



**Turning People Over to the Lord
How Should We Pray When the Problem Has a Name?
Psalm 35**

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Psalm 35:title–28

“A Psalm of David. Contend, LORD, with those who contend with me; Fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of buckler and shield And rise up as my help. Draw also the spear and the battle-axe to meet those who pursue me; Say to my soul, “I am your salvation.” Let those be ashamed and dishonored who seek my life; Let those be turned back and humiliated who devise evil against me. Let them be like chaff before the wind, With the angel of the LORD driving them



on. Let their way be dark and slippery, With the angel of the LORD pursuing them. For they hid their net for me without cause; Without cause they dug a pit for my soul. **Let destruction come upon him when he is unaware, And let the net which he hid catch him; Let him fall into that very destruction. So my soul shall rejoice in the LORD; It shall rejoice in His salvation. All my bones will say, “LORD, who is like You, Who rescues the afflicted from one who is too strong for him, And the afflicted and the poor from one who robs him?”** Malicious witnesses rise up; They ask me things that I do not know. They repay me evil for good, To the bereavement of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, But my prayer kept returning to me. I went about as though it were my friend or brother; I bowed down in mourning, like one who mourns for a mother. But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together; The afflicted people whom I did not know gathered together against me, They slandered me without ceasing. Like godless jesters at a feast, They gnashed at me with their teeth. Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue my soul from their ravages, My only life from the lions. I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty people. **Do not let those who are wrongfully my enemies rejoice over me; Nor let those who hate me for no reason wink maliciously. For they do not speak peace, But they devise deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land.** They opened their mouth wide against me; They said, “Aha, aha! Our eyes have seen it!” You have seen it, LORD, do not keep silent; Lord, do not be far from me. Stir Yourself, and awake to my right And to my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, LORD my God, according to Your righteousness, And do not let them rejoice over me. **Do not let them say in their heart, “Aha, our desire!” Do not let them say, “We have swallowed him up!” May those be ashamed and altogether humiliated who rejoice at my distress; May those who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and dishonor.** May those shout for joy and rejoice, who take delight in my vindication; And may they say continually, “The LORD be exalted, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant.” And my tongue shall proclaim Your righteousness And Your praise all day long.” (NASB 2020)

Wow. You know, I have wanted to pray this, more than once, over things that have happened in my life.

Here is the major thing we need to keep in front of us as we look at this psalm. The issue, at the end of the day, is not vengeance for David, but rather the vindication of God’s righteousness on those who are wicked. And yes, David is praying for an acceleration of that to take place. Do we have the Lord’s reputation in view as we deal with those who have wronged us?

“This imprecatory language is not about personal “payback,” getting a “pound of flesh.” Although the psalmist had personally experienced some kind of horrific treatment by these “enemies,” personal vengeance was not the point of this language. Imprecatory language witnesses to the psalmists’ concern for God’s just character. They were at least as concerned for God’s reputation as they were for their own welfare. Since they firmly believed that God is the just and compassionate ruler over all creation, He must intercede on behalf of the innocent and oppressed. (Grisanti 2011, 520)

Deuteronomy 10:18

“He makes sure that orphans and widows are treated fairly; he loves the foreigners who live with our people, and gives them food and clothes.” (GNB)

Because of the fall, injustice is a known commodity in our fallen world. So is treachery, oppression, and the violation or removal of whatever rights someone may have for the sake of the one who wants to destroy them. We find ourselves, when offended by someone who has done so intentionally, obstructing or removing us from work, freedom, or even attempting to remove us from life, wondering how to respond as a Christian.



Saul tried long and hard to cancel David. We see the same thing in our culture today. Do you want to cancel someone, allege they did something and do so in a manner or way that makes it almost impossible to deny.

For example, “when did you stop beating your wife?” From the point of allegation, now whatever you may say has those who heard the allegation projected onto you in question format; however you answer and whatever you say will be measured from a mind that now is wondering if you are indeed a wife beater.

Years ago, Dianne fell while working at church and broke her wrist. I received a phone call and drove 40 miles to get her and take her to the doctor.

At the doctor’s office, I was treated as if I were the one who had caused the injury. The line of questioning and the accusatory looks were totally disgusting. Truth was not being sought, but destruction was.

