

Sunday Evening - English

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Date: 18 February 2018

Preacher: Rev David Campbell

[0 : 00] For this evening's text we're turning to the book of Deuteronomy and chapter 19.

The book of Deuteronomy and chapter 19. We're going to read verses 4 to 6.

And you will see immediately the connection between our text this evening and the two passages that we took earlier for our scripture reading.

Deuteronomy chapter 19. Reading verses 4 to 6. This is the provision for the manslayer who by fleeing there may save his life.

If anyone kills his neighbor unintentionally without having hated him in the past. That's when someone goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood.

[1 : 15] And his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree. And the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies.

He may flee to one of these cities and live. Lest the avenger of blood in hot anger pursue the manslayer.

And overtake him. Because the way is long. And strike him fatally. Though the man did not deserve to die. Since he had not hated his neighbor.

In the past. And as we begin this evening.

I want you to imagine. That you. Are the man. In that little story. You're an Israelite.

[2 : 19] You're living in Canaan. In the days. After the conquest. Through Joshua. And you kill someone. Not because you hate them.

Not because you've been angry with them. Not like Cain. Who slew his brother. It's an accident. You're out with your neighbor.

You're cutting down trees. You're swinging your axe. The head of the axe. The axe. The axe. Comes off. Hits your neighbor in the head.

And kills him. And there are just no words to express. How horrible you feel. That what has just happened.

So. Suddenly. And you're also afraid. Because you know. That when news gets back to town.

[3 : 20] As to what has just happened. In all likelihood. You will have an avenger. Of blood. On your trail. Some family member.

Some relation. Of this man. Whom you have accidentally killed. Out. To take your life.

As you have taken the life. Of his cousin. Or his uncle. Or his father. Or his son. So what are you going to do?

Because this is not 21st century Britain. This is many centuries. Before the birth of Jesus Christ. And you are a citizen. Of Israel.

So what are you going to do? For your safety. You are going to flee. To. One of these cities of refuge.

[4 : 20] Of which. We have just been hearing. By the command of God. Three cities. Have been set apart. On the east side of the Jordan.

And three. On the west. For just. For just. Such a situation. As this. Cities of refuge.

And what you must do. Without any delay. Is flee. To the city. That is nearest. And there. You will be safe. Because the elders.

Of that city. Will. Hear your case. And they will take you. Into the city. And they will give you. A place. To stay. And there.

You will be safe. Now what I want to do. For a little this evening. Is. To do what has often been done. And that is.

[5 : 18] To take this. City of refuge. As a picture. Of Christ. And of the safety. That is ours. If we flee to him.

As sinners. For refuge. Now we do have to proceed. With caution. The analogy. Or comparison. Must not be pressed. Beyond bounds. Otherwise. It will break down. Nevertheless. There are certain. Broad. Resemblances. Between our situation. As sinners. And that of this. Manslayer.

And between the Lord Jesus Christ. And the city of refuge. And as we trace. These parallels out. It will help us.

[6:16] To see some very. Important things. Why it is. That we need. Jesus. To be our saviour. How great.

Our danger is. If he is not. Our saviour. How certain. We are. Of finding refuge. In him. If we will flee. To him.

How safe. We will be. If we take. Refuge. In him. How indebted. We are to him. If. By God's grace. We have already. Taken. That refuge. Well there are three points. That I want to make. This evening.

And the first is this. Our danger. Too. Is great. This man. In our story. Here in Deuteronomy.

[7:09] Chapter 19. He has. Done something. That has. Put himself. In grave. Danger. That has. Exposed him. To. The wrath.

Of this. Avenger. Of blood. And that is our situation. Too. As sinners. Our danger.

Too. Is great. Only. In our case. Immeasurably. Greater. Do you understand.

I am sure. The danger. To which. I am referring. And why. That. Danger. Exists. Every.

Sinner. This is an old writer. And since I will be. Quoting him again. Let me give to you his name.

His name is Dr. Robert McDonald.

[8:06] Every sinner. Says Dr. McDonald. As much needs a refuge. For his soul.

As did the manslayer of old. For his natural life. For if he has not. An avenger of blood. At his heels. He has the justice of God.

And a violated law. Pursuing him. I think of what the apostle Paul. Says in Ephesians chapter 2.

He is referring to. The spiritual condition. Of his readers. In the days before. They were converted.

And includes himself. Among them.

And says to them. That like the rest. We were by nature. Objects. Of wrath. Right. From the very beginning. From the very outset.

[9:07] Of our lives. Objects. Of the divine anger. That's what they had been. And it is what we are too.

Though you may deny it. Or seek to oppress it. Right from the very start. Of our lives. We have been.

We have been. The objects. Of God's anger. On account. Of our sin. And we have been. So. Most. Justly.

What is the danger here? With this. Man. Who has. Accidentally. Killed. His neighbor. The danger is.

That innocent blood. Will be shed. And the writer. And the writer. Makes that clear. In verse 6. Lest the avenger of blood.

[10:07] In hot anger. Pursue. The manslayer. And overtake him. Because the way is long. And strike him fatally. Though the man. Did not. Deserve to die.

