turning and addressing God once more
- What has changed, what has happened?
 - the whole tone has moved from distress and anxiety to peace
 - now David can lie down to a good night's rest
- Why?
 - because he has come to God in worship, in prayer
 - because he has grappled with the situation with God
 - Absalom is still chasing him... but his heart has been centred again on his relationship with God, that which brings him true joy and peace
 - its not the palace or the army or being king or bossing people around that brings David joy
 - its not the trappings of success that brings David joy
 - rather, what brings David joy is knowing God
 - and he's been reminded of that and refocused on that through worship - composing, singing, remembering this Psalm
- Worship changes us far more than it allows us to express our feelings of adoration for God
- Will we allow this ultimately trustful Psalm, and the attitude David has as he wrote it, to shape our perspective on the troubles and joys that life brings our way?