

## Psalms 58

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 58 - and as we make our way to the 58th Psalm...

...I wanna begin by first pointing out that this Psalm - which was written by King David...

...is the third - of five successive songs - each of which are introduced as Michtams of David.

Now - I'll remind you that the Hebrew word - Michtam - isn't completely understood.

And while some scholars believe that this word was derived from the Hebrew word from - kethem - which means - gold....

...others believe that this word is a derivative of another Hebrew word - which means - to hide - or to cover.

And this certainly make sense - seeing how these five psalms were written...

...during the days when David was seeking shelter from his enemies.

For example - the first Psalm in this series of Michtams was written after David decided to hide from King Saul - by fleeing to Philistine city of Gath.

Then - in the second Psalm that we find in this series of Michtams...

...we find David - praising the Lord - for the way that He protected him from King Saul - as he hid in the caves of Judah.

Now - here in the third Psalm found in this series of Michtams - we find David...

...presenting an imprecatory prayer - as he asks the Lord to punish those who were hunting him.

Unlike the first two Psalms in this series of Michtams - David didn't provide us with the historical context for these lyrics.

At the same time - I should also point out that - it's here in the superscription section of this song...

...where David instructed the Chief Musician of Israel - to set this Psalm to the same tune...

...that was used for the second song in this series of Michtams.

With this as our focus - let's take a look at these instructions - found there in the beginning of verse 1 - where David writes...

Psa 58:1      To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David.

Here in the superscription section of this song - we find David - directing the Chief Musician of Israel...

...to set this song to the same tune as the one he used for the previous Psalm.

Not only that - but - this is the same tune that David set - for the next Psalm in this series of Michtams.

And in this way - David seems to've been setting the historical context of this Psalm...

...by placing it between the 57th - and 59th Psalms - which were both set to the same tune.

As we make our way through this Michtam of David - we'll also see several similarities...

...between this Psalm - and the lyrics of the song we studied last week.

And it's for these reasons that I believe - this Psalm was probably written...

...during the days when King Saul was trying to capture - and kill David.

With this in mind - let's turn our attention to the lyrics found here in the 58th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where David declared...

Psa 58:1 To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David.

Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones?

Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?

Psa 58:2 No, in heart you work wickedness;

You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.

Here in the beginning of this Psalm - we find David - challenging the unjust judges of Israel...

...who were sitting in silence - as they allowed king Saul to carry out his evil scheme.

I like the way William Barrick explained it in his commentary - where he declared...

"David addresses this psalm to corrupt governmental leaders. It is about wickedness and perversion of law in high places."

In other words - the unrighteous rulers of Israel were sitting in silence...

...as King Saul sought to carry out his evil scheme - to kill David.

Let's consider how Spurgeon explained it - in his commentary - where he declared...

“Some of those who surrounded Saul were rather passive than active persecutors; they held their tongues when the object of royal hate was slandered; in the original, this first sentence appears to be addressed to them, and they are asked to justify their silence. Silence gives consent. He who refrains from defending the right is himself an accomplice in the wrong.”

Christian - listen - our silence can be seen as our compliance.

What's even worse is that our silence can also be perceived as our consent of carnality.

And it's for this reason that David challenged the silent rulers of Israel...

...for their failure to speak righteousness - regarding the sins of King Saul.

Now - as we consider the way that those unjust judges remained silent about the sins of king Saul...

...there should be no doubt that their silence was not only consent...

...but - according to the Mosaic law - they shared in same guilt - as those who were actively trying to kill David.

In order to make my case - let's consider how Moses explained it - in Leviticus chapter 5 - where he declared...

Lev 5:1 If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter—if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.

From this - we can see that the the unjust judges who were silent about the sins of King Saul...

...were sharing in the guilt of his sinful scheme - and the reason why is because...

...they knew that he was trying to murder an innocent man - namely David.

And yet - they did nothing to try to stop him.

In this way - their silence was not only compliance - - it was consent.

It's for this reason that David accused those unrighteous rulers - of entertaining the works of wickedness - in their hearts.

Look with me again - there at verse 2 - where David declared...

Psa 58:2 ...in heart you work wickedness;  
You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.

