

## Sermon 58: Longing for Divine Justice: Psalm 58

**Text: Psalm 58:1-11** "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth..."

### Introduction:

- **Psalm 58** contains some of the strongest language in Scripture. A quick reading sounds shockingly harsh, but as we examine its contents, we will discover that it calls us to trust God rather than pursue our own justice.
- **Psalm 58 is laid out like a legal argument:**
  - **Addressing the accused: 58:1-2**
  - **Presenting the case: 58:3-5**
  - **Appealing to the Judge: 58:6-9**
  - **Predicting a final verdict: 58:10-11**

**Summary: Psalm 58** provides hope and lays out a pattern for how to cry out to God when facing violent, oppressive people who abuse their power as a direct affront to God.

**Part 1: Addressing the accused: 58:1-2** "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth..."

- **Four points of grievance:**
  - **You claim to be speaking righteously: 58:1** "Do ye indeed speak righteousness..."
  - **You claim to be judging uprightly: 58:1** "Do ye judge uprightly..."
  - **You rather craft evil: 58:2** "In heart ye work wickedness..."

- **You violently oppress the people you should protect: 58:2**  
"Ye weigh the violence of your hands..."
- **The limitations of these protests:**
  - These rulers did not care.
  - He needed to appeal to the Highest Authority.

**Part 2: Presenting the case: 58:3-5** "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely..."

- **The history of God's people at the time was filled with injustice:**
  - The time of the Judges was characterized by everyone doing what was right in their own eyes.
  - Eli's sons were evil men who abused their position as priests.
  - Samuel's sons took bribes and perverted justice.
  - Saul was trying to kill David without a cause.
- **While David's adversary is never named, these are likely the kinds of struggles in view.**
- **Three points of grief:**
  - **First: Their evil had been firmly established: 58:3** "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies..."
    - He speaks as if they had been in this state from infancy.
    - They had become masters of deception.
    - They learned to get what they wanted and ignore restraint.
  - **Second: Their dealings were deadly: 58:4** "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent..."
    - Their words and actions were lethal.
    - Once they moved, the damage was done.
  - **Third: They were beyond persuasion: 58:4-5** "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely..."
    - They would not listen to reason.
    - Those who appealed to them were ignored

**Part 3: Appealing to the Judge: 58:6-8** "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun..."

- **David appealed to God in five vivid ways:**

- **First: Remove their ability to destroy: 58:6** "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions..."
  - The serpent's power is in its venom.
  - The lion's power is in its great teeth.
  - Take away their ability to destroy other people.
- **Second: Cause their influence to disappear: 58:7** "Let them melt away as waters which run continually..."
  - When it rains in a desert, the ground is so hard it quickly runs away.
  - Within a short time, there could be no remaining evidence of a flashflood.
  - Make their evil influence disappear quickly.
- **Third: Make their weapons powerless: 58:7** "When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces..."
  - When he pulls back the bow let it snap in his hands.
  - When the arrow is flying let it snap in mid-flight.
  - Make their weapons powerless.
- **Fourth: Render their actions self-defeating: 58:8** "As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away..."
  - In vivid poetic language he alludes to the appearance that as snails slide on rocks, they leave a part of themselves there.
  - Let their actions lead to their own destruction.
- **Fifth: Bring their influence to an end: 58:8** "Like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun..."
  - A still born child's life is characterized by silence.
  - Let those who have inflicted so much pain leave no legacy.
- **His appeal is consistent with Paul's instruction in Romans 12:19** "Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"
  - **Ultimate judgment belongs to Christ on that final day: John 5:22** "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son..."
  - It is God's prerogative to determine how and when He does this.
  - **Psalms 58** is not a demand for personal vengeance, but rather an appeal for a quick removal of an evil person's ability to destroy.

**Part 4: Predicting a final verdict: 58:9-11** "Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily

there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth..."

- **Sudden justice: 58:9** "Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath..."
  - Nomads in the desert often used dry thorns to build quick cooking fires.
  - These thorns would ignite quickly and burn hot.
  - God's judgment will come suddenly like a whirlwind before the fire could heat the pot.
  - Though the wicked think their plans are succeeding, God's judgment will catch them by surprise.
- **Relief that God is just: 58:10-11**
  - "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked..."
    - The righteous will see what God has done and be relieved.
    - Like soldiers walking over the dead bodies of their defeated foes, the righteous will rejoice at God's decisive judgment.
  - "Man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous..."
    - The righteous are often maligned and suffer.
    - It appears that walking uprightly is foolish.
    - This swift justice will vindicate their faith.
  - "Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth..."
    - God's word will be tested and proved reliable.
    - He will demonstrate His faithfulness.
- **Foreshadowing of final judgment:**
  - **Noah and the flood: 2 Peter 2:5** God "Spared not the old world, but saved Noah...bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly..."
  - **Lot and Sodom: 2 Peter 2:6-9** "Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them...making them an ensample...And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked...The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished..."
  - **The destruction of Jerusalem: Luke 21:20-28** "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh...For these be the days of vengeance...And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh..."
  - **The Second Coming of Christ: Revelation 19:11-16** "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war...And the armies which were in heaven

followed him upon white horses...And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS..."

- **History's Final Battle: Revelation 20:7-10** "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations...to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever..."
- **The Final Judgment:**
  - **Great White Throne: Revelation 20:11-15** "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God...And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire..."
  - **New Jerusalem: The believer's end: Revelation 21:1-4** "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away..."

### **Application:**

- **First:** Recognize that there is a direct application to believers today.
  - This is a specific context that does not describe an ordinary grievance.
  - It is not about demanding vengeance.
  - It describes a vicious, calculated, tyrannical ruler who cannot be stopped by diplomacy, pragmatism, or incremental pressure.
  - It is a truly desperate situation for everyone.
- **Second:** Be committed to prayer rather than fear.
  - Pray that God would preserve you from such circumstances.
  - Pray for the repentance of evil tyrants.

- Pray for people facing these kinds of circumstances today.
- **Third:** When the setting fits, follow this pattern of prayer.
  - Pray for God to remove their ability to destroy others.
  - Pray for God to cause their influence to disappear quickly.
  - Pray that He would make their weapons powerless.
  - Pray that He would render their actions self-defeating
  - Pray that He would quickly erase their legacy.
- **Fourth:** View life through the lens of eternity.
  - Walk by faith, trusting God's providence in an evil world.
  - Take comfort in moments where God reveals His justice.
  - Remember, despite trouble and setbacks, final deliverance is sure.
- **Fifth:** Rest in the gospel:
  - He is Savior and Judge.
  - To those who repent and believe, the Judge bore our guilt on Himself.
  - Those who reject the Savior will face the Judge.