

Psalm 94

Date: Sunday, 14 November 2021

Scripture: Psalm 94

Sermon: Comfort in God's Divine Justice

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Scripture

Psa. 94:1 O LORD, God of vengeance,

O God of vengeance, shine forth!

2 Rise up, O judge of the earth;

repay to the proud what they deserve!

3 O LORD, how long shall the wicked,

how long shall the wicked exult?

4 They pour out their arrogant words;

all the evildoers boast.

5 They crush your people, O LORD,

and afflict your heritage.

6 They kill the widow and the sojourner,

and murder the fatherless;

7 and they say, "The LORD does not see;

the God of Jacob does not perceive."

Psa. 94:8 Understand, O dullest of the people!

Fools, when will you be wise?

9 He who planted the ear, does he not hear?

He who formed the eye, does he not see?

10 He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke?

He who teaches man knowledge—

11 the LORD—knows the thoughts of man,

that they are but a breath.

Psa. 94:12 Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD,

and whom you teach out of your law,

13 to give him rest from days of trouble,

until a pit is dug for the wicked.

14 For the LORD will not forsake his people;

he will not abandon his heritage;

15 for justice will return to the righteous,

and all the upright in heart will follow it.

Psa. 94:16 Who rises up for me against the wicked?

Who stands up for me against evildoers?

17 If the LORD had not been my help,

my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence.

18 *When I thought, "My foot slips,"
your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up.*

19 *When the cares of my heart are many,
your consolations cheer my soul.*

20 *Can wicked rulers be allied with you,
those who frame injustice by statute?*

21 *They band together against the life of the righteous
and condemn the innocent to death.*

22 *But the LORD has become my stronghold,
and my God the rock of my refuge.*

23 *He will bring back on them their iniquity
and wipe them out for their wickedness;
the LORD our God will wipe them out.*

Transcript

Introduction

Have you felt that life is unfair? Have you ever felt the injustice of the world? If you've lived, of course you have. I am very sure that each one of us here has felt the injustice of life, where we have been mistreated and we say, "that's not fair!"

Maybe you have been mistreated in the big things, but it might also be the tiny things that have rocked your world. It's the unfairness that has worn away at you. Perhaps, you have become cynical. Cynical about life, about other people, maybe dare I say, God.

We come to Psalm 94 in our Psalm series, and it's an encouragement for us because it acknowledges the injustice of the world. It also helps us to work out what to do when we do face injustice. There's three things I want to share from this Psalm. Firstly, the comfort. Secondly, the warning. And thirdly, the promise.

The Comfort

Let's talk about the first point, the comfort that this Psalm gives us.

When we face injustice, and we face wrongdoing, honestly, it's tempting to be discouraged when we are exposed through wrongdoing at the hands of other people. It's tempting to think, "will they get away with it?" That's what the Psalmist feels here, have a look!

3 O LORD, how long shall the wicked,

how long shall the wicked exult?

4 They pour out their arrogant words;

all the evildoers boast.

5 They crush your people, O LORD,

and afflict your heritage.

6 They kill the widow and the sojourner,

and murder the fatherless;

Psalm 94:3-6 (ESV)

We're told here that these evildoers are murderers. They're killing widows, sojourners, children. They are literally getting away with murder. But I am very sure that all of us here have been exposed to evildoers who boast. We have had to deal with those who have crushed us, emotionally, physically, mentally.

And there is a risk that when we are being treated badly, we may be tempted to think that the LORD doesn't see what we are going through. Just as the evildoers say in verse 7,

7 and they say, "The LORD does not see;

the God of Jacob does not perceive."

Psalm 94:7 (ESV)

Do you ever feel that the LORD has forgotten? That he doesn't see what you've gone through. That he is blind to the trouble that you are going through. In the news in the last couple of weeks, we've been overjoyed by the news that Cleo in Western Australia was discovered. It's such good news. But I think about those who haven't been found? I think about William Tyrell, missing since 2014. That's confronting. That there are some people who may never ever be found. And it feels like the LORD has forgotten.

But the Psalmist gives us comfort. Do you see it? Let me show you,

Psa. 94:8 Understand, O dullest of the people!

Fools, when will you be wise?

