



AbundantLifeChurch

SIMI VALLEY

Sunday, October 18, 2026 - **SEARCH ME – PSALM 7** – Pastor John Henry Raskin

Self-Examination, Justice, and Refuge

When evil comes against us, the follower of Jesus runs to God for refuge, invites God to search his heart, refuses revenge, entrusts justice to the righteous Judge, and responds with repentance, mercy, and praise.

Psalm 7

- Run to the Refuge (vv. 1–2): David’s first response to slander and danger is not damage control but trust: “O LORD my God, in You I put my trust.” Biblical trust means taking shelter in God.
- Ask, “Have I done this?” (vv. 3–5): Before examining his enemy, David places himself before God. He is not claiming sinlessness; he asks whether he is guilty of the specific charge.
- Leave the verdict with God (vv. 6–9): David seeks justice without taking revenge. Faith gives the case to the only righteous Judge, who tests every heart and mind.
- Pray for evil to end—and the sinner to turn (vv. 10–16): God opposes evil, yet the words “if he does not turn back” reveal His patience and mercy. Sin eventually traps the one who cherishes it.
- Finish with praise (v. 17): David praises while the conflict is unresolved because God remains righteous, sovereign, and trustworthy.

The Heart Check

Pride asks first: “How could they do this to me? Humility asks first: “Lord, have I done this?”

A clear conscience is not pride when it comes after honest examination before God. If the accusation is true, repent, apologize, and make it right. If it is false, receive peace and entrust the outcome to God.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart... and lead me in the way everlasting.”— Psalm 139:23–24

Psalm 7 Points Us to Jesus

Jesus is the truly innocent and slandered One who “did not revile in return,” but entrusted Himself to the One who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23). He is also our Savior and Judge. At the cross, justice and mercy met: the sword our sin deserved fell on Christ. Because there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, we can pray “Search me” without terror—expecting a loving Father’s cleansing and correction, not rejection.

Five Steps for This Week

1. Run to the Rock of Refuge before reacting, calling, posting, or defending yourself.
2. Search your heart: “Lord, if I have done this, show me.”
3. Leave the verdict to the Judge; refuse revenge and self-appointed judgment.
4. Pray for evil to end and for the sinner to turn in repentance.
5. Sing praise to God, even before the circumstances are resolved.

Before you speak about the person who wronged you, ask: Am I running to God or building my own case? Is there truth in the words used against me that I need to confess? Am I seeking justice or revenge?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, be my refuge. Search my heart, reveal what is true, lead me to repent where I am wrong, and keep me from taking revenge where I have been wronged. End wickedness, turn sinners toward You, and teach me to trust Your righteous judgment and praise Your name. Amen.

SEARCH ME – PSALM 7

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Over the last two Sundays we discovered how Satan tested Jesus in the wilderness and how the Son of Man was able to rebuke and ultimately rebuff the enemy using scripture,

We saw that in the Gospel of Luke's version of Jesus' victory Satan then left until an "opportune time".

We learned that in the very same chapter of Luke, he found that opportunity in the national pride of Jesus' own people in the synagogue in Nazareth, when Jesus proclaimed that He came for the poor, the foreigners and the outcasts and that angered the crowd to the point of murder.

We discussed the enemy's continued desire to frustrate Jesus' Mission by undermining the Body of Christ through false teaching and an appeal to our human pride.

We learned that through appropriate understanding and use of scripture we can frustrate the devil instead of letting him frustrate us, but that we must be careful to stay humble and test all teaching that we allow to influence us.

Simply put, we saw that if we stay fully submitted to our relationship with God in Christ and fully committed to being a blessing to those that He places in our path, then we will be able to turn the pitfalls that the enemy means for worldly evil into opportunities for us to do Kingdom good.

Today, I would like to visit the 7th Psalm, in the hopes of gaining an essential tool of Kingdom obedience that will help us stay focused on that goal:

The tool is self-examination.

King David was, according to the Lord Himself, a man after God's own heart.

Many believers, when they read the Psalms of David, think that they don't necessarily apply to us because David lived before Jesus.

What is often missed, I think, is that David's relationship with God was personal. David recognized the Lord as his salvation, even though he had never heard the name Jesus.

David's psalms are really a template for how we should relate to God in Christ as Savior, Father and friend.

That said, let's take a look at Psalm 7, a Psalm of David.

Every one of us knows what it feels like to be wronged.

Maybe someone told a lie about you that made its way around the office or around the family.

Maybe it was someone who took credit for your work or talked about you behind your back.

And if you are honest, you remember what rose up in you.

It wasn't a gentle feeling of irritation. It was heat.

It was the hunger to set the record straight, to be vindicated, and, if we are really honest, to watch the other person get exactly what they have coming.

But here is what makes that moment so dangerous for a believer. The heat feels righteous. You were wronged.

And so... the anger walks around with a clean conscience, and it never occurs to us to question it.

We can be right about the evil that was done to us and wrong about ourselves at the very same time.

Psalm 7 was written for that very moment.

It is the prayer of a man who really was slandered, who really was in danger, and who did what almost nobody does when he is angry.

He asked God to search him first.

I want to put one question in front of us as we read Psalm 7: when evil comes against you, what should a follower of Jesus do, and what should he refuse to do?

Let's let the psalm illuminate that for us.

This Psalm has an introductory Title...

A Meditation of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.

The Hebrew word translated here as "Meditation" is Shiggaion, which is a Hebrew word used only once, here, in the whole Bible. It means literally, "wandering".

The word is used here to describe an intense, emotional prayer to be sung aloud individually and corporately.

As with most of David's Psalms, the context is highly personal, but the circumstances around which it was written have universal application, meaning all human beings can relate to them.

This Psalm is thought to have been written by David when he was wandering with his small group of supporters through the desert being chased by king Saul and his army, so the use of the title Shiggaion, or wandering, would make sense.

We do not know exactly who Cush was, but we know that he was a Benjamite, very likely someone from Saul's inner circle, who was feeding Saul's paranoia and telling Saul David was trying to overthrow him as King.

Notice what the title tells us.

David is not praying about an army that he is facing. He is crying out to the Lord about words that have been used as weapons.

This person Cush has opened his mouth and told lies about David, and those lies have put his name, his freedom, and perhaps his life at stake.

This is a psalm for people who have been lied about, accused, or slandered.

David begins by naming His defender.

Psalm 7:1-2 - O Lord my God, in You I put my trust; Save me from all those who persecute me; And deliver me, Lest they tear me like a lion, Rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

Before David asks for one single thing, he says whose he is.

“O LORD my God.” Yahweh, Adonai. That is covenant language. God is not just God He is David's God.

And then he says, “in You I put my trust.”

The Hebrew verb used here for trust is “chasah”, to take refuge.

It is the picture of a person ducking under cover when the storm breaks.

It is the same word used of a bird sheltering under its mother's wings. It's the same word that Jesus used when He wept over Jerusalem.

Trust, in the Bible, is not a warm feeling about God.

Trust is where you run for shelter when you are afraid, hurt, confused.

And here is the first question that this psalm asks of us.

When someone verbally attacks you or your reputation, where do you run first?

Most of us run to the phone and begin building a case. Think "damage control".

Some of us run to social media, or to a friend we hope will take our side.

We only go to God as a last resort when we have hit a dead end.

David runs immediately to the LORD.

And notice how honest he is about the danger he is in.

He says he is like a man in the grip of a lion, with "none to deliver."

David knew lions. He was used to protecting the flock from them as a shepherd boy.

He knows exactly how dangerous this verbal attack is, and he sees no human rescue in sight.

For David, his only rescuer is God and for him that is not a dead end. That is the doorway. That is the means of escape.

His very first cry is “save me,” in Hebrew hoshi’eni, from the same root as the name of Jesus, Yeshua.

Hold on to that as we look at the next movement of David’s prayer.

Psalm 7:3-5 - O Lord my God, if I have done this:

If there is iniquity in my hands,

4 If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me,

Or have plundered my enemy without cause,

5 Let the enemy pursue me and overtake me;

Yes, let him trample my life to the earth,

And lay my honor in the dust. Selah

Selah means stop. Wait for an answer.

Do you see what David is doing here?

He knows he has been lied about. His enemy is at his heels.

He has every reason to say, “Lord, I am innocent, so strike them down.”

Instead, he pauses and says, “If I have done this.”

He lays his hands open before God... and he asks God to examine them.

He asks two questions.

First, he asks, “Lord, Have I betrayed a friend?” and then he asks, “Have I wronged my enemy?”

And he stakes everything upon God’s answer: He states, Lord, if I am guilty, let my life and my honor be trampled into the dust.

Please understand that he is asking something very specific here. David is not claiming to be sinless. Here he is claiming innocence of this particular charge.

This is the same David who would one day take another man's wife, and have the man killed, and then write Psalm 51 with his face in the dirt.

But in this case, his claim is not without merit.

Twice in the wilderness David had Saul at his mercy, once in a cave in First Samuel 24 and another time in the camp

in 1 Samuel 26, and both times he refused to lay a hand on the LORD's anointed.

Where he could have plundered his enemy, he showed restraint. He showed mercy.

His hands really were clean in the matter he being was accused of.

But here is what I want you to see. The question David asks is the question we almost never ask.

When we are wronged, our first reaction is, "How could they do this to me?"

But David first asks, "Have I done this?"

When we are wronged, we begin cross-examining the other person in self-defense.

David begins by putting himself on the witness stand before God in self-examination.

