

Thursday, April 29, 2021—Psalms 55-57

“Don’t get mad. Get even.” The idea of revenge is as old as history itself. Exacting revenge has led to conflict between neighbors and nations. Exacting revenge brings some measure of satisfaction but never settles the issue. It feeds a fire rather than smothering it.

The Psalmist knew the sting of insult and attack. To make matters worse, the wound came from a friend with whom he regularly worshiped God (55:12-14). Rather than plotting revenge, the Psalmist called on God to make things right. Smooth words hid the violent acts planned in the hearts of his enemies, and only God could bring an end to this injustice. “Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you. He will never allow the righteous be shaken” (55:22).

David knew the emotional, mental, and spiritual weight of facing enemies. Some were in his kingdom. Most were outside the nation. All of them were mere mortals. David had confidence when he was tempted to be afraid because he trusted in God, not in his troops of his horses. With God on His side, what could mortals possibly do (56:3-4)? This trust did not stop tears from flowing, but David knew God was right there, collecting his tears in a bottle (56:8), fully aware of the situation.

Praise God for His grace and protection. He is faithful to avenge His people and bring justice. Pray that confidence in Him will lead to worship and increased faith. Ask God to glorify Himself through you.

Wednesday, April 28, 2021—Psalms 52-54

Children on the playground learn all kinds of life skills. They enjoy life in the outdoors. Their bodies adapt to new challenges. They learn to play together, and they learn the power of “telling on” the playground bully. The one mistreating others is no match against the teachers. One word to them will bring his misbehavior to an end.

Psalm 52 looks at the one who loves evil more than good and foretells his downfall. God’s people lived among others who were trusted in their riches and took refuge in destructive behavior. While the unrighteous one would be uprooted, God’s people would flourish. God will judge the evil and encourage the faithful to endure. The song was a continual reminder to trust in God and to walk righteously.

Similarly, Psalm 53 describes the fool, the one who says there is no God. The fool was morally bankrupt. He called evil good and good evil. The fool consumed others and never called on God. What the Psalmist realized was there was truly no one good (53:2). Everyone turns from God and does evil. The wise choice, then, is to recognize this, repent, and return.

The natural reaction to being mistreated or to seeing evil done to others is to take matters in your own hands. “I’ll fix this.” “I’ll show them.” The Psalmist knew better. He called on God to hear his prayer and vindicate him. He went to the “teacher on the playground” and asked Him to make things right. He was the rescuer from every trouble (54:7).

Praise God for delivering the righteous and judging evil.

Tuesday, April 27, 2021—Psalms 49-51

The microscope and the telescope are two of the most powerful tools for humbling

arrogant people. These instruments make visible what is invisible to the naked eye and demonstrate vast worlds of wonder. There is far more to life than the richest, smartest, and strongest can imagine.

Imagine, then, the value of the eternal soul that only God can see and that He treasures above all other created things. The healthiest person will not outlive death. The fastest cannot outrun it. The wealthiest cannot buy his way out of mortality. The Psalmist knew that wise and simple alike died. The rich and poor faced death. No one could escape death and separation from God unless God Himself paid that price (49:15).

Knowing this reality humbles rich and poor alike. To come to Him is an act of worship and honor. He wants His people to come to Him and offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and repentance. He doesn't need them because He is hungry or lacking. He welcomes them because the hearts of the worshipers honor Him. Those who are unwilling to come to Him will one day face His righteous judgment (50:21).

David himself came to God in humility and repentance. He had sinned greatly. His soul was wasting away. He knew, despite the dire consequences his sinning caused, that he had truly sinned against God and only God could forgive him and restore his joy (51:12). What truly pleases God is a broken spirit and a contrite heart (51:17).

Pray for renewed awe at the greatness and forgiveness of God.

Monday, April 26, 2021—Psalms 46-48

The presence of God in the lives of His followers makes all the difference. Psalm 46 celebrates the strength and protection God provides because He is always present. Those who know Him fear no trouble. The earth can shake, and the waters can rise, and His people are not worried. God is in the midst of them (46:4). If He is allowing it, He will protect them and use it. One word from Him can create everything and stop anything. He tells His people, "Be still, and know that I am God" (46:10).

