

Godlessness

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[0 : 0 0] Let me, um, Psalm 14, yes. Yes, I have those, uh, those moments just like before I come here and it's like, is it Psalm 14? Like, is that the one we did last week? And I, I don't know, I also know I'm like on it again and Sean will be like, don't you remember me talking about that? I'll be like, no. I, yeah, I did. So I'm doing Psalm 14 and I thought I heard 17, so I was like, wait. Uh, let me read that, that for us now. The fool says in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt. They do abdominal deeds.

There is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside.

Together they have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one. Have they no knowledge? All the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the Lord. They, there, there, there they are in great terror for God is with the generation of the righteous. You would shame the plans of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion when the Lord restores the fortune of his people. Let Jacob rejoice. Let Israel be glad.

As we, um, look at this, uh, Psalm this evening, uh, the, the style of looking at it is a bit of a devotional, um, approach. So it's, uh, maybe not quite a traditional, like, sermon style type thing, but, um, hopefully as we look at it, uh, we can come with some, uh, challenges, uh, for us as we, um, look into the world and as, as we, uh, live our lives in a way of, of trying to honor God. One of the first things I want us to see is the, the description that is put forth here of the, um, children of man as they are called in verse two. And there, um, for the next, uh, few verses that come, there is a description that is put forth. Um, and among the, the things that these children of man, um, also later called evildoers, and, um, there in verse one actually called the fool, uh, they are described as this, um, they are described as, in verse one, corrupt. In verse two, um, they, uh, do abdominal deeds. Verse three, they are none who does good. Um, actually, sorry, verse three, now begin in verse three. They, they've turned, um, aside from God. We see, um, that they have become corrupt together. Uh, we're told once again that none who does good, not even one. Uh, we see in verse four that they, um, consume people like bread. And we also see they do not call upon the Lord and that they shame the plans of the poor.

Uh, this description here of these children of man, these evildoers or this fool, um, all emerges from a root cause. Um, the root cause that is listed there in verse one. Uh, that is that, um, they say in their heart, there is no God. So this idea, this belief that they have, um, that there is no God is, is the cause. And these other things are all the symptoms that result from that cause. These are the effects that come, uh, from that cause. Um, and one of the things, um, that we sometimes encounter as we, as we look at this kind of cause and effect type thing with, with people is that, um, we look at the effects, um, but we don't see the cause. Um, so we may look at, um, someone who takes advantage of the poor as, as it's described here. And we say, wow, what, what a horrific person who would take advantage of the poor. Um, but really the, the root cause of that is that, um, they, they say there is no God. And if someone says there is no God, these descriptions that are put forth here, that they've turned aside from God, that they do not do good, um, that they consume people like bread, they do not call upon the Lord, they shame the plants of the poor. These are, these are all expected things I would say from people who would say there, there is no God.

[4 : 29] So as we think of this idea of this, um, this cause and, um, um, and this root cause and then these effects, um, one of the things that I want you to think of is that as Jesus looks upon people, I'm more inclined to say that Jesus sees people according to their, their root cause and not according to their effects. Not that he's, he's unaware of the effects, but when he looks upon people, he's reminded of their root cause. He's reminded that the problem with people is I say, there is no God. And when someone says there is no God, they act like someone who believes that.

And, um, one of the things, um, I think that we see with Jesus is there is a, a certain pity that he shows for people who do not have a belief in God. People who, who are by the world standards far from God, who do things very ungodly. He has a certain pity for them. And, um, that's one of the challenges that he and the religious leaders of the day encounter is because they look upon Jesus and they say, look at these terrible people that, that you associate yourself with. And, um, uh, Jesus would say, yeah, yeah. You know, Jesus never diminishes the sins that the people commit, but he always has this compassion for them. As he looks upon them, I would say one of the reasons that that compassion is there is because he says, they don't believe in a God. Um, we, we see Jesus reflect upon this idea out of a passage out of, out of Luke, um, uh, in chapter five, beginning in verse 30. Let me just read that for us. Uh, the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled at his disciples saying, why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? And Jesus answered them, those who are well have no need of a situation, but those who are sick, I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. I find Jesus saying, I look upon these people and I see them as sinners, sinners, and I'm calling them to repentance. And the challenge I would put for you, before you is that when we look out and we see the evil doers of the world is that we, we don't dwell entirely upon the things that they do. That when we look out and see these horrific things that, that people are doing, we say, what's the cause of that? What's ultimately the cause of that?

The cause of that is when they say there is no God. And in their heart, they're saying there is no God. And when you think of a person and they would say in their heart, there is no God.

I, I would hope that gives us at least a measure of pity, regardless of what they have done, regardless of the perhaps atrocities they've committed, we would have a measure of pity for them.

Because, wow, what a, what a terrible existence to, to live with the belief there is no God. One of the other things I want us to see is that, um, in this passage, there is a longing that takes place for Zion. And there in verse seven, we see the psalmist saying, oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion. So as the, the psalmist has reflected upon these, um, uh, atrocities that are committed, um, by these evildoers, um, the psalmist looks and says, I'm looking towards Zion. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion.

[8 : 19] So what is Zion? Uh, Zion, uh, is originally a city that is captured by David. And then, uh, the term, uh, begins to refer to the temple area in Jerusalem. And then it, uh, begins to refer to Jerusalem itself. And in, in this context, as, as the, the term, um, continues to, to evolve, it, um, really becomes, uh, um, almost synonymous with the, the establishment of God's kingdom.

That's this idea of Jerusalem, this new kingdom, um, that is going to be, um, developed. And so we see the psalmist here as he, as he looks for salvation for Israel to come out of Zion.

