

Biblical Vindication

Psalm 7

(preached Pine Grove 4/7/19 Sun PM)

Introduction

Read the entire psalm...

A [a]Shiggaion of David, which he sang to the Lord [b]concerning Cush, a Benjamite.

*1 O Lord my God, in You I have taken refuge;
Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me,*

2

*Or he will tear [c]my soul like a lion,
[d]Dragging me away, while there is none to deliver.*

3

*O Lord my God, if I have done this,
If there is injustice in my hands,*

4

*If I have rewarded evil to [e]my friend,
Or have plundered [f]him who without cause was my adversary,*

5

Let the enemy pursue [g]my soul and overtake [h]it;

*And let him trample my life down to the ground
And lay my glory in the dust. [i]Selah.*

6

*Arise, O Lord, in Your anger;
Lift up Yourself against the rage of my
adversaries,
And arouse Yourself [j]for me; You have appointed
judgment.*

7

*Let the assembly of the peoples encompass You,
And over [k]them return on high.*

8

*The Lord judges the peoples;
[l]Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my
righteousness and my integrity that is in me.*

9

*O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but
establish the righteous;
For the righteous God tries the hearts and
[m]minds.*

10

*My shield is [n]with God,
Who saves the upright in heart.*

11

*God is a righteous judge,
And a God who has indignation every day.*

12

*If [o]a man does not repent, He will sharpen His
sword;
He has bent His bow and [p]made it ready.*

13

*He has also prepared [q]for Himself deadly
weapons;*

He makes His arrows fiery shafts.

14

*Behold, he travails with wickedness,
And he conceives mischief and brings forth
falsehood.*

15

*He has dug a pit and hollowed it out,
And has fallen into the hole which he made.*

16

*His mischief will return upon his own head,
And his violence will descend upon [r]his own
pate.*

17

*I will give thanks to the Lord according to His
righteousness
And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most
High.*

Let us pray.

When Rip Roaring Rapids opened at Carowinds in 1982, it was not common to wait over an hour in line just to get soaking wet on that ride.

The same was true with the roller coaster called Top Gun in 1999.

For that ride which lasted just a couple minutes, people were willing to stand in line for over an hour.

In those days, waiting was simply part of the amusement park experience..

Then in the early 2000s, amusement parks came up with an idea.

For the ticket price plus another \$50-100, folks could purchase fast pass privileges..

What that meant was simple.

You could purchase the fast pass and skip to the front of the line.

Needless to say it was an instant hit.

I looked this week, and Carowinds now sells season long fast land passes, and they are already sold out for the year.

This is simply another symptom of a culture that desires instant gratification.

In other words, people are willing to pay almost double the ticket price too that they won't have to wait in line.

But this is the new norm.

For many today, patience is a thing of the past.

People want enjoyment right now without waiting, and they are willing to pay dearly for it.

The incredible popularity of mobile phones is another example of a culture that has to know everything right away with delay.

Folks today will even get upset if you don't call or text them right back.

Along those same lines, not only are people addicted to instant gratification, they also desire instant vindication.

In other words, people want to be treated fairly right now in the right way, and if they aren't, they are ready to do whatever it takes to make sure they get justice immediately...

Yet, that instant vindication often involves sinful actions and attitudes..

It often involves sinful anger, impatience, or even violence.

However, this is the new normal where losing your cool seems to be a good thing and noble thing to do in order to try and obtain justice..

David was a man who was often the target of injustice.

Before he became the second king of Israel, he was constantly under attack from the first king named Saul..

Though David he had been anointed the next king of Israel, he had to run for his life at times so that Saul wouldn't kill him..

As David fled for his life, he often used those occasions to write God-inspired psalms for us..

Psalms 7 is an example of this...

In this psalm, David wants to be vindicated from a false accusation..

David wants the truth to be told about him..

But David doesn't grab the one spreading lies and throw him up against the wall until he corrects his deceitfulness..

Instead, David takes his plea for vindication to God, and I think we can learn much from the words that we wrote in this psalm..

So let's look at 4 actions of David when he was unjustly accused..

The first action is found in verses 1-2

I. Running for Refuge (1-2)

As we come to Psalm, let's set the context by looking at the inspired title of this psalm..

