

July 9th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Title: A Song for the Strong
Sermon Text: (Psalm 49:1-20)

There is no question that we are living in a time of divine judgment in our nation. – As we studied last week, when we see that “Uncleanness, Vile Passions, and Reprobate Minds” are the predominant spirit in a people, that is evidence of being handed over by God!

- But this morning we want to look at a Psalm, when learned and applied, would prevent men and women from being turned over to wickedness by God.

(Not all people who are “disconnected” from reality are so due to the Judgment of God! – Some are disconnected from reality just due to the mindlessness of their sin.)

Now that being said, living in the middle of a people who are disconnected from reality is not something that should move the people of God with fear! – Rather on the contrary. – Rather than weakening us; knowing the things we know ought to make us stronger, and bolder in our living faith!

Four simple complexities the LORD gives us to Convince Men that they had better awaken to the severity of the things of God.

I. A Call to Attention

The Psalm opens with a Divine call to Attention! – This psalm is not background music, nor is it intended to be a little ditty that is mindlessly sung, or heard!

Like all other things written in the Bible this is not intended for you to enjoy some kind of religious sound, but it is to receive with the intention of obeying!

- To listen, like you are listening for orders or instructions for the next thing to do.

The Bible does no good to Christians, or non-Christians who are asleep at the page!

- Here's the idea – “Listen to this, Like you are not Listening to Anything else; with all other distractions removed!

David wrote in Psalm 34:11 – “Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.”

- Do you have any idea how much of the trouble in life you have, and how much goodness in life you miss for no other reason than you “will not hear the Word of the Lord”?

3 things he deals with in the first four verses:

A. The People of The Psalm – vs 1-2 – “Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all the inhabitants of the world:”

*Note – Exactly who this Psalm is for!

- Though it is written to be Sung in the Temple, it is Written to be the Song Heard Around the World! – Note how he addresses, who he addresses:

1.) Personal – “all ye people”

a.) This is to be heard “individually”

*Note – No man can get “lost in the all.” – When instructions are for everyone, they have a tendency to apply to no one.

- It is not an uncommon thing for people hear phrases like “Whosoever, Everyone, Everybody, and All, and it sounds so General, that it ceases to be Personal!

When the Word of God speaks to “Everyone”, it often lands in the hearts and minds of people to mean “Everyone BUT me”

- This is a Personal Psalm

2.) Global – “all ye inhabitants of the world”

*Note – Simply put, it is for “all the individuals on the earth”

1.) This was a clear, but often ignored doctrine among the Jews.

- The message of this Psalm speaks to far beyond Palestine – far beyond Judaism.

*Note – The Jews needed to understand that this was not a Jewish message! Furthermore, the Baptists need to understand this is not a Jewish message! And so do the Republicans and Democrats, and Hindus, and Socialists, and Atheists, and Mormons, and all children Red and Yellow, Black and White!

(Sometimes we subtly forget that the Bible is not God’s Word to the Church going religionists of the Western Hemisphere. The Bible is God’s Word to the World. – This Psalm is a song that is intended to be a Personal Message for every Individual on the Globe.)

3.) Cultural – “both low and high, rich and poor together”

*Note -This is for “White Collar, Blue Collar, and No Collar!” From Madison Avenue to the Local Landfill. No one too rich, and no one too poor.

(Note this; The Psalmist here divides society along “economic lines” and in “political clout.” – For most of time, and in most of cultures this has been man’s way of categorizing people and differentiating among them.)

- Low and High – political or social strength
- Rich and Poor – financial or economic strength

All of that being said, you can take this Psalm Personally, regardless of where you come from in life.

B. The Promise of the Psalm vs 3-4

- 1.) “My mouth shall speak of wisdom”
- 2.) “I will open my dark sayings upon the harp.”

*Note – Simply put, this psalm promises Divine wisdom and Spiritual enlightenment to those who are living on the wrong side of it.

- But it only does so, as it is sung! –

This Psalm is intended to be sung, that it might be said! It is intended to be said that it might be heard; and it is intended to be heard that it might be learned!

One of the unique things about this 49th Psalm is that it’s message is both to those who know the Lord; and those who need to know the Lord. It is to those who Saved AND those who are Lost!

- It is not merely a song to be sung, but it is a sermon to be preached!

*Note – Notice the things that are in this Psalm

- a.) Wisdom - “the right use of knowledge”
- b.) Dark sayings – “Truth deeper than the surface!”

*Note – Here is the folly, and quite honestly, the disingenuous nature of many people. *“Preacher, I’m a simple man! – If it ain’t on top, it can’t be that important! – God would have only put the important stuff on the surface for an easy read so we can learn all we want right there on top!”*

- The Hebrew word for that is Hogwash.
- I have had people before roll their eyes and shake their head if you say anything more complicated than Jesus loves me!
- God put the Surface stuff on the surface, and God put the deeper stuff in the deep, and I remind you that He tells us that “Delight of a Blessed man” is to “meditate day and night” in the Law of the Lord.
- If all you want is what is simple and, on the surface, you’ve never really tasted what’s there in the first place.
That’s like eating the cherry on top of your ice-cream, and saying you ate all that was there!

