

God of Righteousness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 December 2016

Preacher: Terron Tuckett

[0 : 00] So we are in Psalm 7. Let me read that for us. We'll take a look at the passage. Psalm 7.

O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge. Save me from all my pursuers and deliver me. Blessed like a lion, they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces with none to deliver.

O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, if I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it.

Let him trample my life to the ground and lay my glory in the dust. Selah. Arise, O Lord, in your anger. Lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies. Awake for me, for you have appointed a judgment.

Let the assembly of people be gathered about you, over it to return on high. The Lord judges the people. Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.

[1 : 08] O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous. You who test the minds and hearts. O righteous God, my shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart.

God is a righteous judge and a God who feels indignation every day. If a man does not repent, God will wet his sword. He has bent and readied his bow.

He has prepared for him deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts. Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies.

He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into a hole that he has made. His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.

I will give to the Lord the thanks to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High. As we look at Psalm 7, the first thing to point out to you is that it begins of, in my version, even before verse 1, it begins, A Shigion of David.

[2 : 19] So that's actually where the psalm begins. So this is a Shigion of David. And if you're wondering what a Shigion is, well, that's a good question. No one really quite knows exactly what a Shigion is.

The term is actually only used in this passage of all the Bibles, so it only appears here. Although it also appears in a plural form in Habakkuk 3.1.

And there, once again, it's meaning that it's unclear. So a bit of a circular understanding of Shigion. A Shigion is what this passage is. And what is this passage?

It's a Shigion. But the passage, as we begin to look at it, I wanted to direct you to verse 1. And verse 1 is going to set this entire psalm in place for us.

And what we want to see out of verse 1 is that this is going to be a prayer of deliverance. So David is going to be setting the tone here in the first verse with this prayer of deliverance.

[3 : 21] Let me read that for us. Oh Lord my God, in you do I take refuge. Save me from all my pursuers and deliver me.

So David begins there in the passage and says that, refers to God as refuge. So refuge is a place of shelter. So David is looking to God and saying, you're the one who's going to be my shelter in this storm.

There is a storm that's taking place in David's life. And we see that from the setting that's been set there, even before verse 1, where it refers to the Shigion of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush of Benjamite.

So somehow these words of Cush of Benjamite has caused this storm in David's life. And David is saying, God, you are going to be my refuge in the midst of this storm.

And then he makes a couple of pleas to God, a couple of entreaties to God there in verse 1. The first is to save me. He says, God, you're the one. I want you to save me. And then he also continues

to, deliver me.

[4 : 24] So David comes to God in this storm of his life and saying, God, I need you to save me. You are the one, God, to deliver me. David goes on to say that without deliverance, we see there in verse 2, if God does not intervene.

Let me read verse 2 for us. This is what's going to happen to David if God does not intervene. Less like a lion, they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces with none to deliver. David's like, they're a lion.

They're coming after me. They will be, I will be destroyed. God, I need you to deliver me. But David comes and as he continues in this plea of deliverance, he actually makes it a conditional deliverance.

As he comes, he says, God, save me. He says, God, save me. But if I've done anything wrong, God, hold that against me. These people are doing me wrong. But if I have done anyone wrong, God, you can hold that against me.

And so as David come and as he says, God, I want you to save me. He hedges his plea of deliverance. We see that David's like, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, if I have repaid my friends with evil, if I have plundered my enemies without cause, then God, God, may my enemies pursue my soul and overtake it.

[5 : 41] Let them trample my life to the ground. Lay my glory at the dust. So as David comes, he is asking for God's intervention. But he's also doing it in this conditional format.

He's saying, God, if I've done wrong, if there's wrong within me, you can hold that against me. One of the things that I want us to see is that this conditional deliverance that David is putting before God is a necessity on David's part.

It's a necessity because David is asking for God to intervene. And as God comes and intervenes, we find that God's not going to simply be choosing David's side because he prefers David.

God is going to be choosing the side of the righteous. And when David says, God, I want you to intervene in this matter. I want you to hold these people accountable for what they're doing. God will respond with righteousness.

And God will favor the righteous. And if David is not among the righteous, then God's anger and wrath intended for the enemy of David will be directed toward David himself.

[6 : 44] So as David comes and continues in this passage, he has this petition there we see in verse 6. Where he's asking God to bring judgment. He says, God, between these two parties, between me and this kush of Benjamin.

He says, I want you to bring judgment. I want you to decide between us. Who of us is wrong? And the passage there in 6 goes, arise, O Lord, in your anger.

Lift yourself. It says, arise, O sword, in your anger. Lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies. Awake for me. You have appointed a judgment.

So as David comes and he prays and he asks for deliverance. And he says to God, he says, God, save me. Deliver me. He says, God, I want you to make a judgment. I want you to make a judgment in this matter.

And David comes and he pleads before God, the righteous judge. David says, consider my own personal righteousness. So that David here, as he pleads to God, he says, judge between my enemies.

[7 : 56] But there he goes in verse 8. He says, judge, O Lord, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.

So as David comes and he pleads, he says, God, consider my own personal righteousness in this matter. Decide between the two of us.

But look at who I am. Look at my own character. And it's perhaps a little off-putting to us to hear David's plea to God based upon his own righteousness.

That's not often how we think of coming to God. God saying, intervene. Look at my own righteousness. But one of the things that I want us to see in this is that while David does appeal to his own personal righteousness, he does not appeal to his self-righteousness.