The unjust judges who were silently consenting to the sinful scheme of King Saul...

...were - in effect - engaging in the works of wickedness.

And while it's true that they weren't actively engaging in the sins of Saul...

...it's also true that they bore the guilt of King Saul's sin - in the eyes of the Lord.

In similar fashion - the Christians who sit in silence - as we watch others engaging in the wickedness of this world...

...are not only complying - but - we also run the risk of consenting with the sinful schemes of wicked people.

For example - consider the Christian who says nothing - after learning that a loved one is planning to abort their baby.

Rather than speaking up for the life of that pre-born person...

...the Christian who remains silent - is in effect -  
consenting to the abortion of that baby.

And the Christian parent who silently allows their child to  
engage in a sexually immoral lifestyle...

...is not only complying with their carnality - but - they're  
effectively consenting to it.

And it's for this reason that we must be ready to  
speak out against sin - as the Lord leads.

I like the way that C.S. Lewis explained - during an interview with  
Sherwood Wirt - when he declared...

“As Christians we are tempted to make unnecessary concessions to  
those outside the faith. We give in too much. Now, I don't mean that  
we should run the risk of making a nuisance of ourselves by  
witnessing at improper times, but there comes a time when we must  
show that we disagree. We must show our Christian colors, if we are  
to be true to Jesus Christ. We cannot remain silent or concede  
everything away.” —C.S. Lewis

Christian - listen - those of us who fail to speak up - and voice our  
disagreement with depravity...

...are following in the footsteps of the unjust judges - who were  
silently complying with King Saul.

And it's for this reason that those who truly trust in Christ  
Jesus...

...must learn to how to challenge those who are  
living in sin.

With this as the goal - let's consider the example that Christ Jesus  
demonstrated - in Matthew chapter 23 - where He declared...

Mat 23:13 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you  
hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's

faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Mat 23:15 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

Mat 23:16 “Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’

Mat 23:17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

Mat 23:18 You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.’

Mat 23:19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

Mat 23:20 Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

Mat 23:21 And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it.

Mat 23:22 And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

Mat 23:23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Mat 23:24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Mat 23:25 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Mat 23:26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Mat 23:27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.

Mat 23:28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Mat 23:29 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous.

Mat 23:30 And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’

Mat 23:31 So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

Mat 23:32 Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!

Mat 23:33 “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?

Here in these verses - we find the Lord Jesus - presenting a laundry list of accusations...

...against the religious rulers there in Israel - who were leading people astray.

And as we consider this example - it's crucial for Christians to realize that...

...there are times when we must call out the false teachers - and religious cults...

...who are leading people astray.

Not only that - but - there are times when we must call out Christians - who are saying things that are false.

For example - let's consider how the Lord Jesus rebuked Peter - when he told our Savior that He didn't need to die on the cross.

It's in Matthew chapter 16 - verse 23 - where the Lord Jesus responded to Peter - by declaring...

Mat 16:23 “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men”



From this - we can see that there are times when we must rebuke another believer...

...because they are proclaiming the doctrines of demons - rather than the truth of God's word.

Sadly - there are many who would rather remain silent - in order to avoid controversies and conflicts.

And if this sounds like something that you struggle with - then I encourage you to realize that...

...our silence can be seen as compliance - which could easily be perceived as our consent.

That being the case - we will do well to speak out against the sinful schemes of wickedness...

...according to the leading of the Lord.

With this as the goal - we should take a moment to consider how the stain of original sin has affected every single person on the planet.

Let's consider how David put it here in our text tonight - look with me again - there at the 58th Psalm - beginning at verse 3 - David declared...

Psa 58:3      The wicked are estranged from the womb;  
They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.

Psa 58:4      Their poison is like the poison of a serpent;  
They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear,

Psa 58:5      Which will not heed the voice of charmers,  
Charming ever so skillfully.

Here in these verses - we find David - helping his audience to understand that...

...those who engage in the works of wickedness - were born with sinful inclination.

The reason why is due to the fact that - the wicked people of this world were conceived in sin...

...and it's for this reason that they go astray - from the day of their birth.

Now - it would be easy for us to think that David was being self-righteous.

