



POWER OF A SHIELD



PREVIEW

Justice is a funny thing. Sometimes it is swift and happens immediately. Other times it seems like it is nowhere in sight. But justice delayed is not justice denied. God always has His say in the end.

PRAISE

God keeps good books! This means that while things don't always appear to be in our favor, given enough time, God always pays His debts and yields great dividends!

PARABLE

One of the best-known stories in the Bible is David and Goliath. This is the classic underdog tale of a teenager, armed only with a sling and the name of the Lord, who kills a giant warrior and wins the day for his entire nation.

What is less known is that David had volunteered to challenge Goliath because no one else had been brave enough to step out and defy the giant face to face. Even King Saul, who was the biggest man in Israel, head and shoulders above every other Israelite, refused to confront this giant, allowing the whole army to be shamed by fear.

Even less known is the fact that after David defeated Goliath and the army returned to Jerusalem victorious, Saul became so jealous of David that he twice threw a spear at him. When David managed to dodge the spear thrusts unscathed, Saul appointed him as a commander in the army, possibly with the hope that the young warrior would be killed in battle.

This is the possible setting for Psalm 13. David had championed the armies of Israel in the name of the Lord when no one else would, but the only thanks he got from his commander were repeated attempts on his life.

PRESENT

Have you ever done something good only to be painted as the bad guy? Or you did everything you were asked to do, yet you ended up being blamed even when things turned out well? How did you feel? Stunned? Dumbfounded? Powerless? You played by the rules but you still got burned! Where is the justice in that?!

David was incensed with the unfairness of the situation. He complained to God, "O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way? How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand?" (Psalm 13:1-2 NLT).

You also can be honest with God about your feelings. It is much better to vent to Him in prayer than to unload your indignation on

some other poor soul. When you are open with God, it is much easier to see things as He does. God provides greater perspective in prayer.

PRACTICE

When the results are the opposite of the good you've done, how do you feel?

Do you allow your immediate feelings to dictate your actions when things are unfair?

Are you motivated to continue to do your best even if you don't get credit for it?

Do you gossip to others, or do you talk to God and trust Him to resolve the issue?

David's response, despite his initial feelings, was to worship: "But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me. I will sing to the LORD because he is good to me" (Psalm 13:5-6 NLT).

The result was that "David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the LORD was with him. . . . All Israel and Judah loved David because he was so successful at leading his troops into battle" (I Samuel 18:14, 16 NLT).

PRAY

Lord, help me to understand that doing right is not based on whether others do me right in return. Give me the grace to bite my tongue and not lash out hurtfully. You, Lord, are the ultimate Judge, and Your justice is always right and always timely. Thank you, Lord, for Your love and goodness toward me!

PLUS

Throughout this coming week, look for opportunities to share with others a time when people or circumstances were unfair and God felt far away, and yet the situation ended up in your favor. God didn't reverse things for you to keep it to yourself. Testify of God's goodness in your life! Don't put down anyone who is unfair; lift up God, who is always just.