

Longing for Home [Psalm 71]

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INTRODUCTION

1. A benefit of living this close to the city center proximity to old, gorgeous homes.
 - a. Here in our neighborhood, it's even better because they're located on hillsides.
 - b. Starting after the Civil War, wealthy Cincinnatians moved out of the lower basin
 - c. Despite decades of economic shift, many of these homes still exist today.
2. I don't know about you, but I often go online when old homes on sale to peak inside.
 - a. I know that I'll never live in them, but it's fun to imagine, right?
 - b. That's why some speculate that the TV show Downton Abbey was so popular.
 - 1) People love thinking about Highclere Castle and the possibility of living there.
3. Friends, how do you define **home**?
 - a. Maybe you've never owned one, or maybe you've owned a few
 - b. Do you still consider the home of your youth as truly being home?
 - b. Perhaps you disassociate "home" with a house, but consider it a city or a town.
 - c. Maybe you think of "home" as a restaurant or a bar.
 - d. Or maybe to you, "home" is a group of people: family or friends.
4. Today we turn our eyes to a psalm of lament
 - a. It's in the voicing of an old man.
 - b. The poet is reflecting on his interaction with the Lord and on home.

VERSES 1-3

¹In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. ²In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me; turn your ear to me and save me. ³Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

1. The declarative statement at the beginning of this psalm (verse 1) is an umbrella.
 - a. Under this, the rest of the psalm rests and, so did the psalmist rest, in the world.
 - 1) The concept of refuge here, the Hebrew implies, is like a cave on a mountain.
 - 2) If this is a Davidic Psalm, it might reference a period from the King's early life
 - 3) Fleeing from King Saul, David hid in an area near the Dead Sea (**1 Samuel 1:24**)
 - b. These caves in the area are the best description from the Hebrew word in verse 1.
2. Difficult to comprehend, but there are still places in Middle East where people live in caves
 - a. It provides protection in its elevation, it is difficult to assault.
 - b. But regardless of your defenses, practically no place is totally protected. Thus, verse 2
 - 1) The psalmist pleads to God for safety.
 - 2) It's a continual theme in this book: call out to the Lord for delivery.
3. Verse three has the repetition of the Lord as ROCK metaphor, and we can see this today.
 - a. When we look at houses, we can be easily distracted by beauty.
 - 1) Thus, you might happen to overlook a little crack in the brick.
 - 2) But this can signify a foundational issue that could ruin the entire home.
 - 3) That's the importance of the foundation. It isn't sexy, but it's THE most critical part.
 - b. And this is the importance of the Lord as being foundational to your life.
 - 1) When our focus is on spiritual aesthetics, we're missing out on true wisdom.

VERSES 4-9

⁴Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.⁵For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth.⁶From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you.⁷I have become a sign to many; you are my strong refuge.

⁸My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.

⁹Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.

1. The lament part of this psalm is presented in verse 4.
 - a. As the world is falling all around the poet, he recognizes that he has nowhere else to turn
 - 1) Again, this acknowledgement of limitation we've seen in the Psalms is revealing
 - 2) You can call on God and trust in Him to deliver you from persecution.
2. Verses 5&6 explain why he's so willing to call out: Since the days of my youth
 - a. This psalmist grew up in a home where the worship of God was central.
 - 1) And, as such, faith has been foundational to his entire life.
 - b. That's why we see the repeated plea in verse nine
 - 1) I've given my life to you; don't forget me when I'm old.
3. The lesson from these verses: there is a value to lifelong belief.
 - a. I know that in this room we have people on both sides of this spectrum
 - 1) Some of you were reared in Christian households while others were not.
 - 2) Those who did not could testify how blessed those who did should feel.
 - 3) But regardless, we should see the value of Christ in the home.
 - b. This is why, as a parent, I do not take lightly the influence I have on my daughter's life.
 - 1) And even those without children have the ability to influence in a positive way.
 - 2) Many of you in this church invested in my child and I'm thankful for that influence.
 - c. Together, we can develop homes where kids can know Christ.

***I WAS GOING TO GO THROUGH VERSES 14-18, but it states the same as the above text.**

****INSTEAD, I'M ASKING YOUR TO ASK YOURSELF: What was your homelife like?** Now read this:

VERSES 19-24

¹⁹Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things. Who is like you, God?

²⁰Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. ²¹You will increase my honor and comfort me once more.

²²I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, Holy One of Israel.

²³My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I whom you have delivered.

²⁴My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.

1. The text shifts to a posture of praise for the Lord.
 - a. The height of the righteousness of God is unfathomable.
 - b. WHO IS LIKE YOU?
2. VERSE 20: "Restore my life again" was counter to prevailing belief in the region.
 - a. In ancient Mesopotamia, the "depths of the earth" was the destination for all humanity
 - 1) They'd become a ghost: no judgment, but no joy to be found.
 - b. **An ancient text** from this Mesopotamian era states:

*"To the house where those who enter are deprived of light
where dust is their food, clay their bread
they see no light, they dwell in darkness."*
 - c. This is why the God of Israel was different
 - 1) His afterlife will consist of a definitive home.
3. Verses 22,23,24: God is the object of future praise.
 - a. We humans take pride in our ability to prognosticate
 - 1) Madam Cleo is a fortune teller. But no one educated buys it.
 - 2) Then we have Babe Ruth in the 1932 World Series against the Cubs
 - b. I know that I will praise God in the future: Why? He will care for me

CONCLUSION

1. Popular music has long embraced the topic of “home”

Phillip Phillips “Home”

*Settle down, it'll all be clear
Don't pay no mind to the demons
They fill you with fear
The trouble it might drag you down
If you get lost, you can always be found
Just know you're not alone
Cause I'm gonna make this place your home*

Ozzy Osbourne “Mama I'm Coming Home”

*I could be right, I could be wrong
Hurts so bad, it's been so long
Mama, I'm coming home*

Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros “Home”

Home is wherever I'm with you

Eric Clapton “Back Home”

*'Cause I been on this road too long
Going in the wrong direction
And I don't know where I've come from
All I know is I will die
If I don't get back home*

2. God has put a longing for home within us; it's part of our DNA.

- a. The longing will ultimately be realized in our eternal dwelling with him.
- b. That is the power of the story of Jesus: he provides for us a home.

John 14:2-4

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Revelation 21:3 (NLT)

“I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, ‘Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.’”