

“The Privilege of God’s People”  
Psalm 143  
(Preached at Trinity, December 8, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Psalm 143** is the last of the seven penitential psalms—the others being Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, and 130. The best known is Psalm 51. In each of these psalms the writer confesses his sin and asks God for forgiveness.  
**Psalm 51:1-4 KJV** - "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. <sup>4</sup> Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight"
2. But this psalm seems different. Only **Verse 2** carries the idea of confession of sin and even then it isn’t an acknowledgement of personal sin but a general statement that all have sinned. So can this be a penitential psalm? The answer is yes, because **Verse 2** lies at the very heart of the psalm.
3. **Verse 2** makes an important statement of truth:  
**KJV** "for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."  
**NAS** "For in Your sight no man living is righteous."
4. This truth runs consistently throughout Scripture.  
**Romans 3:23 KJV** - "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"  
**Romans 3:10 KJV** - "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one"  
**Psalm 14:2-3 KJV** - "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God. <sup>3</sup> They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one."
5. We are hopelessly polluted before God and there is no way for us to solve the problem through our own actions.
  - A. No amount of good deeds can make us righteous before God.  
**Galatians 2:16 KJV** - "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."  
In other words Paul is saying that no man shall be made righteous in the sight of God through his own good works.
  - B. Our best works are defiled before God.  
**Isaiah 64:6 KJV** - "But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags"
6. How is a man to be accepted before God?
  - A. In **Verse 1** David makes a plea to God.  
"give ear to my supplications"  
But he knows he is not without sin so he is actually crying out for mercy.  
**Verse 2** - "enter not into judgment with thy servant"

- B. In **Verse 1** David also states the character of God.  
**Psalm 143:1 KJV** - "in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness."  
 David is pleading for God to answer him in His righteousness. But how can a righteous God accept a sinful man?  
 How can God be just and declare a sinful man righteous?
- C. Paul answers this question in **Romans 3**  
**Romans 3:23-26 KJV** - "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: <sup>25</sup> Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; <sup>26</sup> To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
7. God can be righteous in justifying a sinful man through the redeeming sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
8. So **Verse 2** is at the heart of this Psalm. It is the starting point, not only for this psalm but also for the life of any child of God. It is the place of repentance. The place of faith. "Do not enter into judgment with me."  
 This is the starting point of the glorious privilege of being one of God's people. Tonight I want us to examine this privilege. **Psalm 143** describes the believer's privilege in terms of Mercy, Love, and Guidance.
- I. Commitment to God's Unmerited Mercy – **Verses 1-2**  
 II. Confidence in God's Unfailing Love – **Verses 3-8a, 12**  
 III. Comfort in God's Unwavering Guidance – **Verses 8b-11**
- I. Commitment to God's Unmerited Mercy – **Verses 1-2**  
 A. David makes it clear - "in thy sight shall no man living be justified."  
 1. So how can a man be justified? How can he be made righteous? It must be from a righteousness not our own. It is based on God's unmerited mercy.  
 2. God's people have only ever been saved one way—through the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross. That includes both Christians before His birth and after.  
**Romans 4:3 KJV** - "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."  
**Galatians 3:6-7 KJV** - "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. <sup>7</sup> Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."  
 3. The other requirement is repentance. It isn't added to faith. It accompanies faith. Again, **Verse 2** is the foundation of the entire psalm.
- B. David is confessing in **Psalm 143** both the infinite holiness of God and the universal corruption of man. He is calling upon God to hear his supplications but confessing that God will only hear as an act of His mercy.  
 1. God only hears in accordance with His faithfulness, righteousness and justice. And only by His mercy.  
**Psalm 143:1 KJV** - "give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness."

2. David confesses that justice demands God's judgment  
**Psalm 143:2 KJV** - "enter not into judgment with thy servant"
  3. Mercy can only come by God making us righteous through the righteousness of Christ which we receive by faith and repentance, all of which is by the grace of God.
  4. **Verse 2** reflects confession of sin and a heart of repentance
- C. Repentance reflects the complete change in a person which comes through the grace of regeneration.
1. Repentance involves our entire life
    - a. When Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg which began the Protestant Reformation the first of the theses read:  
"When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'repent,' He meant that the entire life of believers should be one of repentance."
    - b. Luther wrote this in opposition to the corruption of repentance by the Roman Catholic Church which had redefined the word to refer to the doing of penance, a sacrament that one does from time to time.
  2. What we see in this psalm is the effect of repentance upon the whole of life.
    - a. It reflects a change in mind as we are brought to acknowledge our sin and confess our need of a Savior.
    - b. It reflects a change in emotion as we come to love Christ with our whole heart and despise all that is displeasing to Him.
    - c. It reflects a change of will in which we strive after righteousness living in obedience to His Law.
  3. I title this sermon "The Privilege of God's People."  
Receiving mercy from God is just the beginning. It results in a life of commitment to Him. This is why I call the first privilege,  
"Commitment to God's Unmerited Mercy."  
What are the other privileges?

