

Grand Chaplain's Corner



By Pastor Pat Thompson

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Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt (Psalm 123:3).

Psalm 123, a four-verse cry for mercy, is one of the shortest psalms in the psalter. This psalm is a communal plea for deliverance from social opprobrium, and it is one of the so-called "songs of ascents" that might have been sung by ancient pilgrims on their way up to the temple in Jerusalem.

In verse 3, the psalmist laments the domination of *contempt.* Humans know when they have been so debased that the experience can be described as nothing other than *contempt.* It is contemptuous of humanity to orchestrate the revocation of government food assistance for hungry people for no other reason than that we can!

In the practice of law, legal contempt can be either direct or indirect. *Direct contempt* happens right inside the courtroom in the judge's presence, while *indirect contempt* happens outside the courtroom (such as breaking a restraining order at home). In the larger societal context, contempt is often demonstrated by that which militates against the very essence of our humanity, and it is often systemic.

At its root, contempt evokes a profound disrespect for the proper order of things—shall I say, "the godly order?" I am continually amazed at how easily those who are the "haves" of society so easily deride those who are more properly described as "have-nots."

Lately, there seems to be reluctance to acknowledge America's collective sin from the past. Few institutions can be as repugnant as slavery, and yet, there are those who insist on sanitizing it in our communal memory. In the interest of destroying what has been described as "woke" ideology, textbooks and historical exhibits have been purged of facts that might make us uneasy.

But the faithful Mason knows that facts are facts, and that history—regardless of how disturbing—does not care about our feelings!

Like the psalmist, I have had just about enough of contempt, which seems to emanate from hatred.

We have been told that the Supreme Architect has created each of us in the godly image. That having been said, there is no contempt in the mind of God toward God's creatures. Humans are called to live out that blessed reality.

Faithfully and fraternally,

Pat