

HE SATISFIES THE LONGING SOUL

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We praise the Lord for many reasons. He is the wise and powerful creator of the universe. He is the sustainer of all life, providing food, water and light for his creatures. He is powerful, and it is he in whom we put our trust, not in man. He hears prayers, he saves his faithful from calamity and he forgives sins. He knows all, including the most obscure details about each individual one of those who trust him.

“O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed.” In addition to such obvious attributes--creator, power, judgment--God wants us to know that he cares for the afflicted and unfortunate in the world. Our natural reason might suggest to us that he does not care for them. We might think that if he cared for the unfortunate, then he would reverse their hard circumstances. But the message of Scripture is that God indeed considers the plight, hears the prayers and comes to the aid of the suffering.

“Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.” He gives justice to the weak, the orphaned, the afflicted and the destitute. Men may take advantage of the widow, the traveller and the poor, but the Lord comes to their aid and executes justice on their behalf. *“For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things...He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap.”*

When the Lord disclosed himself and his nature to the world in the person of Jesus Christ, he made clear his compassion and concern for the suffering. Jesus considered his ministry to the suffering as convincing evidence that he was the Christ, the Son of God: *“The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.”* Clearly, the Lord wants to be known for this trait. He wants the church to glorify him for this cause, and make the practice of mercy an identifying mark of his people as well.

(Psalms 10:17-18, 68:5, 82:3, 94:6, 107:9, 113:7; Matthew 11:5)