His danger. The danger of innocent blood. Being shed. But that is not where we are. Not as sinners. Were God. To take our lives. It would not be the taking. Of the lives of the innocent. But rather the lives of the guilty. It would be a most.

Just act. On his part. Were he to proceed against us. And summon us. To judgment.

There would be no wrongdoing. In that. Whatsoever. Once again. He would be acting. Most. Justly. And that is why we can say.

[11:09] That we too. Are in danger. As sinners. And what I want to do. For a moment or two. Is to illustrate.

How great. That danger is. And in order to do that. We need to glance. For a little. At the character. Of the pursuer. Who is. This God. Who might justly. Take vengeance. On us. For our sin.

First of all. He is the God. Who does not need. To look for you. To search for you. News gets back to town.

So and so. Has been killed. By you. And off. The avenger of blood. Goes.

[12:09] In hot pursuit. But if he is to get you. He must first of all. Find you. You. And in order to find you.

He must search for you. And as he is searching. There may be all manner of places. In which you can hide from him. And hide successfully.

But you know very well. That none of that. Applies to God. God. God. God. Doesn't need. To come. Looking for us. He doesn't need to institute.

A search. For us. He knows. Where we are. And there is just nowhere. That we can hide from him. Isn't that. What David says. In Psalm. One hundred and thirty nine. Insistent. That God is a God.

[13:10] From whose presence. We simply. Cannot. Flee. Think about it. With reference. To the past.

How many. Years. Have you been living. As an unconverted. Unforgiven. Sinner. How many years. Have you been refusing.

To take refuge. In Jesus Christ. At every. Moment. God has known. Exactly. Where you are. And he knows. Where you are. Now. At this. Very moment. In this building. In that particular pew. You see how great. Our danger is. God. Who does not need. To look for us. To search for us.

[14:10] And then there is a second thing. That we can see. As we think about the character. Of the pursuer. This God. Who may justly. Take vengeance upon us. Because we are not innocent.

But guilty. Who is he. Who is he. A God. Who might do so. At any moment.

Back to our story. The avenger of blood. Is on your heels. Has spotted you. And you look. And he is running toward you.

But he hasn't. Got you. Yet. And if you are quick. You may yet be able. To outrun him. And escape with your life.

But there is no outrunning God. The God. Who knows. Who you are. At every moment. At any moment. Might call you.

[15:14] To account. Do you see how great. Your danger is. And it may be.

That in this. Building this evening. There is someone. Who very much. Feels that. It's no. Uncommon thing. When God has.

Awakened someone. To. A sense of their sin. And their danger. For them to be afraid. Of. Going to bed at night. And going to sleep. Lest they should wake up.

In hell. He knows. Where you are. You are in his hands. And at any moment.

He may summon you. To his just. Judgment. God. So there is our first point. This evening.

[16:14] This manslayer. His danger is great. And if you have yet. To flee. For refuge. To the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your danger. Is greater by far. And I pray. To the Lord. To the Lord. To the Lord. And I pray. God. To awaken you.

To a sense of that. But now secondly. We too. We too.

Have somewhere. To flee. This. Man. Who has. Accidentally. Killed. Killed his neighbor. And has this avenger.

Of blood. On his heels. He. Has somewhere. To flee. We've been hearing. All about it. In these. Scripture readings. On either side.

[17:12] Of the Jordan. These specially. Designated cities. Cities. Of refuge. Places. Where a man like this. Can be safe. There are some.

Interesting. Traditions. In connection. With these cities. Of refuge. And. We learn. For example. How. Without.

Wherever you were. In Israel. You were. Only. A half day's. Journey. At most. From.

One or other. Of these. Cities. And. We learn. How. The roads. To these. Cities. Were.

Always. Kept. In good. Repair. And. According to tradition. At every place. Where. Someone. Fleeing. Might be. Uncertain.

[18:07] As to the direction. In which. To go. There was. A signpost. Refuge. So. The traditions.

Tell us. And it may. Well. Be. That. Each of them. Is. Correct. Certainly. Certainly. Certainly. Certainly. By the. Merciful. Provision. Of. God.

There. Were. Cities. To which. You. Could. Flee. And. Wonderfully. As. Sinners. Liable.

To the. Just. Anger. Of. God. That. That. Is. Our. Happy. Position. We. Too. Have. Somewhere. To. Flee. Only. In. Our. Case. The. Somewhere. Is. A. Someone. A. Person. Our. Lord.

[19:00] Jesus. Christ. Do you. Remember. John. The. Baptist. Urging. His. Hearers. To. Flee. From. The. Wrath. To. Come. There. Is. Somewhere.

For. Us. To. Flee. Or. I. Think. Of. What. The. Writer. To. The. Hebrews. Says. In. Chapter. Six. About. Those. Who. Have. Fled. For. Refuge. To.

Lay. Hold. Of. The. Hope. Set. Before. You. There. Is. Somewhere. For. Us. To. Flee. A. Person. The.

Lord. Jesus. Christ. He. Is. Our. City. Of. Refuge. Abiding. In. Him. We. Are. Safe.