A [a]Shiggaion of David, which he sang to the Lord [b]concerning Cush, a Benjamite.

No one is completely sure of what a Shiggaion is.

The root of the word means to stagger, so most commentators see it as a song that is uneven in its rhythm.

May also refer to the back and forth nature of the psalm in that David starts concerned for his safety but ends with trust in the Lord..

We also don't know who Cush the Benjamite is.

There is no mention of this person in the OT, so we are left to speculate.

We do know that David's great enemy in his early life was Saul, the first king of Israel and the king that David was going to succeed.

And we also know that Saul was also a Benjamite..

Os it follows that Saul's family would be opposed to David trying to take the throne from their relative..

So it is possible that Cush was simply a relative of Saul who set out to smear David's character and reputation with a nasty accusation that we will see in a moment..

The final thing that we see in the title is that this was a personal song to the Lord.

We see that David sang it to the Lord.

What a great encouragement to us to pour out our hearts before the Lord in times of doubt and trouble..

David was going to be the next king of Israel but he wasn't above poured out his soul to the Lord..

So, let's see what is on his heart..

1

***O Lord my God, in You I have taken refuge;
Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver
me,***

2

***Or he will tear [c]my soul like a lion,
[d]Dragging me away, while there is none to
deliver.***

This is not figurative language from David.

His life is truly in danger, most likely from the hand of Saul.

It is quite possible that Cush lied about David to Saul in order to enrage Saul..

So David is running to his storm shelter..

He is taking refuge in his strong tower.

And David's request to the Lord is simple.

Save me and deliver me.

As we so often see in the Bible, the best prayers are often the most direct prayers..

Nothing fancy in this language here..

Just a cry from David's heart to the heart of his God.

And why is he in need of deliverance?

Verse 2..

He is in danger of being ripped apart by enemies...

For David, the threat is real, so he runs to His father for shelter..

I don't need to apply this to our hearts, but I will remind you of the need to seek the Lord first in our times of distress and trouble.

So quickly our minds move to human help and human wisdom.

WE are often "fixers" who try to handle our our difficulties without bothering anyone else.

WE like to be self-sufficient but that often becomes sinful pride.

When the lions are outside your door, don't try to fight them off yourself.

Run to the refuge of your Lord first..

That was David's first action, but now let us see the 2nd action he took in verses 3-5..

We will call this..

II. Resisting the Charge (3-5)

Verse 3..

3
O Lord my God, if I have done this,

Know the question is....”Done what?”

In other words, what had David been accused of doing?

Well, we don’t get the specific allegation, but we get some clues..

Let’s keep reading..

If there is injustice in my hands,

4
*If I have rewarded evil to [e]my friend,
Or have plundered [f]him who without cause was
my adversary,*

5
*Let the enemy pursue [g]my soul and overtake
[h]it;
And let him trample my life down to the ground
And lay my glory in the dust. [i]Selah.*

It seems that Cush had accused David of acting unjustly, returning evil for good, and taking advantage of his enemy..

Again, we have no idea of what the exact charge was, but it clear that the thing being said about David was not said to cast him in a good light..

It is possible that Cush wanted to incite Saul to kill David.

It is possible that Cush was trying to incite Saul's soldiers and supporters all the more by slandering David's character by accusing him of injustice.

Regardless of the specifics of the charge, David pleads his innocence to the Lord.

In fact, David so sure of his innocence that he calls God's judgment of him if any of it is true..

Let my enemies catch me, let them trample me, let them kill me..

To lay his glory in the dust is the picture of death..

Essentially, Davids tells the Lord to take his life if the accusation against him is true..

Let me tell you something...

That is one of the boldest prayers in the entire Bible.

It takes a lot of guts to ask for God's judgment on your life if what others say about you is true..

But here is the kicker..

David knew that God knew He was innocent..

That is why he can pray this prayer..

David may have been guilty of other sins at other times, but this time his critics were entirely wrong..

They were acting unjustly.

They were returning evil for good.

They are slandering David without cause..

So instead of seeking instant vindication against Cush and others, David seeks the Lord.

What a great example for all of us.

Look, when you are unjustly accused, the temptation is to go and set the record straight right away..

Our flesh tempts us to go those people in our anger and remind them...

“Ain’t nobody gonna talk about me.”

But the danger is this..

