

Vengeance Is Lord's

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Preacher: Ray Park

[0 : 00] So we're reading Psalm 59. It's 17 verses. Could somebody read the first 10 verses along with the intro? And then someone else read verses 11 through 17.

Thanks, Mitchell. Thanks, June. Yeah. 1 through 10 and June 11 through 17. Amen.

You, Lord God Almighty, you who are the God of Israel, rouse yourself to punish all nations. Show no mercy to live with troopers. They return at evening, smiling like dogs, and palls of the city. See what they spew from their mouths. The words from their lips are sharp as sores, and they think, who can hear us? But you ask them, Lord, and stop at all those nations. You are my strength. I watch you, God, are my fortress.

My God, in whom I can rely. God will go before me and will let me gloat over those who slain me. Kill them not, lest my people forget. Make them tormented by your power, and bring them down, the Lord our shield.

[1 : 30] For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, that will be trapped in their presence. For the cursing of lies that they utter, consume them in wrath. Consume them until they are no more, that they may know that God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth.

Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city. They wander about for food, and growl if they do not get their fill. But I will sing of your strength.

I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress. Oh, my strength, I will sing praises to you.

For you, O God, are my fortress. The God who shows me steadfast love. Thanks, guys. So this psalm is an individual lament, and it seeks God's protection from enemies who threaten to harm the pious person's life.

It's split into two sections, so 1 through 10, and then 11 through 17. The first section is a cry for help in the face of fierce and bloodthirsty enemies. And the second half voices confidence in God that he will protect the psalmist and make an example of the persecutors.

[2 : 42] It's connected to an episode earlier in David's life when he escapes from Saul. Before this, Saul, the king of Israel, was trying to kill David indirectly, so trying to get the Philistines to kill him.

Now he shifted over to trying to get David killed directly. He's just ordering men to kill him. So let's turn there very quickly. It's 1 Samuel 19, verse 11.

And I'll read that very quickly. So 1 Samuel 19, verses 11 through 17. Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning.

But Michael, David's wife, told him, If you do not escape with your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed. So Michael let David down through the window, and he fled away and escaped.

Michael took an image and laid it on the bed and put a pillow of goat's hair at its head and covered it with the clothes. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. Then Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him.

[3 : 52] And when the messengers came in, Behold, the image was in the bed, with the pillow of goat's hair at its head. Saul said to Michael, Why have you deceived me thus, and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?

And Michael answered Saul, He said to me, Let me go. Why should I kill you? So that's the episode this is connected to. Earlier in this chapter, David is able to escape from Saul through Jonathan, who is Saul's son and one of David's friends.

Here, he's able to escape from Saul through Michael, who is Saul's daughter. And later in the chapter, he's able to flee to Samuel. And when Saul and his messengers come after him, the Spirit of God comes upon them, and they all end up prophesying.

So instead of killing David, they prophesy. So that's what this psalm is connected to. Going back to Psalm 59, let's look at three people, three types of people.

There's the bloodthirsty men. There's God. And then there's the persecuted faithful. So first, the bloodthirsty men. There's Saul, who's the king of Israel.

[5 : 03] And right now, what's happening is he's having the kingship ripped away from him. As the king, he doesn't care about God's honor or the good of his people, as he ought to.

But he cares about himself. That's all. First Samuel chapter 18, it says that Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul.

So he was jealous of David, afraid of losing his power, his prestige, his influence. So there's Saul, one of the bloodthirsty men. There's Saul's messengers who are watching for David at his home, waiting to kill him in the morning.

They're following Saul rather than following God. They don't care about what's right and what's wrong. Maybe instead they care about money or they care about favor with the king.

They don't fear God. It says that instead they think, who will hear us? They're described as dogs prowling about the city, a pack of dogs trying to get their kill. And in our lives, we might encounter people like this who are pursuing selfish gain and cause us harm rather than seeking what's right and good.

[6 : 11] So it might be managers who work you into the ground and they don't care about, they don't respect your work hours. They only care about what they can get out of you.

You're just a product to them. Maybe it's a coworker who's waiting for you to make a mistake so they can make you look bad and step over you toward a promotion. Maybe in our younger days and for our younger people, it's a younger or older sibling who can't wait to tattle on you to mom or dad, right?

So we encounter those people. Or maybe you found yourself in the position of bloodthirsty man. You might not be lurking outside someone's house to kill them.

But I know for me, I can come home. And from a hard and tiring day at work, I become really irritable. I take it out on my family. I'm really short, really harsh when they don't deserve it, right?

David says, no fault of my own. These bloodthirsty men are coming after me. Maybe I see people my own age who are surpassing me, maybe getting a promotion, maybe are getting paid more than me.

[7 : 19] And I harbor jealousy and ill will in my heart. And I know that's happened to me. So whether it's in ourselves or in others, we can come across these bloodthirsty men.

Second, there's God, the God of strength and steadfast love. When David comes across these bloodthirsty men, he doesn't lose himself in despair or hopelessness, but he looks to God.

God is for him his strength, his fortress, his refuge. He's the one who shows him steadfast love, who is there for him, the one that David can rely on.

Sinful men might think, who hears us, who sees us? But it's God who sees and hears all. Psalm 94 says, So in your life, that's a point of application.

In the midst of injustice or unfairness, when people are malicious to you, be comforted by the fact that God sees and he will judge. Romans 12 says, Do not take refuge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written, it is mine to avenge.

[8 : 38] I will repay, says the Lord. When your manager steps all over you, your coworkers and siblings wait for you to fail. Don't despair. Don't take vengeance into your own hands. Instead, look to God to judge.

But again, let's take a look in the mirror. Take a look at ourselves. Because if we're honest, if I'm honest, this strikes fear into my heart. God sees me.

God sees all of me. He hears me and knows my thoughts. That can be a frightening thought. In my life, I've done wrong to God, though he hasn't been at fault. I've thought, you know, God, is he really loving?

Accusing him of whether he's good or not. I've thought, I don't care what you want, God. I want this, and I'm going to do this. So how can I approach God and look to him?

Look to him to be my strength when I've disregarded him. But this brings us to the third person, and that's the persecuted faithful. And specifically in this song, it points us to the Lord Jesus.

[9 : 43] Among all the men who have lived on this earth, he's the only one who did no wrong. He's the ultimate person who had bloodthirsty men wanting his harm, though he was not at fault.

During his life, there were people trying to catch him in his words, so he would slip up. There were people who accused him of blasphemy. And when he was put to death, the crowd that was there, they chose someone who committed murder to be released instead of the Lord Jesus, who had done nothing wrong.

He could have cried out to God for salvation and vengeance like David did, but Jesus stayed silent. Isaiah 53 says, He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before it shears is silent, so he opened not his mouth. Why would he do this? What could motivate him to stay silent in the face of such injustice?

His motivation was you, and his motivation was me. He loves us. It's because he loves us, he chose to die for us, even though he didn't deserve it. Again, in Isaiah 53, we read, He was pierced for our transgressions.

[10 : 55] He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. Because Jesus died in our place, we can be forgiven by God, be accepted according to Christ's perfect life.

We can be accepted as dearly beloved children. We can cry out to God to be our strength, our refuge. We can cry out to him, and trust that he will not judge us for our sins, but show us steadfast love forever.

So as we go forward, tonight, tomorrow, in our lives, let's remember not to take vengeance into our own hands, or to despair, but because of what Christ has done for us, let us rely on God's steadfast love for us.