And so - I should take a moment to remind you how he described himself in the 51st Psalm - where he declared...

Psa 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
And in sin my mother conceived me.

Psa 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,  
And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

Psa 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

According to David - he was also conceived with a sin nature - and he was also brought forth in iniquity.

And as we consider the curse that was caused by the fall of Adam and Eve...

...there should be no doubt that - we were all conceived with the stain of original sin.

This was precisely the point that Paul was making in Ephesians chapter 2 where he declared...

Eph 2:3 ...we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

According to the stain of original sin - we were all conceived under the curse that the Lord placed upon Adam and Eve. .

It's for this reason that we are - by nature - children of wrath.

And it's also for this reason that David compared  
unrepentant unbelievers....

...to poisonous snakes that cannot be charmed.

Let's consider again how he put it - - here in the 58th Psalm.

Look with me again - beginning there at verse 4 - where he declared...

Psa 58:4      Their poison is like the poison of a serpent;  
They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear,  
Psa 58:5      Which will not heed the voice of charmers,  
Charming ever so skillfully.

Here in these verses - we find David - comparing the unjust judges who  
were helping King Saul...

...to the poisonous cobras - that are quick to strike the handler that  
is trying to charm them.

And what this means is that - David was certain that any  
attempts to persuade those unrighteous rulers...

...would only invite an angry response.

This reminds me of the water snake that I found last Friday - on a trail  
here in South Austin.

After stopping my ride - to admire it's beautiful scales - the snake  
quickly responded - by trying to strike me.

The reason why is because - this is the nature of a snake.

in similar fashion - the nature of an unrepentant unbeliever  
is to become defensive...

...with those who spend time sharing the gospel of  
grace.

This reminds me of the way that Paul describe the natural state of every unbeliever - it's in Romans chapter 3 - where he declared...

Rom 3:10 "There is none righteous, no, not one;  
Rom 3:11 There is none who understands;  
There is none who seeks after God.  
Rom 3:12 They have all turned aside;  
They have together become unprofitable;  
There is none who does good, no, not one."  
Rom 3:13 "Their throat is an open tomb;  
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";  
"The poison of asps is under their lips";  
Rom 3:14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."  
Rom 3:15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;  
Rom 3:16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;  
Rom 3:17 And the way of peace they have not known."  
Rom 3:18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Here in these verses - we find Paul - describing the state of every unrepentant unbeliever.

And as we consider the carnal state of those who are still unregenerate...

...we shouldn't be surprised - when they lash out at the Evangelist...

...like a deaf cobra - striking the hand of the handler that's trying to charm them.

With that being the case - we shouldn't be surprised by the way that the unregenerate react to the gospel message.

And listen - no matter how charming we are in our delivery of the gospel message...

...we shouldn't be surprised when the poison of asps flow from their lips.

Remember - the Lord Jesus was the human incarnation of God's love.

And it was the unregenerate rulers of Israel - who responded to His mission - and message...

...by conspiring to crucify the King of kings.

As we consider the reaction of those who called for the crucifixion of Christ Jesus...

...we shouldn't be surprised - when those who have no fear of God...

...strike out at us - like angry serpents who are trying to defend themselves.

With that being the case - we should take a moment to consider the Imprecatory portion of the prayer that David presented - here in the 58th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 6 - where David cried out...

Psa 58:6 Break their teeth in their mouth, O God!

Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!

Psa 58:7 Let them flow away as waters which run continually;  
When he bends his bow,

Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.

Psa 58:8 Let them be like a snail which melts away as it goes,  
Like a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

Here in these verses - we find David - praying an Imprecatory prayer - as he asked the Lord to punish the lions that were stalking him.

Just to be clear - it'll help you to know that the word - Imprecatory - comes from the Latin word - imprecari...

...which is the basis for our English word - imprecate.

And the word - imprecate - means to call down by prayer.

To be more specific - Imprecatory prayers typically include the invocation of divine curses...

...which includes a request for the Lord to punish evil doers.

And to sum it up with simplicity - the Imprecatory Psalms contain prayers - which invoke the punishment of God...

...as the Psalmist cries out to for the just judgment of his enemies.

And that's exactly what we find - here in our text tonight.