C. The Pledge to the Psalm vs 3-4

- 1.) “the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.”
- 2.) “I will incline my ear to a parable”

(Note – Now here’s a side note. This is a song; and they were not merely to “learn it” but to learn FROM it.” – This is not for

the Entertainment of the Mindless, but for Engagement of the Mind!)

- How much we never learn from songs we never sing!?!
How deep we do not go, from wells we never drink from!

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

- That is the 3rd Verse of a Hymn written in 1592
- “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” – Martyn Luther

Songs are not to take up time before the message is preached! This Psalm was written not only for Israel sing – but for the saved to swim in, and drink from!

- Give the Lord’s Word Your Attention!

A Call to Attention:

II. A Courage to Awaken – vs 5-9

*Note – Now here are some things to awaken in your heart and in your mind! – You may know them, but that doesn’t mean you are AWAKE to them.

A. To the Safety of the Saved – “Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?”

*Note- Here is the primary proposition of this song! – Fear during the flourishing of sin is senseless!

(Why should I fear, when the iniquity of those behind me, surround me?)

1.) – “the days of evil”

*Note – When evil is more prevalent than righteousness! When the character of the times is more aligned with sinfulness, than they are with righteousness.

2.) – “when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about.”

- “the iniquity of my heels” –

a.) Heels is the word for “supplanter” which is what Jacob was called when he latched on to Esau’s heel at birth.

The picture is one of “iniquity behind me, grappling for my heels.” – When even if it surrounds me; Why should I be afraid!

Exactly what is it, you worried about when the evil come into power? –

Exactly what is it they can take from you!

- Comfort, but not conviction
- Finances, but not Faith
- Health, but not Heaven
- Peacefulness, but Not Peace!

*Note – If the things that they can threaten us with bring fear into our hearts, we value the wrong things!

- When we value living, more than the Loyalty to Christ, we value living too much, and give them something to wound us with.

- When we value lifestyle, more than we do faithfulness, we value lifestyle way too much, and give them something to wound us with.

- When we value health, more than we do holiness, we value our health way too much, and give them something to wound us with.

The Only Place they can threaten are the things that we value and cherish. When the things we value and cherish are far beyond their reach, they cannot wound us!

There is a Fortress for the Faithful!

Proverbs 18:10 – “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

Psalms 27:1-5 – “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, They stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock.”

We must awaken to the safety of the saved, that way we will live with greater boldness as believers!

B. To the Brevity of the Living – “None ... can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him....That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.”

1.) There is a mindset that has done all it can to ignore the brevity of life; and live as though dying is irrelevant...

a.) "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches."

*Note – Don't read this and say, "those sorry rich people who have more money than heart can wish..."

- (This verse certainly includes them. – But more than that, these are those who's entire ambition in life, is just to live a happy, comfortable, lifestyle, enjoy their kids, their vacations, the weather, and ride the merry-go-round of life, just as nice as you can.)

- You don't have to have money to trust in wealth! – All that means is someone who just looks for and lives for the comforts and conveniences of this life.

- This is the mindset that is DEAF and Disconnected from the Urgency of Life's Brevity!

2.) He states at least two things about the iniquity and evil that exists around us and the people with previous mindset...

a.) They have an expiration date –
b.) They can do nothing about it –

*Note -The very most they can do is roll in their riches for a season that will come to an end. – And they have no power, no ability to escape the consequences of their lives; nor can they offer escape to anyone else.

*Note – Now notice verse 8; that appears to be a parenthetical statement.

- The Redemption of their soul is Precious! – Yet if not seized, will cease forever!

There will be a moment in time, redemption is no longer available, and it will never be available again!

There is a Call to Attention – A Courage that Needs to Awaken

III. A Concept to Abandon – vs 10-13 –

*Note – I cannot tell you how many times, I have learned and relearned the mandate to never think outside of the Book!

The Psalmist now attacks the "normal programming, and natural thinking, of good, civilized mind" – and demonstrates its utter insanity. – What is a Normal Way of thinking, is not Always a Biblical way of thinking.

A. The Sentimental Cycles of the Fool – Just as the earth moves around the sun, and the merry-go-round speeds up, but goes nowhere, so does the repeated cycles of man's view of living.

1.) His Observation – vs 10 – "He sees that the wise men die, likewise the fool, and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others."

*Note – Who cannot see that?

Someone rightly pointed out that the greatest and highest and wealthiest and most politically powerful people to have ever lived – wind up needing nothing more than a 3 foot by 7-foot box in the end. (All lifestyles come to an end)

2.) His Imagination – vs 11 – "Their inward thought is, *that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all*

generations; they call their lands after their own names.”

*Note – Since they cannot give themselves redemption, they can make themselves “Remembered!” – Since they cannot preserve their being; they think they can preserve their name!!

