

Sermon 65: God Preserves and Delivers His Children: Psalm 52:1-9

Text: Psalm 52:1-9 "To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.> Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah. The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. ⁹ I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints..."

Summary: Unrestrained evil is difficult to process, yet there is comfort for those who reflect on how He preserves and delivers His people.

Proposition: He wants us to find comfort in His righteousness.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Part 1: Background: "To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech..."

- **The background of Psalm 52:**
 - **Psalm 52** is a Maschil, which means it is meant to be a reflection song.
 - It was written by David.
 - **Psalm 52** is his reflection on the horrible atrocity in Nob shortly after he ran for his life from Saul.
- **The Nob atrocity: 1 Samuel 21-22**
 - **David's Deception:**
 - **David ran from Saul to preserve his life.**
 - **He was a fugitive who ran from his father-in-law for the next 8-10 years.**
 - **When he came to Nob, Ahimelech the priest was afraid: 21:1** "Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?"
 - **He deceived the priest to preserve his life: 21:2** "The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto

me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place..."

- **A man named Doeg who was loyal to Saul witnessed their interaction: 21:7** "Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite..."

- **Saul's irrational behavior:**

- **Unsubstantiated accusations against his men: 22:8**
"All of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

- **Unsubstantiated accusations against Ahimelech 22:16-17**
"The king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me..."

- **Doeg's treachery:**

- **Doeg's deception: 22:9-10** "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine..."

- **Doeg's hardened disdain: 22:15-17** "Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more..."

- **The integrity of Saul's men: 22:17** "the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD..."

- **Doeg's high-handed murder of the innocent: 22:18-19**
"And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings..."

- **David's Grief: 22:22** "And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house..."

Part 2: Themes:

- **Theme 1: It is irrational to mock God: 52:1-3** "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness..."
- **Question:** "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief..."
- **Reality:** "The goodness of God endureth continually..."
 - He upholds a righteous standard.
 - He is patient and extremely forbearing.
 - He is righteous and will both vindicate His people and punish the wicked.
- **Folly:** "Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness..."
- You think you can get away with evil.
- You think you can destroy people without consequences.
- **Theme 2: Evil people will face His justice: 52:4-5** "God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living..."
- **You loved evil:** "Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue..."
- **God will destroy you for your evil:** "God shall likewise destroy thee...he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living..."
- **That destruction is eternal:** "God shall likewise destroy thee for ever..."
- **Theme 3: Godly people will witness God's righteous intervention: 52:6-7** "The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness..."
- **See:** "The righteous also shall see..."
- **Fear:** "The righteous also shall...fear..."
- **Process:** "The righteous also shall...laugh at him..."
- **Theme 4: He sets an eternal distinction between the righteous and the wicked: 52:8-9** "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. I will

praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints..."

- **Contrasting metaphors:**
 - **One will be uprooted:** "God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living..."
 - **One will flourish forever:** "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God..."
- **Contrasting objects of confidence:**
 - **Confidence in one's ability to manipulate:** "Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness..."
 - **Confidence in God's providence:** "I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever..."
- **Contrasting relationships to God:** "I will praise thee for ever..."
 - **The wicked will be cut off in this life and face His wrath: Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8** "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... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire... the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.
 - **The righteous while maligned in this world will experience everlasting glory: Revelation 21:3-7** "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 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...I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son..."
- **The tension of our immediate and future experience:** "I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints..."
 - **The Christian life has a built-in tension:**
 - **Already:** Already experiencing everlasting life.

- **Not Yet:** Looking forward to the fulness and unending nature of that life with God.
- **Scripture is filled with descriptions of this tension:**
 - **Psalm 23:4-6** “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever...”
 - **Psalm 16:11** “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore...”
 - **Romans 8:23** “We which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body...”

Part 3: Application:

- **There is comfort even when life is painful and complicated.**
- **This comfort comes in several ways:** **2 Corinthians 4:17** “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory...”
 - God preserves His people.
 - Their suffering is temporary.
 - He judges the wicked.
 - Their prosperity is temporary.
 - This judgment is severe but entirely just.
 - He is patient and perfectly measured in His justice.
 - The wicked will face eternal destruction.
- **We must learn to live with the tension of being redeemed, destined for eternal glory, and yet suffering for a little while.**