As we go to clear our name, we often harm our name in how we handle it..

When you are truly innocent, there is no need to set the record straight right now.

Rest assured, the Lord will vindicate his people if you seek him first.

The proper to resist unjust slander is not by returning for evil to those evil doers.

The proper way to resist unjust slander is to go the Lord and plead your case.

I will add this..

If the charge is accurate, repent of it and seek forgiveness...

There’s no need to seek the Lord’s defense of you if you are the guilty of the crime.

In that case, repent of the sin, confess it to Lord, make it right with your enemies..

Though our enemies may not be seeking our best interest in slandering our character, they may help our character if they push our hearts to repentance.

However, if you are innocent, resist those charges by peaking your case to the Lord first..

A 3rd action of David takes up the largest portion of this psalm in verses 6-16..

WE will call this...

III. Rousing the Lord (6-16)

Let me read verse 6 because it really sets the tone for this section..

6

*Arise, O Lord, in Your anger;
Lift up Yourself against the rage of my
adversaries,
And arouse Yourself [j]for me; You have appointed
judgment.*

David is simply going to call on God to make things right in verses 6-16..

Once we are reminded that the best prayers are those which call upon God to act according to his character..

David knows God intimately.

He knows that God protects his children.

David knows that God judges evil doers.

So David is simply going to spend the majority of this psalm rousing the Lord to come to his defense..

Look, my kids never forget anything I say...

After a very busy first semester of seminary, I told Anna and Ally that I would do better the second semester.

That we would take more time to enjoy our little adventure away from home each week.

So one night when I had a pile of papers to write, the girls come up to me wanting to head to Menchies, the frozen yogurt place at the mall..

I was swamped and overwhelmed and told them no.

They went upstairs a little while and came back with this..

Daddy, you said that we take more time the semester enjoying our adventure in California...

So, getting ice cream would really help us enjoy our adventure here..

Needless to say, we all jumped in the car and headed to Menchies for frozen yogurt..

You see, my girls are smart.

If their words can't move my heart to get them frozen yogurt, they simple use my own words to move my heart.

Look, God is our Heavenly Father.

The way to rouse his heart is to remind Him of his own words and character.

God hates slander and deceit.

God protects his children.

David is simply going to remind of this in verses 6-16..

So David calls on God to stand..

God is spirit but He is often described in human terms, and the picture of God standing is one of concern..

We only stand when we are about to take action..

David needs God to stand and defend his name.

Then we see the plea for God to lift himself and be aroused for David's sake.

Then in verses 7 -11, David writes..

7

*Let the assembly of the peoples encompass You,
And over [k]them return on high.*

8

*The Lord judges the peoples;
[l]Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my
righteousness and my integrity that is in me.*

9

*O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but
establish the righteous;
For the righteous God tries the hearts and
[m]minds.*

10

*My shield is [n]with God,
Who saves the upright in heart.*

11

*God is a righteous judge,
And a God who has indignation every day.*

IT seems that David is calling on the Lord to act so that God's people are not put to shame..

In other words, God's protection of David will encourage other saints to trust in the Lord in their time of need..

But God's protection of David will demonstrate to all the world that David's God is a God of justice.

David's God will not let evil prevail.

He will not let deceitful slander continue.

He will let inaccurate accusations stand.

God will vindicate David and prove to the world that He is a God who acts justly.

But also take note of the second half of verse 8..

[I]Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me.

Again, we see the boldness of David to call upon God based upon David's own character.

Now look, this isn't a prideful statement..

This also isn't a claim of sinlessness.

Instead, David is using the character of his own life as a reason for God to act.

I tell you one thing...

That tells me a lot about David's integrity.

Sure, he is going to commit some incredible sins.

Sure, he is going to make some poor choices.

But the pattern of David's life was one of integrity and character and obedience.

Could you ask God to act on your behalf based upon your character as a believer?

You should be able to do that.

David did.

And before you say, "well that is David," I would remind you that Paul made the same claim in the NT.

When Paul's critics falsely accused of doing ministry for sinful and selfish reasons, Paul's consistent answer was...

"My life speaks for itself."

"I have a clean conscience before the Lord."

Look, the goal of your life should lie to live in such a way that you can ask God to defend you based solely on your character.

