

# Two Men, Two Destinies

A Sermon on Psalm 52

by

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## 1. Introduction

## 2. The Lying Tongue May Destroy, but the Covenant Faithfulness of God Endures Forever

(vv. 1-4).

a. *The boasting of the wicked is foolish in light of God's continual faithfulness (v. 1).*

i. David begins with a rhetorical question: "Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long."

1. There is a heavy dose of irony here when David calls Doeg a "mighty man."

a. A mighty man is a warrior of great bravery and virtue. He not only wields an incredible amount of strength; he uses his strength to defend God's people.

b. Doeg is anything but this. He is a bloodthirsty, ungodly coward who took it upon himself to slaughter an entire town full of people.

2. Yet the question David asks here isn't set in light of the contrast between his mighty men and the so-called, self-dubbed "mighty man" that Doeg claims to be.

- ii. The reason why the boasting of Doeg is foolishness is that he ultimately positions himself against God’s faithfulness and love toward His people.
  - 1. The term David uses here is *hesed*, which is an incredibly rich word used all throughout the Old Testament to speak of God’s love towards His people.
    - a. You can use any number of words to try and capture the meaning of it, but none of them individually do the term justice.
    - b. All of it is founded upon God’s covenant—and God is unable to break His covenant.
  - 2. Doeg boasts against the Lord as if he and he alone is the one man who is the exception to the rule, hence the rhetorical question in v. 1.
    - a. What follows from here is a scathing judgment on all the ways this man boasts in his wickedness.
    - b. But all of this is merely the “fruit” of a much deeper problem with Doeg.
- b. *The tongue of the wicked brings incredible destruction, but it is short-lived (vv. 2-5).*
  - i. “Your tongue devises destruction, O worker of deceit. You love evil more than good, falsehood more than speaking what is right. You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue” (vv. 2-4).

1. The entirety of what defines Doeg is that he is a man of lies.
  - a. First, David says his tongue devises destruction and he is a worker of deceit.
  - b. Secondly, Doeg loves evil more than good and falsehood more than the truth.
  - c. Finally, Doeg loves deceitful words that tear down rather than build up.
2. All of this characterizes the reality of what we spend so much time trying to speak against as pastors.
  - a. The reality is that every single time, every issue you face in life always boils down to a battle over the truth.
  - b. In some ways, that assault will come from outside of you.
  - c. In other ways, the assault on the truth will come from within you.
  - d. In either case though, the temptation will always be to look upon the lies of this age and believe them—and the reason for that is that from a human perspective, it seems to pay off.
- ii. “But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, and uproot you from the land of the living (v. 5).
  1. The promise to the man of lies and destruction is that he will face a swift and terrifying judgment.

- a. God will snatch him up in an instant and bring him to his death.
  - b. He will not merely die a quick death—God will rip him out of the land of the living and break him down forever.
2. You don't have to be a man exactly like Doeg to be caught up in his same fate though.
- a. The basis of his judgment is not that he slaughtered a town full of people or even that he is a man of lies.
  - b. The basis of his judgment rests upon the fact that he loves evil more than good, love lies more than truth, but ultimately, he loves this age more than he loves the Lord.

**3. The Vainglorious Tree Will Be Uprooted, but the Green Olive Tree will Flourish Forever (vv. 6-9).**

*a. God will destroy the wicked eternally and the righteous will see, fear, and then laugh (v. 6-7).*

- i. "The righteous will see and fear, and will laugh, saying, 'Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and was strong in his evil desire'" (vv. 6-7).

- 1. Notice first, the immediate contrast set between the wicked and the righteous. Doeg is promised a swift, unending judgment from God—but the righteous are spared from that judgment.

2. The righteous will see judgement poured out upon the wicked and be brought to an immediate sense of fear. Yet that fear gives way to joy for two very important reasons.
  - a. For one, the judgment of the wicked is to your benefit.
  - b. For two, this kind of judgment won't fall on you if you've made the Lord your refuge—and so you laugh.
- ii. At the heart of the wicked man's judgment is the reality that he did not make God his refuge.
  1. Everything that Doeg did was merely the fruit of what he trusted in and loved.
  2. He saw the quick pay off, the ease, and the riches—but in the end, all that accomplished was his destruction.
    - a. This is why David asked the question in verse one: why do you boast in evil, O self-dubbed mighty man?
    - b. This is the same question we bring to your minds in one way or another each and every week when we ask what the foundation of your hope is.
- b. *The righteous will flourish both now and eternally in the presence of God (vv. 8-9).*
  - i. “But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever. I will give You thanks forever,

because you have done it, and I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones” (vv. 8-9).

1. Notice how David uses the analogy of a tree once more to show just how different the trajectory of his life is compared to a man like Doeg.
  - a. In v. 5, Doeg is described as the man who will be uprooted from the land of the living and broken down forever—but in verse 8, David is like a green olive tree in the house of God.
  - b. The picture of the green olive tree really gives us an incredibly detailed idea of what the life of the righteous looks like.
    - i. Unlike the unrighteous, the righteous “olive tree” will remain through harsh conditions and even flourish.
    - ii. The life of the righteous flourishes though, because God will tend to them as a farmer tends to the olive tree.
    - iii. If you are one who trusts in Jesus Christ, this same reality is true for you just as it was for David.
2. Notice again how David contrasts his own hope with the hope of a man like Doeg.

- a. In v. 7, we see that the wicked are those who do not make God their refuge, but trust in the abundance of their riches—but in verse 8, we see that David is one who trusts in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever.
  - b. The picture being given here is that the righteous man's hope is placed securely in God and God alone. God, in other words, is his refuge.
    - i. The righteous man does not trust in the things of this age, but trusts in the Lord's faithful love.
    - ii. It is the faithful love of God which enables the righteous to endure.
3. David shows the contrast of the speech of the wicked and the speech of the righteous is radically different in light of God's faithfulness.
- a. In verses 1-4, the wicked are described as those who have a perverse tongue that delights in lies and words of destruction—but in verse 9, David is a man who will give thanks to the Lord, because He has done it.
  - b. What David means by this is that he is determined to give God praise because his life is built on the conviction of faith.

4. The final contrast between the righteous and the wicked is that their desires are at completely different ends of the spectrum.
  - a. In verse 7, we saw the wicked man is said to be one who is strong in his evil desire—but in verse 9, David lifts up the name of God as good, and waits on Him.
  - b. The wicked man's hope in riches and his strong desire for evil lead him down a wicked path—but David will remain with the godly, placing his hope in God.
- ii. In all of it, the contrast between the righteous and the wicked is set between what we love and what we hope in.
  1. David's confidence in the lovingkindness of God is what leads him to be able to look upon the carnage in front of him and see that the flourishing of the wicked is ultimately short-lived.
    - a. He has a perspective that sees God is faithful all day long, even in the midst of great evil.
    - b. The reason for this is not that David is somehow aloof to the reality that men, women, and children have all just been slaughtered by a wicked man.
  2. What David looks upon and sees informs his hope all the more, because he knows who his God is.
    - a. Because of this, he has a hope that the wicked will be judged and the righteous will be vindicated.



- b. He can wait, with full assurance and hope, that God will fulfill His promises because God's faithful love endures all day long.

#### **4. Conclusion**