God promises that He will be exalted in all the earth (46:10). He is the king over the whole earth (47:2, 7-8). When a team wins a championship or an individual accomplishes something significant, there often is a parade or a gathering to celebrate. Consider the response appropriate, then, for the One who reigns over the whole earth. The Psalmist calls on His people to clap, to shout, and to sing. If ordinary humans are worth celebrating, how much more is the Victorious One?

Unlike a championship parade or celebratory dinner, the praise of God takes place day after day. He dwells among His people, so they can come to Him continually in worship. He lived in the Tabernacle and Temple which became a visible testimony to His presence and power. He lives in Christ-followers now and uses them as His ambassadors. He makes Himself known as a refuge (48:3) and a guide (48:14).

Praise God for His presence and power in you.

Sunday, April 25, 2021—Psalms 43-45

To struggle in faith is not always a sign of sin or failure. To feel discouragement or grief may simply be the symptoms of living in a broken world. Living around unfaithful people and in a godless society can siphon joy and gladness from the soul.

David prayed that God would vindicate him and champion his cause. He needed God to rescue him from deceitful and unjust people. He knew God was his refuge, but his emotions were telling him that God was far off. The enemy's oppression was heavy, so he needed a fresh infusion of God's light and truth (43:3) to lead him and encourage him.

Israel knew they were helpless and hopeless without God. He had called them out of slavery and given them a home. He gave them victory over their enemies and disgraced those who hated them (44:7-8), but there were times where they, like David, felt oppressed and abandoned (44:9-16). Sometimes this is the consequence of personal sin. Sometimes this is the result of the world's brokenness. Each time the faithful are not to forget God or to betray the conditions of His covenant (44:17). The dawn will come. Help will arrive. Call on God to act (44:26) and wait for Him.

God is noble, and His people are His treasure. He comes to them and anoints them with the oil of joy (45:7). He leads them in gladness and rejoicing (45:15). When depression and despair make the soul downcast, remember the faithfulness of the King who makes all things new.

Saturday, April 24, 2021—Psalms 40-42

Hebrews 4 assures believers they can approach the throne of grace boldly to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. This boldness is not permission for arrogance. God's children come to Him confident in His character and willingness to help, not in their own status.

David knew God had helped him in the past. He had waited patiently and seen God take him from the pit of despair and put a new song in his mouth. Knowing God's character and ability, David implores God to act quickly to deliver him (40:13). He had been patient in the past but needed God on the scene rapidly in this instance. God is not bothered by requests or needs. He assesses the condition of the heart coming to Him.

The heart of the righteous one is considerate of the poor (41:1). He sees others the way God sees them. The heart of the righteous one knows he is not perfect and has sinned (41:4). The Lord will support the righteous and place them in His presence forever, delivering them from their enemies. He saves those whose hearts are aligned with His.

Knowing God does not insulate the righteous from struggle. Many will experience depression or despair. Why does the soul feel so downcast? These feelings of dejection are not uncommon. Circumstances seem to indicate God has forgotten His promises. Jesus Himself wrestled greatly on the cross. The anchor for the soul is to hope always in God (42:11).

Praise God for His faithfulness and the hope that brings.

Friday, April 23, 2021—Psalms 37-39

Investment professionals continually remind their clients of the power of long-term investing. If the clients are willing to put a portion of their income regularly into an account now, that money will multiply and provide a rich future. They have to be willing to sacrifice and to wait.

Imagine the return, then, on an investment in God's Kingdom. The Psalmist repeatedly urged the singers of Psalm 37 to wait on the Lord. Children have the hardest time learning to be patient, but as they mature, they reap its benefits. The righteous will find God to be faithful to

provide and protect. “Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he will lift you up to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it” (37:34).

Patience and endurance are non-negotiable characteristics for Christ-followers. They will face times of physical pain and discomfort. Their closest friends and family will be far off. Enemies will gloat and find success. These are temporary. Long-term hope is in God alone (38:15).

David asked God to remind him how short his life truly was (39:4). Compared to God, David was nothing. He boldly declared, “Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you” (39:7). David was learning to trust in the Lord and do good, delighting himself in the God who is faithful (37:3-5).

Praise God for being eternal and wise. Pray for faith to trust Him in difficulty, wisdom to repent of sin, and endurance to wait on His timing.