

# Family TableTalk

Conversation 56

## Us And Him

read

Psalm 123

think

Following Jesus is hard. The Apostle Paul told his young mentee Timothy that “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (II Timothy 3:12). Ouch. That’s not exactly a revelation that leads to excitement. God’s people during Old Testament times knew as well that being a faithful follower of God would bring opposition, oppression, and even persecution. So, how can we face and endure these difficulties?

In Psalm 123, God’s people cry out to God as they encounter opposition that’s left them spiritually weary. They have been mocked and ridiculed for their faith in God by proud people who not only don’t have time for God, but who are relentless in their harassment of those who do. Their cries in Psalm 123 offer us insight into how to endure the persecution we face when we follow Jesus.

First, we are to look to God. While we might be tempted to power and push ourselves through our difficult times with our own strength, that strength will *never* be sufficient. We might even feel like giving up. Instead, we should “lift up our eyes” beyond ourselves and our circumstances to focus on the almighty and all-powerful God who is “enthroned in the heavens.” As we look to him, we must pray for mercy and relief as we respectfully depend on him as our “master” and “mistress.” God *is* with us in our troubles and we must be utterly dependent on him.

Second, we are to walk through these difficulties with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Notice how the Psalmist uses the pronouns *us*, *we*, and *our* as he prays for God to intervene. God has given us the gift of each other for many reasons, one of which is for support as we walk through life’s hardships together. We are not in this alone.

In many ways, following Jesus is risky and dangerous business. But unlike God’s Old Testament people, we have the benefit of listening over and over to the words of Jesus which give us an even greater perspective. In Matthew 5:10&11 he tells us where our earthly persecutions and troubles for his sake will end. We can look forward to inheriting the reward of the kingdom of heaven!

apply

- Has there been a time where you’ve felt spiritually weary as result of others giving you grief about your faith in Jesus? What did it feel like? How did you respond?
- What are some of things that keep you from being utterly and completely dependent on God? In what ways can we overcome these hurdles?
- What are your doubts regarding God and his promise to carry you through the difficulties of persecution for your faith?
- How have you experienced the blessing of walking through persecution with other Christians?

pray

Almighty God who is enthroned in the heavens, all power and glory are yours. We humbly approach you to confess that way too often we have cowered under the difficulty of taking heat from others because we follow you. We sometimes feel like giving up, or we try to push through on our own strength. Father, take us into deeper dependence on you. Have mercy on us and refresh our souls. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

by **Walt Mueller**

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