I finally told one of the folks who was accusing me “how could that possibly happen since I was 40 miles away in a business meeting at the time.” And are they sure they really want to contact the police and thereby assist me in my financial planning by providing a windfall of millions of dollars to me by doing so. They did indeed back down, and we did indeed leave that doctors office never to return.

I have had folks at work do things to try and cancel me for no reason other than they wanted my job. The worst thing I have ever confronted, is so called brothers and sisters in Christ intentionally demeaning me and the ministry the Lord has provided me and doing so for reasons unknown. And yes, this is still continuing today.

How do you stop that type of behavior as a follower of Christ? Do we exercise our rights under the law and insist on holding the wrongdoers accountable in court? And there are indeed times that must take place. Or do we turn away, since it is not a court issue and give the case of the offender to the Lord and ask Him to intervene?

Welcome to the imprecatory psalms. Psalm 35 is an imprecatory psalm. “An ‘imprecation’ has been defined as ‘an invocation of judgment, calamity, or curse uttered against one’s enemies, or the enemies of God’. These imprecations are found in many parts of Scripture, but perhaps most strikingly in the Psalms, where they sit alongside much beautiful and uplifting poetry. (Shepherd 1997, 27)

How are we to interpret these imprecatory psalms as New Testament followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus did indeed tell us to forgive our enemies and there is nothing like His teaching in the Old Testament. So, where do imprecatory psalms fit in? Why is it no one has written a worship song for us to sing psalm 35 to?

The entire Bible is to be studied and relied upon for direction, are these part of that? There are those who try to throw out all the imprecatory psalms saying we are to disregard them. But they are here since the Holy Spirit led David to write them. It is scripture after all.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (ESV)

And yes, that includes the imprecatory psalms.

We see that the imprecatory psalms were written by David. They are normally identified as Psalms 7, 35, 69 and 109. As you read them, they go from mild in Psalm 7 to Psalm 109, home to:



Psalms 109:8–10

“May his days be few; May another take his office. May his children be fatherless, And his wife a widow. May his children wander about and beg; And may they seek sustenance far from their ruined homes.” (NASB 2020)

Wow. How are we to think of praying this way since obviously David had no issue with it? Should we pray this way? Is it ever appropriate to pray this way?

Jesus tells us to forgive those who have wronged us, yet He never tells us to forget. He tells us not to hold bitterness inside.

Ephesians 4:31

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.” (ESV)

Is there something to praying in this manner that helps us to off load the anger and the bitterness as we give it to the Lord and rely on Him?

David, who wrote these, is not someone who is known from our study of scripture as someone who was always taking things into his own hands and exacting vengeance. Hardly, he felt guilty about cutting off an edge of Saul's robe.

1 Samuel 24:5

“But it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe.” (NASB 2020)

He is a type of Christ and the way he dealt with Saul is an OT picture of Jesus dealing with those who killed Him.

Luke 23:34

“And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.” (ESV)

We are indeed to have the mind of Christ as we do life, but we also need to understand His attitude towards those who were involved in sinning against others. For example, the folks running the various mercantile operations as part of the religious scam being run by the Sanhedrin.

John 2:14–16

“In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.”” (ESV)

Jesus made a whip of cords and then drove them out. This is the same man who tells us to forgive others.

David was guilty of many things, but in the imprecatory psalms, he is not guilty of the things he was accused of. When he is guilty, he confesses the sin and asks forgiveness, but not in the imprecatory psalms.

Although the tone of the New Testament is somewhat different from that of the Old Testament, the rejoicing of the righteous at the fall of the wicked is nevertheless not entirely absent from it. The chief example is the joy of the righteous at the fall of mystical Babylon, recorded in Revelation 18 and 19... As



far as Jesus himself is concerned, we must remember that the One who said, “Father, forgive them,” also pronounced a terrible catalogue of woes upon the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, recorded in Matthew 23. (Boice 2005, 301)

As we look at Psalm 35, we also need to have balance. Imprecatory psalms are not to be rejected, but they are here to teach us. First of all, when we are wronged, the reaction many times is one of anger and a desire for retaliation. Yes, we do need to pray for them, but it is okay to give this court case to the Lord for His prosecution.

Romans 12:17–21

“Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. **For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the LORD.** Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.” Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.” (NLT)

We pray for those who have offended us, misused us, abused us, that the Lord would bring them to repentance. But not everyone will repent, nor will everyone come and ask you for forgiveness. Give it to the Lord.