What a cheap substitute for REDEMPTION?!

- I have heard it said by some philosophers that they believe in the grand “maybe!” – Since they cannot be sure they will live in heaven, they try to make sure their names live on earth!

- Halls of Fame – History Books – Keepsakes – Memorabilia, the most admired people in society are those who can make their name Live On!

3.) His Imitation – vs 13 – “This their way is their folly; Yet their posterity approve their sayings.”

- This idea that their names can live far beyond them, and living *with* that idea, and *for* that idea, is their “insanity!” - YET – the next generation picks up the same torch and carries it proudly!

Friend – Listen – Men have no idea how many people have come and gone. Men have no idea how many companies, empires, kingdoms, accomplishments and achievements buried in the dustbin of history, known only to God.

- Were it not for the Bible, no one would ever know the Amorites ever existed.

I cannot think of anything in Satan’s bag of snake-oil philosophy more insidious than the idea of treasuring earthly

memorials as a substitute for divine mercy. – When a man would rather be remembered than redeemed, he has shown himself ignorant in eternal proportions.

IV. A Conclusion to Address – vs 14-20

A. The Inevitability of Death – vs 12 & 14

1.) vs 12 “Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish.”

*Note – Just as sure as that flattened squirrel is on the interstate, so is the death of Time’s Man of the Year!

2.) vs 14 “Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.”

*Note – Here are the certainties, and realities, that most of humanity know is true; but rarely if ever actually functions like it...

- a.) Laid in the Grave
- b.) The body eaten, or consumed by death.
- c.) the upright shall have dominion over them.

*Note – Note this; from the grave you have absolutely no power over the living to honor your wishes; they will actually decide what happens to your body!

d.) their beauty shall consume in the grave.

*Note – There are no beautiful rotting corpses! What death does to this body is uglier than homemade butter.

(All of that being said, the Choirmaster leads this chorus in the Temple, so that as it is etched in song, it is sealed to the mind.)

B. The Availability of Life – vs 15 – “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for He shall receive me. Selah!”

Death is inevitable, but life is available! – Like the testimony of Job, the resurrection of the people of God is as much a reality for the saved, as yesterday’s sunset!

(Right in the middle of all of this darkness, and all of this wickedness, and all of this stress and oppression, is the statement that makes all other threats moot!

- God will raise me again!

- If all that you can do is kill me; then you can’t really do anything to me!)

1.) In God alone through Christ Jesus is Redemption from the Grave!

*Note – The New Testament fleshes out for us the fact that Christ redeems us from sin; but when sin looses its power, so does the grave! – The Grave is the Fruit of Sin – Where there ceases to be sin; there will cease to be a grave!

(Now remember this – “Hear this all ye inhabitants of the earth.” – Not just the Jews! – The good news is just as global as the bad news! – and each and every one of us must take this personally to heart!) – Redemption is for every ear that will hear!

These are the conclusions of the matter that you MUST address: - The inevitability of dying; the availability for living; but here finally.

C. The Futility of the Wicked – vs 16-20

*Note – We are often intimidated by a Massive Movement of Uselessness!

Notice the things the Psalmist points out about this Wicked World that does not want the believer!

1.) Worthless as a Threat – “Be not afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased.” – vs 16

*Note – There was a common fear; and usually justifiable; when men prospered. Prosperity often brought social influence and political power; and rarely did men use those things benevolently.

(There seems to be a great unnerving when your enemy appears to gain leverage)

- “Do not fear that!”

*Note – The combined influence of the loss of all time; have absolutely NOTHING they can do against the God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit!

- Don’t let them unnerve you!

a.) Proverbs 29:25 – “The fear of man bringeth a snare: But whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”

2.) Wasteful in their Pride – “Though while he lived he blessed his soul; and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.” – vs 18

*Note – While the prophets and preachers of God spend their time proclaiming these Words of God; the world goes around patting itself on the back!

You scan the calendars of the past; while the Word of God was to be being preached, listened to, heeded and understood;

- Men have been having Award Shows! Inducting people into halls of fame; Admiring Famous

accomplishments; handing out metals and trophies for lifetime achievement awards; etc.

Preacher, don't you think we should give honor to whom honor is due? – Of course – when they do honorable things!

-Making godless movies, singing godless songs; winning godless tournaments; writing godless books; and making it big in a godless economy; are not things worthy of any kind of honor!

- Note the last part of verse 18 – “men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.”

- Sounds a lot like – Follow your Dreams! Follow Your Heart – Good for You, You got what You wanted!

- Wants are Wrong – Godless, Fleshly, Selfish Wants Are!

3.) Without End in their Suffering – “He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.”

*Note – It is important to note that the Psalmist doesn't say they shall never see life – Because even the wicked will be resurrected at the last day. – They will never see LIGHT again!

- When it is lights out for them; they will never again come back on!

Here's the conclusion of the whole matter! – Life out there is a Waste! – Life in Christ, is the only thing Worth anything. – Dangers to come; ultimately are no dangers at All!