Sometimes, I think believers speak of their fallenness too much almost as a way to excuse their sin..

I hear things like, “Well we all sin. That’s just our fallen nature.”

However, the goal of you life is not to like a sinner but to live like a saint.

David wasn’t perfect but his character was of such quality that he offered it as a reason for God to defend Him..

Good motivation for us all to live a life like that.

To close out this section of rousing the Lord, David uses verse 12-16 to truly envision the Lord’s deliverance of Him..

Verse 12..

12

If [o]a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword;

He has bent His bow and [p]made it ready.

13

He has also prepared [q]for Himself deadly weapons;

He makes His arrows fiery shafts.

The modern picture of God is a god always filled with love and never sits in judgment on anyone.

Yet, the biblical picture of God is more than just one of love.

Here, we see the vengeful, wrathful God who will not leave the sinner unpunished.

David's speaks of God's sword, God's bow and arrow and other weapons..

And the point is that God is armed to deal with unrepentant sinners.

God will not strive with sinful man forever.

He will act and he will act justly and swiftly.

Verse 14..

14

***Behold, he travails with wickedness,
And he conceives mischief and brings forth
falsehood.***

15

***He has dug a pit and hollowed it out,
And has fallen into the hole which he made.***

16

***His mischief will return upon his own head,
And his violence will descend upon [r]his own
pate.***

David now turns a picture of God ready to strike to a picture of the sinner who refuses to repent..

This is clearly a picture of Cush the Benjamite who has spread false rumors about David..

And the simple application is this..

The lies that he spread about David in hopes of hastening David are going to actually hastening his own death..

He dug a pit for David to fall in, but now his own false accusations are going to prove his own deceitfulness...

And he will fall by his own words..

I can't help but think of Haman in the book of Esther..

He built gallows where he planned to have Mordecai hanged, but he the king order Haman to be hung on them instead.

David's prayer is for his accuser to repent, but if he doesn't David's prayer is for his accuser to be caught by his own sinful schemes..

Now that David has run to the Lord and declared his innocence..

And now that David has called upon the Lord to act
in his defense and deal with the evil doer,.

We simply come to verse 17...

WE will call this..

IV. Resting in Gratitude (17)

Verse 17..

17

***I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness
And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.***

When you are sinned against by others, the greatest benefit of going to the Lord first is that you can peace even before you have a resolution..

As we get to verse 17, there is no indication that God has acted on David's behalf.

There is no indication that the false slander has disappeared.

There is no reason to believe that David's life is no longer being sought by others.

The only thing that has changed since verse 1 is that David has poured his heart out before the Lord.

And just the simple act of doing that has put praise on David's lips..

David is offering thanks to the Lord, even though God has yet to act.

So what is David thankful for?

He is thankful for the peace that has come over him.

You see, the need to be right and vindicated is an issue of pride.

We want people to admit that they are wrong before we can find any satisfaction or comfort.

Yet, the quickest way to satisfaction and comfort is not to go to them, but to go to the Lord.

David has gone from panic to peace in 17 verses, yet there is no reason to believe that the danger has passed or that the false rumors have stopped.

The only that has changed is that David has poured out his heart to the Lord.

Let me tell you something..

If you want peace, you probably won't get it from your accusers.

Very rarely do people own up to their sin and apologize for it.

So if you want peace, you better find it by going to the Lord first..

Prayer settles our hearts way before the issues of our life get settled out.

In the midst of chaos, don't force peace with others, seek the peace that only the Lord can give..

David is now giving thanks and praising the Lord simply because he sought to go to God first..

Conclusion

Let me offer 2 quick thoughts to end our night.

#1 - You will be the victim of sinful people.

What David experienced is common to us all.

There are going to be times when you are right but are still accused of doing wrong.

This is life in the world.

But this is also the common experience of believers.

In those instances, first make sure there is no merit to the accusation.

And if not, second make sure to seek out the Lord before you seek out your accuser..

#2 - False accusations simply put you in company of Christ.

Remember, the greatest victim of unjust slander was Jesus.

They called him a son of the devil.

They crucified Him for being a guilty sinner.

Yet, like a lamb before its shearers is silent, Jesus spoke not a word but kept entrusting Himself to the Father..

May we follow the example of our Savior.

Let us pray.