It is okay to pray that the Lord bring them to judgment if they refuse to repent. When they fall, it is okay to rejoice in the justice of the Lord being made evident and seeing the word of the Lord being fulfilled in the judgment.

As those who have a faith relationship with God who makes and keeps covenant (through the new covenant and not the Mosaic covenant), believers should be just as passionate about demonstrating the surpassing nature of God’s character to the world as were the psalmists. Believers should also be just as offended by acts of treachery against God’s sovereignty. To long that God would punish the wicked so as to vindicate His righteousness is totally proper. The imprecations in the psalms were “motivated by a desire to promote righteousness (Ps 7:6–11), to demonstrate God’s sovereignty (58:11; 59:13), to cause the wicked to seek the Lord (83:16–18), and to provide an opportunity for the righteous to praise God (7:17; 35:18, 28).” (Grisanti 2011, 521)

As followers of the King, we already know that a day is coming where the abuse, treachery and misuse at the hands of others who are involved in servicing their greed and thirst for power over others, will indeed end.

Until then, we pray, we forgive, and we warn others and pray for His judgment to take place. Now would be nice.

2 Timothy 4:14–15

“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm, **but the Lord will judge him for what he has done. Be careful of him, for he fought against everything we said.**” (NLT)

Paul had learned to give the Lord the case and leave it up to His timing. God will indeed judge. By the way, if the issue involves doctrine and false teaching, there the instructions are a bit clearer.

Galatians 1:8–9

“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be condemned to hell! **We have said it before, and now I say it again: if**



anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell!" (GNB)

This is not real popular with those into prosperity gospel teaching.

What we will indeed learn here in Psalm 35 is that God, who rules with perfect justice, can be relied upon by all of us to notice and deal with those who have abused or misused us.

Jesus was pretty clear about their future unless they repent.

Mark 9:42

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea." (ESV)

We must be careful never to pit Scripture against Scripture, as if to suggest that the OT calls for a different, perhaps inferior, ethical response to one's enemies than does the NT. (Storms 2016, Ps 35)

As we have begun to see, imprecations are also in the New Testament as well.

Have you ever prayed the Lord's example of prayer for us, specifically, Matthew 6:10 "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." (NASB 2020)? If you have, then you have prayed an imprecatory prayer.

When we pray those words, we are asking the Lord to invoke divine judgement on all of the kingdoms and peoples of the world who are in opposition to the rule and reign of God on this planet. And if we follow up with Maranatha, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Yeah, that is an imprecatory prayer. In fact, how did Paul phrase it.

1 Corinthians 16:22–23

"If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you." (NASB 2020)

One more thing to consider here, especially as we realize it is okay to pray these types of prayers. It is **"that imprecations are nothing more than human prayers based on divine promises.** One is simply asking God to do what he has already said he will do (often repeatedly throughout the Psalms themselves). For example, in Matthew 7:23 Jesus declares that on the day of judgment he will say to hypocrites, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness." Is it wrong for us to pray that Jesus do precisely that? Is it wrong for us to build a prayer on a promise? "Oh, Lord, cause those to depart from you who do evil," appears to be a perfectly legitimate petition. (Storms 2016, Ps 35)

Shocker, praying the promise means praying God's will to be done and many times, that alone is an imprecation.

When Saul decided David had to go, it was not because of any evil thing David had done. It was his own pride over seeing someone do what he should be doing, and doing it better than he ever had.

1 Samuel 18:7–9

"And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." **And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?" And Saul eyed David from that day on.**" (ESV)



Not much has changed since then. This tends to be the selfish attitudes that birth much of what we see take place today. I have come to realize that there is always someone who is stronger than me, smarter than me, and can do a much better job than I ever could.

If we understand that and also understand the grace which God has poured out on us to even allow us to serve Him in what He has us do, who are we to get upset with someone else. But that has not stopped people in thousands of years.

Psalm 35:1–3

“Contend, LORD, with those who contend with me; Fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of buckler and shield And rise up as my help. Draw also the spear and the battle-axe to meet those who pursue me; Say to my soul, “I am your salvation.”” (NASB 2020)

At the first, David is in a courtroom asking the Lord to take the case.

David wants God to fight his legal battles and also defend him from those who are attacking. I must admit that I have claimed these same promises from the Lord many times over the past few years.