And we rightly look down upon self-righteousness. We rightly condemn self-righteousness. And the problem with self-righteousness is that it compares the goodness of the person to other people.

[9 : 00] Self-righteousness doesn't look to God for a comparison of what is right and what is wrong. It looks to the other person and says, I'm better than that person. And in this case, David is saying,

God, judge between me and this other person.

But consider my own righteousness that I see to you, God. So David comes and says, it's my righteousness based upon my understanding of God. That's the righteousness that I want you to see.

And the psalmist comes and he says to God, I want you to intervene and I want you to take sides. David is saying, God, I want you to arbitrate this dispute.

I want you to make a decision between us. One of the things I want us to just pause and consider for a moment is this question. How comfortable are we with asking God to choose sides?

It's not something I often see as people gather and they pray. It's specifically, God, I want you to choose sides. David clearly here in the psalm is asking God to choose sides.

[10:07] And as I continue to delve into this matter, another question for you. How comfortable with we are praying against our enemies? Yeah, and once again, as I think of my own experience with people and the prayer times together, I don't remember many prayers where people praying against their enemies.

But that is certainly what is taking place in this psalm. And as we think not only of this psalm, but in all the psalms, there are 77 references to either enemy or enemies.

So this idea of enemies in the psalms does occur with a measure of regularity. And we find here specifically that David is saying, God, choose between me and my enemies.

Find favor with me. Find favor with me because of my righteousness. Now, as we think of that idea of David petitioning God to take sides and petitioning God to judge against his enemies, I think we also need to be mindful of Jesus' command.

Jesus says to love our enemies. Let me read a passage from Matthew. This will come from Matthew chapter 5, verse 43 through 45.

[11:29] And this is Jesus speaking on the Sermon on the Mount. Let me read that passage for you. And this is Jesus once again. You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

So how do we navigate our way between these two perhaps seemingly conflicting information?

Jesus clearly says we are to pray for our enemies. He says you are to love your enemies. We are to pray for those who persecute us. David, on the other hand, is petitioning God to say, God, choose between us.

I want judgment on my enemies. So how do we find our way between these two perhaps seemingly conflicting directives or suggestions or ways of moving forward?

[12:38] Well, I would say, like with most things, that balance is always a good option and wisdom is always a good option. We must find our way between balancing these two different options that are before us and wisdom is often what helps us guide through these matters.

As we think of this idea of praying against our enemies, I want you to think of it as a tool. It's a tool that can be used and can be helpful. But it's not necessarily a tool that has to be used.

And as we also think of this idea of praying against our enemies and think of it like a tool, a tool to be used, I think one of the great dangers with any tool is that it can be of great benefit.

It can also be of great harm. Think of using a screwdriver. When you need to get that screw out of the wood, that screwdriver is a vital tool for doing that.

But in the same way, that screwdriver with all that pressure and all that force upon it can easily slip and cut the person's hand who's using it. A tool, a tool greatly valuable, can also cause great harm.

[13:48] So as we think of this idea of praying against our enemies, think of it as a tool. It doesn't necessarily need to be used, but it is something that is an option and available to us.

And as we think also of this idea, a reminder that David comes and he says, God, I want you to judge between us. I want you to judge, God, because you are righteous.

God, look at the situation. Look at the harm that's being done to me by the unrighteous. As we continue on, I want us to just take a look, and I'm going to read a part of this psalm for us.

Because I want you just to take the imagery that's here and just soak it up as we've set the stage thus far of this passage.

And I'm going to begin in verse 10. I'm just going to read a portion of this psalm. And really what I want you to see, once again, is just the beauty of the words that are written, the imagery that's felt there, as David comes and pleads before God.

[14:54] Beginning in verse 10. My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.

If a man does not repent, God will wet his sword. He has bent and readied his bow. He has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts.

Behold, the wicked man conceives evil. And is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made.

His mischief returns upon his own head. And on his own skull, his violence descends. As we close, I want you to think back where we started.

Which is, this is a prayer of deliverance. David is coming in asking God to intervene. Let me read verse 1 for us again.

[16:00] Oh Lord, my God, in you do I take refuge. Save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me.

It's a reminder for us that when we pray for God's deliverance, when we pray for God's deliverance from other people, we invite God's judgment.

The question that we would have then is, are we ready for God's judgment? Are we ready for God to come and make a judgment between the two people?

As we think of prayer points that come from this passage, I'd begin, first of all, that there must be within us a great desire for righteousness.

Without righteousness, we don't find ourselves in a place to petition God. We don't find ourselves in a place to come before God and say, deliver me. We don't find ourselves in a place to come before God and say, judge between me and this other person.

[17:02] So as we think of this, I want you to see this desire for righteousness should be part of all that we do. The second point that I want you to think of as we look at the ideas of prayer that drive from this passage is the burden of evil around us.

David sees the evil around him. David says, God, I want you to do something about it. And I want us to see the evil around us and seek God's judgment and seek God's action to put an end to the evil that is around us.

So as we come before God this evening, I put those two things before you, that desire for personal righteousness, the great burden of evil, and also just a reminder of the tool that we have, the tool where we say to God, God, look at our enemies.

I want you to intervene. I want you to arbitrate between me and my enemies and make a judgment. I want you to prep in the kitchen.

Okay. This is Bad Yaman. I want you to discuss