## II. Confidence in God's Unfailing Love – **Verses 3-8a, 12**

- A. Like other psalms of David the context of **Psalm 143** is David surrounded by enemies.
1. In **Verse 3** David calls attention to his enemy who is persecuting him and continually seeking his life.
  2. Because of the relentlessness of the attacks David is overwhelmed. His heart is greatly distressed.  
**Psalm 143:4 KJV** - "Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate."
  3. His situation is desperate. He says in **Verse 7**  
**Psalm 143:7 KJV** - "Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth"
  4. There is no assurance in Scripture that God's people will not face terrible trials.

- B. In the face of his trial David maintained confidence in God's unfailing love.  
**Psalm 143:8 KJV** - "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust"  
**Psalm 143:12 KJV** - "And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I *am* thy servant."
1. It was his confidence in God's unfailing love that sustained him—God's covenant love - רַחֲמֵי This wonderful word is so prevalent in the psalms occurring 130 times.  
**Psalm 6:4 NAS** - "Save me because of Thy lovingkindness."  
**Psalm 23:6 NAS** - "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."  
**Psalm 89:1 NAU** - "I will sing of the lovingkindness of the LORD forever"
  2. David cries out in **Verse 8** – "I trust you as I go to sleep because of your love for me – let me also hear of your love in the morning. In **Verse 12** he prays, "God, because of your love for me, destroy my enemies."
- C. God's people have wonderful grounds for assurance
1. First, we trust in His mercy. We trust in His forgiveness in Christ. We have been justified. He no longer holds our sins against us.  
**Psalm 143:2 KJV** - "And enter not into judgment with thy servant" He had confidence to bring his supplications before God.
  2. Second, we find assurance and confidence in His unfailing love for us. He is our Father; our God. He loves us with an everlasting love.  
**Romans 8:38-39 KJV** - "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- D. Not only do we trust Christ regarding eternity. We trust Him regarding life.
1. Over and over God proves Himself faithful.  
David opened this psalm:  
**Psalm 143:1 KJV** - "in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness."
  2. In **Verse 5** David calls to mind the countless times God had rescued him in the past.  
**Psalm 143:5 KJV** - "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands."  
"I remember, I meditate on all thy works, I muse or consider the work of Thy hands."
  3. This was not mere nostalgia or bitter lamenting. It was a confident remembering of God's mighty power demonstrated in the life of David Even as a youth David told Saul

**1 Samuel 17:36-37 KJV** - "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. <sup>37</sup> David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee."

4. God cares for us. He loves us with an unending love. This is the great privilege of God's people.

### III. Comfort in God's Unwavering Guidance – **Verses 8b-11**

#### A. True repentance brings true hunger for God

1. David was seeking deliverance from his enemies but his true hunger was for God.

**Psalm 143:6 KJV** - "I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. "

2. We saw this last week in **Psalm 144**. David's supreme motive for deliverance was that he might praise God.

**Psalm 142:7 KJV** - "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name"

3. A true hunger for God results in a true hunger for holiness. This is the nature of true repentance.

#### B. How can we be more holy?

1. On one hand the Bible stresses personal responsibility

**Deuteronomy 10:16 KJV** - "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked."

**2 Corinthians 6:17 KJV** - "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*"

**1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV** - "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

**Colossians 3:5-6 KJV** - "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. . ."

**ESV** - "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you"

**Ephesians 5:11-12 KJV** - " And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."

2. On the other hand we are dependent upon God. The Holy Spirit is our only sufficiency for mortification. He alone leads us unto holiness.

David cries out three times in this psalm for God's direction.

**Psalm 143:8 KJV** - "cause me to know the way wherein I should walk"

**Psalm 143:10 KJV** - "Teach me to do thy will; for thou *art* my God"

**Psalm 143:10** - "thy spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness."

"Cause me to know, Teach me to do, Lead me to uprightness."

3. This has been David's heart throughout the Psalter

**Psalm 25:4-5 KJV** - "Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. <sup>5</sup> Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day."

**Psalm 86:11-12 KJV** - "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. <sup>12</sup> I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."

**Psalm 119:33-40 KJV** - "Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end. <sup>34</sup> Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart. <sup>35</sup> Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight."

4. The child of God presses towards holiness with his whole heart. He flees all appearance of evil. He studies diligently that he might know the path of God. But he also cries out,  
"Cause me to know, Teach me to do, Lead me"

#### Conclusion:

1. God's mercy affects everything. Repentance is a lifelong experience. It affects our confidence in God's care for us. It affects our hunger and thirst after righteousness. And it comforts us that God will continue to work in us holiness as He continues to prepare us for eternity.  
**Philippians 1:6 KJV** - "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ"
2. May we recognize our great privilege as the people of God – the privilege of mercy, love, and guidance.  
May God stir our hearts in His love to trust Him in every trial. May we come before His throne with comfort and confidence.  
**Psalm 143:1 KJV** - "Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness."
3. This is the great privilege of God's people.
4. And for those who are not one of God's people, God is faithful to give mercy to those who call upon the name of Christ.  
**1 John 1:9 KJV** - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."