At first, I thought I was in the wrong to pray for the Lord to bring judgment on those who were busy destroying me and the ministry He had given me, I am now convinced that is exactly how we should be praying. I guess what I am saying is that my own false perceptions of Jesus, who He is and His purposes for my life got in the way. You see, we are indeed His adopted kids, and He takes it very personal when someone steps in and starts attacking His kids (Mark 9:42).

David looks to the Lord to defend him from all who are slandering him and to protect him from those who are actively hunting him to kill him. To comfort his soul by reminding him “I am your salvation.”

And with that, he begins an appeal to the Lord in the form of curses on those who are his enemies.

“Curses such as these are not to be regarded as expressions of personal vindictiveness.” (Harman 2011, 297)

Rather, we should see these as a servant of the Lord looking to His Lord to protect him and deal with his enemies.

Psalm 35:4–8

“Let those be ashamed and dishonored who seek my life; Let those be turned back and humiliated who devise evil against me. Let them be like chaff before the wind, With the angel of the LORD driving them on. Let their way be dark and slippery, With the angel of the LORD pursuing them. For they hid their net for me without cause; Without cause they dug a pit for my soul. Let destruction come upon him when he is unaware, And let the net which he hid catch him; Let him fall into that very destruction.” (NASB 2020)

The imagery employed here by David is strong. It is intended to be so. And as followers of Jesus Christ, we agree with it. Spurgeon notes the following.

Shameful disappointment shall be the portion of the enemies of the gospel, nor would the most tender-hearted Christian have it otherwise: viewing sinners as men, we love them and seek their good, but regarding them as enemies of God, we cannot think of them with anything but detestation, and a loyal desire for the confusion of their devices. No loyal subject can wish well to rebels. Squeamish sentimentality may object to the strong language here used, but in their hearts all good men wish confusion to mischief-makers. (Spurgeon n.d., 141)



We are in a spiritual war; it is the enemy who has convinced men to turn and do what they do against followers of Jesus. The picture of the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Christ, driving folks ahead of Him chasing them off into judgment is rather clear here.

Something to consider from a spiritual warfare perspective. For the one who does not know Jesus, who is busy about the business of being an enemy to Him and His people. All they can look forward to is being haunted by the fallen ones, victimized by the demons and ultimately pursued by avenging angels serving the Lord chastising them and ensuring their presence at the Great White Throne in order to be condemned to punishment in hell for all eternity. Not an exactly happy thought for the one who does not know Jesus.

David is confident that the Lord will do as he has asked. God will indeed take care of His and because he knows this, David slips into praise.

Psalms 35:9–10

“So my soul shall rejoice in the LORD; It shall rejoice in His salvation. All my bones will say, “LORD, who is like You, Who rescues the afflicted from one who is too strong for him, And the afflicted and the poor from one who robs him?”” (NASB 2020)

At this point in his life, David had nothing. He had some men following him along with their families, but these are not battle-hardened men, yet.

Psalms 35:11–12

“Malicious witnesses rise up; They ask me things that I do not know. They repay me evil for good, To the bereavement of my soul.” (NASB 2020)

They are indeed poor and are being opposed by the King, one who is too strong for him, yet God is with them and delivers them. Yes, there were indeed physical dangers and pressures being applied to David, but that was not all. Many times, we do not have a physical danger in front of us, but slander? People mocking us and saying things they really shouldn't, maliciously done to try and damage us.

Mocking those they want to chase away and demean is a problem in the church. I have been on the receiving end of this recently and I do not know at present, if it is still continuing or not. I have given this over to the Lord to handle and He is doing so. But this really damages the church.

It also seriously damages the flock too and, in some cases, takes believers and runs them off away from the church and away from the Lord. I know of some who no longer want to even be around other believers because of the damage done by malicious narcissistic “Christians.” I have counseled folks damaged this way and again am reminded of Jesus attitude conveyed in Mark 9:42.

Dr. McGee has a word for those who self-righteously mock others in the church. “Mockers hurt the testimony of the church. The church is the bride of Christ; God still has a purpose for her, and somebody needs to do some cleaning up on the inside. We are not to judge the world, but we are to judge the things inside the church. There are those who ridicule God's men, and they lie about God's men—doing it in a most pious way. They are hypocritical mockers. They are jesters in the court of God, ridiculing God's men.” (McGee 1997, 736)

Just as David did nothing to cause the lies and abuse taking place in his life, many followers of Jesus were busy serving the Lord and doing ministry.