Well. Let. Me. Expand. On. It. A. Little. And. I. Want. To. Do. So. By. Talking. To. You. About. Two. Things. The. First. Is. A. Marvel.

[19:54] And. The. Second. A. Relief. The. Marvel. And. The. Marvel. Is. That. Jesus. Is.

God's. Own. Provision. Back. To. The. Manslayer. He. Has. These. Cities. Of. Refuge. To. Which. He. Can. Flee. Why.

Is. That. Because. God. Has. So. Ordained. It. These. Cities. Of. Refuge. They. Weren't. Moses. Idea. They. Weren't. Joshua's.

Idea. They. Were. God's. Idea. God's. Gracious. Provision. And. So. It. Is. With. The. Lord. Jesus. Christ.

Our. City. Of. Refuge. Why. Is. He. There. For. Us. To. Flee. To. God. Has. Sent. His. Son. To.

[20:48] Be. The. Savior. Of. The. World. God. So. Loved. The. World. That. He. Gave. His. One. And. Only. Son. Here. In. His.

Love. Not. That. We. Loved. God. But. That. He. Loved. Us. And. Gave. His. Son. To. Be. The. Propitiation. For. Our. Sins. Jesus.

Is. God's. Provision. And. The. Marvel. Of. It. The. God. Who. Has. Made. This.

So. Loving. And. Costly. Provision. Is. The. Very. God. Whom. We. Have. Offended. By. Our.

Sins. Whose. Wrath. We. Have. Provoked. Whose. Justice. May. Take. Our. Lives. And. Cast. Us. Into.

[21:43] Hell. What. A. Marvellous. Thing. It. Is. That. He. Should. Make. Such. A. Provision. For. Us. Take.

It. As. A. Testimony. To. The. Greatness. Of. The. Love. Of. God. For. Sinners. He. Whom. We. Have. So. Wronged. In.

Whose. Eyes. We. Are. So. Guilty. Yet. Gives. His. Beloved. Son. To. Be. To. Us. A.

City. Of. Refuge. There. Is. The. Marvel. The. More. God. Opens. Our. Eyes. To. The.

Greatness. Of. Our. Sin. And. The. Costliness. Of. The. Gift. The. Greater. The. Marvel. Becomes. And.

[22:38] The. Relief. The. Relief. Is. That. He. Is. So. Near. To. Hand.

I. Mentioned. A. Moment. A. A. One. One. One. Of. Those. Traditions. About. The. Cities. Of. Refuge. How. Near. It. Is. Said. That. They. Were. To. Anyone.

In. Israel. A. Half. Day's. Journey. And. No. More. A. Half. Day's. Journey. At. The. Most. And.

You. Are. At. The. Gates. Of. One. Of. These. Cities. Of. Is.

Another. Old. Writer. The. Invitations. Of. The. Gospel. Are. Unencumbered. With. Any. Conditions.

[23:31] Of. Time. Or. Place. Not. Even. Half. A. Day's. Journey. Is. Necessary. For. Trembling. And.

Penitent. Sinners. To. Come. To. Christ. The. Relief. Of. The. Gospel. Right.

Where. You. Are. At. This. Very. Moment. You. May. Come. To. Jesus. For. Life.

Violet. Offender. Who. Truly. Believes. That. Moment. From. Jesus. A. Pardon. Receives.

The. Relief. The. Relief. Of. The. Gospel. The. Lord. In. His. Mercy. Brings. You. To. Your. Senses.

[24:26] Perhaps. That's. What. He. Has. Done. And. You. See. Your. Sin. And. Your. Guilt. And.

Your. Lostness. And. Whilst. There. Are. Those. Around. You. Who. Will. Not. Have. It. So. It. Has. Gone. Right. To. Your. Heart.

That's. Where. You. Are. And. You. Sense. The. Greatness. Of. Your. Danger. Well. What. Now. Does. The. Lord. Have. Some.

Pilgrimage. That. He. Desires. You. To. Make. Or. Does. He. Set. Out. An. Elaborate. Set. Of. Preparations.

That. You. Must. Make. In. Order. To. Be. A. Little. Bit. More. Fit. To. Come. To. Him. For. Life. None. Pivots. I. love.

[25 : 21] How. Charlotte. Elliot. Puts. It. In. Her. Great. Hymn. She. Captures. It. Perfectly. Just. As. I. Am. And.

Waiting. Not. To. Rid. My. Soul. Of. One. Dark. Blot. To. The. Whose. Blood. Can. Cleanse. Each. Spot.

O. Lamb. Of. God. I. Come. Right. Now. Right. Where.

You. Are. Without. Any. Preparation. Needing. To. Be. Made. Just. As. You. Are. The. Relief. Of. The. Gospel.

So. The. Picture. Is. Building. Up. Our. Danger. Too. Is. Great. That's.

[26 : 16] The. First. Point. And. The. Second. We. Too. Have. Somewhere. To. Flee. The. Lord.

Jesus. Christ. Who. Even. Now. Waits. To. Be. Merciful. Christ. Our. City. Of. Refuge. And. My. Third. Point. