

Psalm 4

How to Get Relief from Adverse Circumstances, Psalm 4:1-8

Psalm 4:1-8 (NKJV)

¹ Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

² How long, O you sons of men, *Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? Selah*

³ But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The Lord will hear when I call to Him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. *Selah*

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.

⁶ *There are* many who say, “Who will show us *any* good?” Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

⁸ I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

1. Call upon the God of righteousness (v. 1).

2. Call upon the godly to repent (vv. 2-5).

3. Call upon God to be good—to let the light of His face shine upon you (vv. 6-8).

Theological Introduction

Psalm 4 is a psalm of **conflict**, **betrayal**, **distress**, and **unwavering confidence in God**. David writes during a season of **deep turmoil**, most likely during Absalom’s rebellion, when many within Israel were being seduced by **lies**, **manipulation**, and **outward displays of false spirituality**.

In **Psalm 4:5**, David calls the people away from hypocrisy and rebellion and back to genuine worship and trust in God:

“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.”—

Psalm 4:5 (NKJV)

The phrase “**sacrifices of righteousness**” refers not merely to external religious activity, but to worship flowing from a heart that is right with God. Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly **condemns empty religion** while calling His people to sincere **repentance**, **obedience**, **holiness**, and **faith**.

David understood that God is not impressed by ceremonial performance while the heart remains rebellious. True worship requires **righteousness, submission, humility, and trust** in the sovereign Lord.

This passage also reveals an important theological truth: religious activity can be counterfeited. Absalom **offered sacrifices** *while simultaneously* leading a rebellion against God's anointed king. Satan often **disguises rebellion beneath the cloak of spirituality.** Scripture warns that **false believers, divisive people, and self-serving leaders** can infiltrate the covenant community and deceive the undiscerning. Therefore, believers must exercise spiritual discernment and remain anchored in God's Word rather than **personalities, emotions, or political movements** within the church.

From a theological perspective, **Psalm 4:5** reminds us that true repentance and true worship originate from a transformed heart produced by the grace of God. Mere outward religion cannot save. **Only God can produce genuine faith, true obedience, and righteous worship** through **regeneration and sanctification.**

Modern-Day Introduction

We live in a generation overflowing with **religious noise** but starving for **spiritual discernment.** Many people know how to appear spiritual while living in rebellion against God. Some speak **Christian language, quote Scripture, attend church,** and even **participate in ministry** while secretly pursuing **division, bitterness, pride, and personal agendas.**

Social media has amplified this danger. Accusations spread rapidly. Criticism becomes entertainment. Church conflicts become public spectacles.

Many believers are easily swayed by **charisma, emotional manipulation, half-truths, and gossip rather than biblical truth and godly wisdom.**

Psalm 4:5 speaks powerfully to our generation. David essentially says: **"Stop following rebellion. Stop being deceived by appearances. Come back to genuine worship. Trust the Lord to judge rightly."**

When conflict arises in the church, believers **are called not to join factions, fuel division, or attack leadership** carnally. Instead, they are to seek **righteousness, pursue biblical reconciliation, pray fervently, trust God's justice, and maintain the unity of the Spirit.**

This passage also reminds suffering believers that our response to mistreatment matters. David sought the **repentance of his enemies, not their destruction.** In a culture driven by **revenge, cancellation, and public humiliation,** the gospel calls believers to pursue **restoration, grace, truth, and reconciliation** whenever possible.

d. Turn to the Lord (v. 5)

Psalm 4:5 NKJV

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.

Absalom, in a deliberate attempt to convince the people that he was right, was offering sacrifices to the Lord (**2 Samuel 15:12**).

2 Samuel 15:12 NKJV

¹² Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city—from Giloh—while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number.

These sacrifices were a sham, a deceptive device to persuade the people that **he** was on God's side—actually doing God's will—in overthrowing the king. David admonished the easily swayed people of his kingdom to awaken to Absalom's deception and to offer true sacrifices that were rightly presented to God. If they would sincerely approach the Lord, **he knew that God would convict them of their sin and open their eyes to Absalom's evil ways.** God would alert them to His will for their nation.

The people needed to turn to the Lord, place the matter in His hands, and trust Him to do what was right and just in the situation. If David had sinned in his ascent to the throne, the Judge of all the earth would do right and remove him as king (**Genesis 18:25**).

Genesis 18:25 NKJV

²⁵ Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Thought 1. As believers, when our zeal is aroused to do what is right, we must be careful not to be deceived by evildoers. This is especially true in the church. **Satan attacks the church from within,** and sometimes he is able **to stir up some carnal church members** to rise up against godly pastors and leaders.

True, pastors and leaders are sometimes wrong. However, those who rise up in open rebellion against godly leadership are never under the control of God's Holy Spirit. It is Satan who works in people's hearts to divide and destroy. Most who rebel against leadership have usually **been offended** or have **personal agendas**. In some cases, troublemakers have never been genuinely born again. If they were, they would never do some of the things they do.

Christ Himself says that they are tares rather than wheat—false believers sown by Satan into the fellowship of the church (**Matthew 13:36-43**).

Matthew 13:36-43 NKJV

The Parable of the Tares Explained

³⁶ **Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”**

³⁷ **He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.**

³⁸ **The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.**

³⁹ **The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.**

⁴⁰ **Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.**

⁴¹ **The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,**

⁴² **and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.**

⁴³ **Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!**

The New Testament epistles are filled with the **names of ungodly people who rose up in the churches against the apostles**. We must be on guard against troublemakers in our churches. We must **actively resist them, refuse to listen to them**, and even **rebuke them for their unbiblical, satanic behavior**. One way to silence troublemakers when they come to us to criticize church leadership is to simply say, **“I would be happy to go with you to the pastor.”**

Scripture prescribes the process to be followed when dealing with troublemakers:

Matthew 18:15-17 NKJV

Dealing with a Sinning Brother

¹⁵ “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’
¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Romans 16:17-18 NKJV

Avoid Divisive Persons

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.
¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

1 Timothy 5:1 NKJV

Treatment of Church Members

¹ Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers.

1 Timothy 5:19-20 NKJV

¹⁹ Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.
²⁰ Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

1 Samuel 15:23 NKJV

²³ For rebellion is as the sin of ^lwitchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from *being* king.”

Thought 2. David’s call for his enemies to repent is an example for us in our dealings with other believers, **especially** when they are **lying about us** or **attempting to hurt us** in some way. Note that these enemies were Israelites, David’s fellow countrymen and sharers in God’s covenant. Again, his desire is for their repentance, not their destruction. When people—believers or unbelievers—attack and cause trouble for us, we should always seek **their repentance, not their destruction.**

1 Thessalonians 5:15 NKJV

¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

2 Thessalonians 3:13-15 NKJV

¹³ But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.

¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

¹⁵ Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.