People were being prayed for, and in many cases, healed of addictions and turned from sinful practices to a closer walk with the Lord. The most upsetting thing for me, and for David as well, is the way we have



been treated after ministering to and loving on those who are the source of the problem. You see, we really did love them and care for them while they were plotting and planning against us.

Psalm 35:13–16

“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, But my prayer kept returning to me. I went about as though it were my friend or brother; I bowed down in mourning, like one who mourns for a mother. **But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together; The afflicted people whom I did not know gathered together against me, They slandered me without ceasing. Like godless jesters at a feast, They gnashed at me with their teeth.**” (NASB 2020)

At one time, there was a growing relationship, the beginning of a lifelong friendship. But that was not the goal of the other party.

The unfortunate truth is that, as Paul, Peter, Jude and Jesus all taught, in the last days, there will be those who will play games with you, your love, your joy, your relationship with Jesus and do so for personal gain. They will feign fellowship and love until they determine you have nothing left they need and then they toss you aside.

2 Peter 2:1–3

“But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as **there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money.** But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.” (NLT)

What can we be looking for to warn us? Pray for a discerning spirit. They are deceivers, that is what they do. They have no problem working the long game if they believe they can manipulate or use you. The pain comes from realizing that is exactly what has taken place. And as you realize that you too begin to claim the promises and truth of Psalm 35. One more case for the Lord to handle.

Now, folks who fall into this category are more at home with plotting and scheming against you. They slander without ceasing. I wish I could say that is an exaggeration, but once you counsel folks who have been through a situation like David is discussing, or you have gone through it yourself, yep, without ceasing. You wonder if they will ever stop. They will, but it will take the Lord dealing with them to do so.

Psalm 35:17–18

“Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue my soul from their ravages, My only life from the lions. I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty people.” (NASB 2020)

As we see this happening to David, or to ourselves, here is the thing to remember; this will not last forever. If this is a test we are going through, there will indeed be an end. And unless the one who is behind it repents and comes to the Lord, they will indeed be judged for what they do.

Asking the Lord to rescue us from their ravages, is absolutely appropriate to take to the Lord. Knowing that it is God we are praying to, and David was as well, we are able to see that a time is indeed coming where we will be bringing praise to the Lord for His might victory over the evil the enemy has been involved in those who are standing against us have done.

I have had folks ask me to pray for them as they are going through a time of persecution or coming out of a situation of false teaching or abuse being projected onto them by another. When we are delivered,



when we see the Lord move and deal with the one who was behind it, do we then praise Him and ask others to praise Him as well for His deliverance? I think this is one of those places we fall down on at times. David would encourage us to be looking forward to that time we could join with our brothers and sisters in praise at the end of the trial.

Psalms 35:19–23

“Do not let those who are wrongfully my enemies rejoice over me; Nor let those who hate me for no reason wink maliciously. For they do not speak peace, But they devise deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land. They opened their mouth wide against me; They said, “Aha, aha! Our eyes have seen it!” You have seen it, LORD, do not keep silent; Lord, do not be far from me. Stir Yourself, and awake to my right And to my cause, my God and my Lord.” (NASB 2020)

I must admit that I have prayed this section of scripture, more than once.

There is nothing more damaging than having someone lie about you or to you and then take great joy in your pain and go further by publishing the lie to others. Remember, we are imagers of God, made in His image so this type of behavior, which Jesus was subjected to, bugs us. And one more thing, expect it.

John 15:20

“Remember what I told you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they obeyed my word, they will obey yours too.” (NET 2nd ed.)

In his imagination, David saw Saul’s men winking at each other arrogantly (Prov. 6:13; 10:10), as if to say, “He’s done for!” They would never accept a truce or even talk about peace, but this was God’s way of judging Saul for his sins and eliminating him from the political equation in Israel. (Wiersbe 2004, 137)

God indeed saw and He did indeed judge Saul for this. God also saw the same type of behavior take place in the Sanhedrin as they persecuted and murdered Jesus. They too were judged.

Why is it that folks today insist on continuing to do this? Simple, Satan has lied to them and as a result, they believe the lie and take it as a short cut to achieve what they want, you and I are only in their way.

Why should we pray for those who offend us and abuse us, because they too are victimized.