9 He who planted the ear, does he not hear?

He who formed the eye, does he not see?

10 He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke?

He who teaches man knowledge—

11 the LORD—knows the thoughts of man,

that they are but a breath.

Here is the comfort. The Lord sees and he knows. The Lord knows what you are going through. Whilst evildoers think that their evil deeds will never come to light, the Psalmist gives us the comfort that we need and he reminds us that the LORD knows. He sees everything. Nothing escapes his knowledge. He is the one who made the ear, obviously he can hear. He is the one who made the eye, he can see. He is the one with ultimate knowledge, he knows.

The Psalmist tells us comfort is found in crying out to the LORD, pleading with him because that's what the Psalmist himself does. Have a look at the first two verses,

Psa. 94:1 O LORD, God of vengeance,

O God of vengeance, shine forth!

2 Rise up, O judge of the earth;

repay to the proud what they deserve!

Psalm 94:1-2 (ESV)

You know, there are times when I'm driving, I see how badly people drive, and I want things to be righted, but often the police don't see it. The police don't see people running through red lights, speeding, stopping in the middle of the road. And that can feel frustrating. It's tempting to take revenge. It's human nature to want to right the wrongs that we see. We feel uncomfortable when people get away with things.

But the Psalmist wants us to find our comfort in the LORD. He wants us to cry out to God for justice. He wants us to cry out to the LORD because he is the one who sees, he is the one who knows. He wants us to pray and ask the LORD for divine justice. Do we find our comfort in the LORD just as the Psalmist? Or do we take matters into our own hands in order to right the wrongs that have occurred to us?

Paul himself warns us against taking revenge on people. Rather than cursing them, we are to bless them. We are not to repay evil with evil. As followers of Jesus, we are to love even our enemies, if they are hungry, we are to feed them. And we are to leave vengeance in the hands of the LORD. Because the LORD says "vengeance is Mine, I will repay."

Jesus himself encourages us to cry out to the LORD. (Luke 18) He gives the story of the widow who demands justice from a corrupt judge. Knocking on his door day and night demanding justice. Jesus compares the judge to the LORD and says that if the corrupt judge gives justice to the widow just because he wants her to stop bugging him, how much more will the LORD give us justice because he is good, he is loving, he is righteous, he is the one who sees all? I wonder, will the LORD find faith in our church, in our houses if Jesus were to come back today? Would he find us on our knees begging for justice? Or will he find us out and about taking things into our own hands, taking revenge on those around us?

Just as Joseph Scriven wrote in that beautiful hymn, What a Friend

Have we trials and temptations?

Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged

Take it to the Lord in prayer

Take it to Jesus in prayer, cry out to Him.

Our comfort.

The Warning

Let's talk about the warning found in this passage, because there's a warning for two types of people. The unrepentant sinner and the sufferer. Let's talk about these two.

For the Unrepentant Sinner

Let's talk about the warning to the unrepentant sinner. I'm talking about the individual who doesn't trust in Jesus. I'm talking to the person who doesn't take Jesus seriously. Maybe you are like the evildoer that is being described here. You are proud, you are arrogant, you boast with arrogant words. You have oppressed other people. You have used your power, your money, your resources to get ahead, and in doing so, you have caused strife for other people. Maybe you have cheated, you have used dishonest ways. You love money. You love yourself more than you love God and loved your neighbour.

You have hurt family, friends, neighbours, all the in name of getting ahead. And perhaps, until now, you've gotten away with it. You haven't be caught by the police, you haven't been called out. You think, "As long as nobody knows, then that's fine."

But the truth that this Psalm tells you is that there will be a day when what you have done in private, will be revealed. What you have done in the darkness, will be brought out in the light for all to see. There will be a day when the LORD himself will deliver his judgement against you and you will be found wanting. There will be a day when you will be called to account, and you will regret all that you did in the name of exalting yourself because the LORD himself sees, the LORD himself

knows, and the LORD himself remembers. All that you've done, every thought, nothing escapes Him.

Unless, you choose to repent. Unless you confess your wrongdoing before the LORD and you put your trust in Jesus Christ. Unless you stop living for yourself and you live for Jesus Christ. That's my plea to you right now, to repent and turn to Jesus. The LORD is being patient with you right now because he wants you to repent.