That the, the psalmist is looking towards God's kingdom. So the psalmist says, God will establish a kingdom that will wipe away the evil that he sees. He sees the terrible evil around him. He says, God will establish a kingdom that will, that will correct that wrong. And as he does so, one of the things I want us to see is how disheartened the psalmist is as he looks upon the sin of the world. As he looks upon the evil in the world, his heart just yearns for God to come in and to rule over that, to establish righteousness and the place of evil. And so the, uh, the, the, the challenge I would put before you, uh, the challenge I put before myself is how do we view the sins of the world? How do we view them? Um, are, do they bother us? Are we disheartened by them?

Do we long for the establishment of God's kingdom when we see the terrible things that are going on around us? When we see people being taken advantage of, when you, when you look at that next news story and read of, um, just the, the terrible things that one person could do to another, right? Do we look to that and say, wow, I'm looking for God's kingdom? Right? Sometimes, uh, uh, we can almost begin to ignore the evil around us and just kind of let it gloss over and, and we don't focus on it. We just kind of forget it's there. We live in our own little world, um, but the evil still exists. Um, sometimes, and perhaps more troubling is that, um, we see the evil of the world and it doesn't really bother us anymore. We, we see it and we're like, hmm, it's just kind of the way it is. Or, or perhaps, um, it, uh, it's gotten to the point where we look at and we, we say, wow, we kind of just think like the people of the world think. And, um, we, we think, um, uh, just like, um, uh, those around us who, who have no belief in God. We don't, we don't have a hope, um, that God has truly offered us. And so, um, my, my challenge for you today is that, um, that as you reflect upon the sins of the world, um, that let it, let it bother you. Let it, let it pierce at your very heart. And in doing so, recognize there is a, a Zion that's coming. There's an establishment of God's kingdom, uh, that is coming. Uh, one last thing I want us to look at is, um, the, um, the, the targets here of these evils, evildoers. Um, so we find that the, the evildoers are, uh, taking advantage. There in verse five, we're told that they take advantage of, of the righteous. And then, uh, verse six, we see that they take advantage of the poor. So, uh, the righteous and the poor, uh, can be vulnerable targets. They're easy to take advantage of. If you, if you have, have your heart set upon, uh, using any means necessary for your own advantage to your own gain, the righteous and the poor should be pretty easy people, um, to advance your own personal agenda. One of the things that we can, um, uh, be sure of is that God protects the poor and the now and the very now. Uh, we see in verse six that the Lord is his refuge.

And, um, and then we also see it just as we were talking a moment ago with the idea of Zion is that God protects the poor and the righteous into the future establishment of Zion, establishment of God's, God's kingdom. And, um, the, the thing that, um, I would put before you, um, is like, do you, do you believe that, um, that God protects the poor and the now and that God protects the poor and the righteous in the future? And that's kind of an easy question, right? You'd see what we just talked about it and you'd be like, yeah, I, I believe that. I believe that. Um, and, uh, so with, with, with that, um, thought in mind, like that the belief, um, that God protects the poor and the righteous, um, would you be willing to intentionally put yourself in the place of the poor? Would you be willing to intentionally put yourself in the place of the righteous knowing that you could be exploited by evildoers? You know, and so often we think of, um, this exploitation as something that just happens to us. Like if, if you, if you're righteous, it'll just happen to you. If you're poor, it will just happen, which is true. Um, but if we truly believe in God's provision, uh, then we also, um, have within us, if we truly believe the things that we, we could take steps towards that. We could take steps towards being vulnerable. We could take steps towards being righteous in such a way that we know that the evildoers could exploit us. But we said, you know what? I am an easy target, but that's okay because my, my God, my God will provide for me. And that's not how the world thinks.

[14 : 19] Like if you were trying to explain that to your friend who was not following Jesus, they would say that's crazy. And in a sense, they would be right. That we would willingly make ourselves vulnerable targets, but do so with the assurance of God's provision. Recognizing that that provision doesn't mean that it all turns out all happy in the end, but it does mean that whatever happens to us, we believe that, that God will provide for our needs, right? And certainly our greatest need would be the, uh, the, the, the salvation of our soul, regardless of whatever the world may throw at us.

We know that we, we know that God has, has the salvation of our soul in his hand. And so as, as we become and we see these evildoers who would exploit the righteous, exploit the poor, I would put that challenge before you. Would, would you be willing to be righteous and poor and be vulnerable? Wow. Think of what God could do if we were willing to be vulnerable to the evil of this world. Um, as, as you think of that idea, I just pointed towards, um, Matthew 10, and we're not going to read through that, but if you want to see an idea of what that might look like, Matthew 10 would be a great chapter to read. And that's the chapter where Jesus, uh, sends out the 12. And as he's sending them out, he provides a lot of, um, uh, encouragement to them, a lot of explanation of what will happen. And he, he's sending them out, uh, they are going to be vulnerable.

But he's telling them, I've got you. Don't worry. I've got you. And, um, uh, he, he describes sending them out, uh, there in Matthew chapter 10, verse 16, behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. That's how God wants us to go out as sheep in the midst of wolves.

And, um, and when we do that, great things can be done through us. Great and powerful things can be done through us. God did great and powerful things for the disciples, and God can do that through us as well. Let me pray for us.

God, we're thankful that, um, uh, that you have a great love for us. God, um, we're, we're thankful that you do provide for those who are vulnerable in this world, not only in, in this age, but, um, in the one to come as well.

[16 : 48] God, um, we pray that we would be people who advance your kingdom, God, people who are used by you to make your kingdom go forth. We ask all this in your name. Amen.

Amen.