Ephesians 6:12

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The worst thing we see, those who accuse us, actually believe their own lies. What started off as gas lighting others now has those who are the gas lighters, the liars, now accepting of their own lies. “Aha, our eyes have seen it.”

The goal of their gas lighting and their strong insistence in it, to once again find a way to leverage advantage over you and me and make us feel guilty for something we have never done. They want you and me to start wondering if there is indeed some truth to the story they have created about us. This is why David tells the Lord, “You have seen it.”

He is using the lies being told about him as prima facie evidence for the Lord to use in His court case against the wrong doer. David knows what he is asking of the Lord to do, and he uses legal language here to ask the Lord to come to His defenses. Note this, in this case there is no repentance from David as he has done nothing wrong. He is being abused and misused without cause, he is remaining faithful to the Lord and as such, is looking to the Lord for his defense.



Psalm 35:24–28

“Judge me, LORD my God, according to Your righteousness, And do not let them rejoice over me. Do not let them say in their heart, “Aha, our desire!” Do not let them say, “We have swallowed him up!” May those be ashamed and altogether humiliated who rejoice at my distress; May those who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and dishonor. May those shout for joy and rejoice, who take delight in my vindication; And may they say continually, “The LORD be exalted, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant.” And my tongue shall proclaim Your righteousness And Your praise all day long.” (NASB 2020)

As we come to the Lord and pray in alignment with what David is praying here, we must also examine our own hearts and fully determine we are following faithfully and there is nothing between the Lord and us. If we are asking the Lord to stand up for us, are we willing for Him to judge us right now and show us where we must make changes in how we live? We are not praying from a hardened heart, but because of what we are going through, we have soft hearts to the Lord and are allowing Him to do His work in us conforming us even more to Jesus.

David was seriously concerned about unrighteous rejoicing.

If he is bugged by that, we can be as well. David asks for those who do this, to be ashamed. “The phrase be ashamed refers not to simple embarrassment, but to the revelation of the complete emptiness of wickedness before the judgment seat of God (14:5; 31:17; 36:12).” (Radmacher, Allen and House 1999, 672)

Yes, David is indeed praying that those who are wicked, those who are misusing him, realize what it is they have done as they are humiliated in this life and judged in the next. This is a tough concept for us.

“And “yes, we are to “hate” those whom we “love”. When they persistently oppose the kingdom of Christ and will not repent, our jealousy for the name of Jesus should prompt us to pray: “O, Lord, wilt Thou not slay the wicked? Vindicate your name, O Lord, and may justice prevail in the destruction of those who have hardened their hearts in showing spite to your glory.” (Storms 2016, Ps 35)

David is confident in what the Lord will do for him and He will also do the same for us as well.

Psalm 35:27–28

“May those shout for joy and rejoice, who take delight in my vindication; And may they say continually, “The LORD be exalted, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant.” And my tongue shall proclaim Your righteousness And Your praise all day long.” (NASB 2020)

When we see brothers or sisters who have been falsely accused and are vindicated by the Lord, the natural result should be praise. The reason is simple, God and His righteousness have prevailed, and He has shown up on behalf of the one we are praising with.

As New Testament believers, it is ok to pray along with David here.

I believe we are to protect ourselves from unnecessary, random harm. For example, if we are falsely accused, it is appropriate to defend our reputation. Our reputation is the calling card we use to get in the door of the heart in order to live out the gospel. Paul defended his reputation as an apostle in order to retain the opportunity to minister the gospel. (Allender and Longman III 1992, 224)

There are also those cases where it is appropriate to take legal action to protect ourselves or others. Especially in cases of physical abuse.



We also need to remember, the problem is a person reflecting the desires of our true enemy, Satan. Those who are serving him, have expectations. Dan Allender and Tremper Longman state the following.

"What does the enemy usually expect? The enemy usually has an idea, even if it's vague and unconscious, about what one will do in response to his words or deeds. He operates according to a paradigm, as complicated as a chess match, which anticipates what action will be taken to his opening move. Therefore, any word or behavior that is unanticipated throws the match into higher gear. The more radical the response, the more likely the paradigm of defense will crumble under surprise and uncertainty. If the one violated does not react predictably to the violation, but instead offers to feed the enemy with kindness (without compliance) and strength (without harshness), the enemy's setup is foiled and his plan violated." (Allender and Longman III 1992, 215-216)

Romans 12:19–21

"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (NASB 2020)

Let's pray.

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