Notice with me again - there in verse 6 - where David declared...

Psa 58:6 Break their teeth in their mouth, O God!  
Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!

Now - as we consider how David compared his enemies - to young lions with fangs...

...I can't help but to remember how he included a similar comparison - in the the previous Psalm.

It was in the fourth verse of the 57th Psalm - where David declared...

Psa 57:4 My soul is among lions;  
I lie among the sons of men  
Who are set on fire,  
Whose teeth are spears and arrows,  
And their tongue a sharp sword.

Now - as we consider the similarity of this comparison - to the prayer found in our text tonight...

...it seems to me that David created a connection - between the lions that surrounded him in the cave of EnGedi...

...and the lions that he was hoping - would receive the punishment of the Lord.

This is another reason for why I think the 58th Psalm is connected to the 57th.

I should also point out that - David wasn't praying for the Lord to kill the lions...

...no - instead - he was praying for the LORD - to defang them.

And with this as the goal - he asked the Lord to Break their teeth in their mouth...

...and Break out the fangs of the young lions.

Not only that - but - we should also notice how David prayed for God to make their attacks - ineffective.

Notice with again - there in verse 7 - where he cried out...

Psa 58:7 Let them flow away as waters which run continually;  
When he bends his bow, Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.

In other words - David wasn't praying asking their Lord to sweep them away - with the waters that never stop flowing...

...and at the same time - he asked the Lord to stop their attacks - by breaking their arrows.

We should also notice how David asked the Lord to render his enemies powerless.

Look with me again - there in verse 8 - where he cried out...

Psa 58:8 Let them be like a snail which melts away as it goes,  
Like a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

In other words - David was asking the Lord to make his enemies - slow like a snail...

...and powerless - like a stillborn child who is lifeless from the womb.

And as we consider the content of this imprecatory prayer...

...we can be certain that David was simply asking the Lord to render the attacks of the enemy...

...completely ineffective.

In similar fashion - we too should pray for the Lord to protect us from the attacks of the enemy.

And listen - there's nothing wrong with praying imprecatory prayers...

...so that strength of those who are seeking to harm us - might be diminished by the power of our God.

And as we watch the Lord - answering these prayers...

...we can rejoice in knowing that there is a reward for those who are righteous in the eyes of the Lord.

Let's consider how David put it - here in the final verses of the 58th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 9 - where David declared...

Psa 58:9      Before your pots can feel the burning thorns,  
He shall take them away as with a whirlwind,  
As in His living and burning wrath.

Psa 58:10    The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance;  
He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,

Psa 58:11    So that men will say,  
"Surely there is a reward for the righteous;  
Surely He is God who judges in the earth."



Here in the final verses of this Psalm - we find David rejoicing - as he considered the way that those who are righteous...

...will eventually watch - as the Lord washes His feet - in the blood of the wicked.

And as we consider this imagery - I can't help but to remember Isaiah's description of Christ's second coming.

It's in Isaiah chapter 63 - beginning at verse 1 - where the prophet asked...

Isa 63:1     Who is this who comes from Edom,  
With dyed garments from Bozrah,  
This One who is glorious in His apparel,  
Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—  
“I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”  
Isa 63:2     Why is Your apparel red,  
And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?  
Isa 63:3     “I have trodden the winepress alone,  
And from the peoples no one was with Me.  
For I have trodden them in My anger,  
And trampled them in My fury;  
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,  
And I have stained all My robes.  
Isa 63:4     For the day of vengeance is in My heart,  
And the year of My redeemed has come.  
Isa 63:5     I looked, but there was no one to help,  
And I wondered  
That there was no one to uphold;  
Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me;  
And My own fury, it sustained Me.  
Isa 63:6     I have trodden down the peoples in My anger,  
Made them drunk in My fury,  
And brought down their strength to the earth.”

Here in this prophecy - we find the prophet Isaiah - describing the day when Christ Jesus will return.

And it's at that point in time - when the righteous will rejoice when we see the vengeance of the LORD.

It's at that point in time when the King of kings - and the Lord of lords...

...will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

Not only that - but - we will also rejoice - as the Lord rewards the tribulation age saints...

...who endured the persecution of those who decidedly served the antichrist.