Jesus told us to do this in the Sermon on the Mount when He said...

“Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?”

The speck in our adversary’s eye may be real, but often we can’t see the situation clearly until we have dealt with our own plank.

Honest self-examination begins with true humility.

David shows us what that looks like elsewhere in the Psalms...

Psalm 139:23-24: - Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

When David asks the Lord his God to lead him in the ‘Way everlasting’ He is asking for the perspective of the Holy Spirit. For us, this is the Mind of Christ.

When we examine ourselves before the Lord as a response to an accusation, the Lord can have two answers, and both of them are His Grace and His mercy towards us.

Sometimes, when you allow the Spirit to search your heart, you will find that there is truth in the accusation of your adversary.

Then the humble thing for you to do is to repent, to apologize, to make it right, and to thank God that He revealed it to you.

And sometimes when you search your heart you will find that you are truly innocent in the matter at hand.

Then you can be at true peace, your conscience clean, because you have stood before the righteous Judge.

When you have examined yourself through God’s eyes, claiming a clear conscience is not pride.

Claiming your innocence is only pride when you refuse to look at your actions from God's perspective.

The proud heart will not look inside itself. It has already decided the verdict. The other person is always guilty.

Now, having found himself without blame in the matter, David calls on the Lord his God, confident that the just God who has promised vengeance on the wicked, will move on his behalf.

**Psalm 7:6-9 - Arise, O Lord, in Your anger;
Lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies;
Rise up for me to the judgment You have commanded!
7 So the congregation of the peoples shall surround You;
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.
8 The Lord shall judge the peoples;
Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness,
And according to my integrity within me.
9 Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,
But establish the just; For the righteous God tests the hearts and
minds.**

Only after David has searched his own heart does he make his appeal. Some of you may wince at what sounds like David giving a command "Arise, O LORD, in Your anger."

But it is the Lord who has commanded justice and David is reminding Him of His promise.

See what David does not do. He does not pick up a sword. He does not organize a campaign.

He hands the whole matter over, in confidence, to the Judge of all the earth.

This is the difference between an act of revenge and a prayer for justice.

Revenge gives pride the gavel and makes the judge the executioner.

Faith gives the resolution to the only righteous Judge.

Paul says it plainly:

Romans 12:19 - Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord.

This is how David approaches his plight. He puts it in God's hands and leaves it there.

And listen to what David asks for in verse 9.

“Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end.”

He is praying against evil itself. He wants the lie to stop, the violence to stop, the corruption to end, and the just to be established.

That is a prayer a Christian can pray over the evils of our day, in our city, our nation, and in our own families.

And remember that for the person caught up in it, the best way for wickedness to end is with repentance.

Remember, we are fighting not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities, against wickedness in high places.

Our prayers should reflect the love of God.

That the wickedness of the wicked would come to an end and what better way for that to happen than that the wicked would repent.

One last thing in this section.

“The righteous God tests the hearts and minds.”

That is the most comforting sentence in the passage, and it is also the most sobering.

Comforting, because the God who is judging your case sees what no human court can see: the true intentions of your enemy, your integrity, your tears, the things you could never prove.

But it is sobering, because the One who sees your enemy’s heart also sees yours.

You cannot ask Him to examine your enemy and keep Him out of your own heart. A desire for God’s truth will always reveal what is true. But sometimes truth hurts.

**Psalms 7:10-13 - My defense is of God,
Who saves the upright in heart.**

11 God is a just judge,

And God is angry with the wicked every day.

12 If he does not turn back,

He will sharpen His sword;

He bends His bow and makes it ready.

13 He also prepares for Himself instruments of death;

He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

Notice first, David says, “My defense is of God.”

The Hebrew word for defense is “magen” which also means shield.

After all that boldness, there is quiet confidence in the protection that David asked for in the beginning of his prayer.

David is confident that whatever comes at him has to get past God first.

Then notice that David says that God is angry with the wicked every day.

Some might think God's anger is a flaw in His character. But a God who was never angry at evil would not be a God who is good.

God's anger is not like man's anger. It is not a loss of control. It is the settled, holy opposition of perfect goodness to everything that tries to destroy His beloved creatures.

And please notice that little phrase right afterwards in verse 12. "If he does not turn back." There again is that merciful word IF.

The sword is sharpened, but it has not yet fallen.

The bow is bent, but the arrow has not yet flown.

Why? Because God may be just but He is also patient. Peter tells us this in the New Testament.

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slowness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

And friends, we were once on the wrong end of that sword.

Paul says we were "by nature children of wrath, just as the others."

Anyone believer who has really understood that cannot stand pridefully over the wicked as though he never needed that door held open himself.

Psalms 7:14-16 - Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity; Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.

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

**16 His trouble shall return upon his own head,
And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.**

The scriptures all tell us that sin has a life cycle. It is conceived, it grows, and it gives birth.