That's the warning for the unrepentant sinner.

For the Unrepentant Sufferer

But here's the warning for the unrepentant sufferer. I'm talking about the person who trusts in Jesus Christ for their life, but right now, they're going through suffering, and here's the warning, maybe it is the LORD who is disciplining you. Now this is not always the case. Sometimes, we suffer through no fault of our own. We suffer because our world is full of sin, it is fallen, it is imperfect. But sometimes, we suffer because of our own pride, because of our own sin. And if you know it is, if you know you are going through a trouble times because of your own sin, are you opening your heart to God and willing to repent and change?

Psa. 94:12 Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD,

and whom you teach out of your law,

13 to give him rest from days of trouble,

until a pit is dug for the wicked.

14 For the LORD will not forsake his people;

he will not abandon his heritage;

15 for justice will return to the righteous,

and all the upright in heart will follow it.

Psalm 94:12-15 (ESV)

Ask yourself this question, "Is what I am going through God's discipline on me?"

Are you unrepentant over sins in your life that God our Father is disciplining you for? Don't think that if you're sitting in this church, you're safe from this warning. If you have unrepentant sin, then you need to listen to these words.

Because this is what happened to the Israelites. They were God's chosen people. And yet there were times when God would discipline them because they disobeyed God. They were loved by God, but at the same time, they were sent into Babylonian exile because of their disobedience. Israel is a warning for you and for me today.

Recently, there's a show on television about parenting. And one of the messages that comes out is that discipline is a dirty word. You shouldn't discipline children. You should only affirm them. That's ridiculous. The world thinks that you should not discipline children today. That the wisdom from the Scriptures is out of date, it's old. But actually, the wisdom of the Scriptures is from God himself. Discipline actually shows love.

Maybe I can give you an example. When I was younger, my mother would often tell me where I went wrong. And she would often discipline me for speaking back, for disrespecting her. I must admit, at the time, it wasn't the most pleasant thing to go through. But looking back now, I'm very thankful to her for doing that. Looking back I can see the goodness and the love of my mother. I'm sure that when we reflect back on the discipline that our parents have given us, we can see the love and wisdom. Now, there may be circumstances that the discipline was a little heavy handed, but we can see that the discipline was for our blessing like here in Psalm 94, we're told 'Blessed is the man who is disciplined by the LORD.'

Can I ask, if you're going through troubled times, perhaps it's because the LORD is disciplining you. Now you might find that a little uncomfortable, but Jesus himself said that we need to reflect on ourselves. It's so easy for us to point out the speck in someone else's eye and forget the log that is in our own eye. Maybe, the suffering you are going through at the moment is because he wants to show you where you need to change. It is the LORD who is showing his love to you.

I know, that sometimes, you go through suffering because of other people's sin, and it is no fault of yours. But that's not what this Psalm is about. It's really about the discipline of the father on his children.

That's the warning to the unrepentant sufferer.

The Promise

Finally, let's talk about the promise.

I must admit that as I wait for justice from God, it's really easy to get cynical about life. Maybe you do too. We can feel like we are battered and bruised by life. You've lived longer than me and I know that you've gone through your fair share of injustice. And it's really easy to give up because it feels like God has forgotten you. It feels really easy to give up because when you go through suffering, you realise that you don't have any strength.

But there's a promise here that we need to cling to when we are hoping for divine justice. And it's something that we need to cling to, let me show you.

14 For the LORD will not forsake his people;

he will not abandon his heritage;

15 for justice will return to the righteous,

and all the upright in heart will follow it.

Sometimes it feels like God is disciplining us, that he has hidden his face from us for a little time. And it can feel like he has abandoned us. That we are no longer his children. But what we may feel may not reflect reality.

Because the reality is that God promises never to forsake his people. He will never abandon us. If we have trusted in his Son, we have been adopted into the family, and whilst we may be disciplined by our father in heaven, we will never ever be cast out of the family. (ref. WCF XII on Adoption).

And we see that through Jesus. Jesus showed us that he was willing to die for us even whilst we were his enemies. So if he was willing to do that, how great a love does he have for you and for me? He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Let's pray.