Cush's lie did not appear out of nowhere; it was a pregnancy of his heart.

David here reminds us that the one who digs a pit for another ends up at the bottom of it himself.

Evil has a boomerang effect.

Family, we need to turn that mirror on ourselves, because the same law works on believers.

The grudge you nurse, the story you keep retelling, the quiet campaign you wage against someone who wronged you: those are shovels, and the pit you are digging is in your own heart.

The person who spends a lifetime getting even rarely gets even. He simply gets buried.

There are two ways to relate to evil, and Jesus gave us a picture of both in Luke 18.

Luke tells us that He “spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.”

Two men go up to pray, Jesus tells us.

The Pharisee stands and prays about himself: “God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.”

Every item on his list may have been true.

His mistake was not that he saw evil in the world.

His mistake was that he used the evil in the world as a ladder to climb up and look down on everyone else.

The tax collector would not even lift his eyes to Heaven.

He beat his breast and said, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!”

And Jesus said that this man “went down to his house justified.”

Let’s look at this parable about those two men in the light of the 7th Psalm.

The proud heart, when it meets evil, defends its name, hits back, enjoys the downfall of the wicked, and takes justice into its own hands.

The humble heart, when it meets evil, runs to the refuge, asks “Have I done this?”, prays for evil to end and for the sinner to turn, and leaves the verdict with God.

Be aware church! Pride hides best inside righteous causes.

The more passionate we are against real evil, the more we need to remember David’s humility and willingness to look inside himself.

It is right to oppose wickedness.

It is a trap to be proud of opposing it.

If you are like me, you feel the weight of this.

Who among us can honestly say, “Judge me according to my righteousness”?

David could say it about one charge. But how many times have we fallen short?

And that is where Psalm 7 points us beyond David to David's greater Son, Jesus.

First, Jesus is the truly innocent One who lived a sinless life.

He is the only man who could claim a clean conscience without a single qualification.

Peter tells us He "committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth."

When Pilate examined Him, he said, "I find no fault in this Man."

The thief on the cross said, "This Man has done nothing wrong."

And the centurion who watched Him die said, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

The innocence David could claim about one charge, Jesus owned in every thought, word, and deed.

Second, Jesus is the slandered One who answered perfectly, in silent confidence in His innocence.

They brought false witnesses against Him.

Peter tells us that Jesus was the One...

1 Peter 2:23 - who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

That is Psalm 7 lived out in flesh.

He ran to the Rock of Refuge. He left the verdict with the Righteous Judge. He prayed for His enemies: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

He is our perfect template. But He is far more than a template because a perfect template would only condemn us.

Third, He is also our Savior and the Judge who searches our hearts.

“I am He who searches the minds and hearts,” He says in Revelation 2, echoing today’s Psalm.

God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.

The Judge David begged to arise in Psalm 7 is Jesus.

That comforts us, because we do not carry the verdict, and it humbles us, because He has seen every one of our hearts.

Fourth, on Jesus the sword fell.

David says the sword is sharpened for those who do not turn back. At the cross, God’s justice and God’s mercy met.

“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,” says the LORD in Zechariah.

Jesus “was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.”

God set Him forth, Paul says, “that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

And fifth, in Jesus the pit was turned inside out.

His enemies dug a cross and sealed a tomb. But He is the one “whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death.”

The very pit they dug became the means of our salvation. Evil fell into its own trap.

Remember David's first cry in Psalm 7, "save me"? The Hebrew word for save has the same root as His name. Jesus.

Ye'shua means The LORD saves. Because of Him you can pray "Search me" without terror.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

The search will find sin, but the sword that sin deserves has already fallen on the One who searched your heart.

So, the true follower of Jesus can open his hands to God, because the verdict is settled, and what remains is not condemnation but cleansing and correction from a Father who loves him.

David ends his psalm with praise.

Psalm 7:17 - I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

Notice where David lands. Cush is still out there. Yet he sings praise.

The same righteousness that terrifies the wicked becomes the song of the humble, because he knows now that righteousness is on his side.

And he sings to the One who is Most High, over Cush, over Saul, over every liar and every accuser.

So here is what you do this week if anyone claims you have done something wrong.

1. Run to the Rock of Refuge.

2. Search your heart, and say, "If I have done this."

3. Hand the verdict to the Judge.

4. Pray for evil to end, and for the sinner to turn.

5. And sing praises to the God who is your refuge.

There may be someone in your mind right now.

Before you open your mouth about them, before you pick up the phone, before you post a word, walk through these five lessons from Psalm 7, and if there is truth in what they said, go and make it right.

And if you have never run to the Refuge, or if you are actively running away,

He is not mad at you and He is not far away.

Jesus' arms are open wide to all who seek Him. He says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Let's pray...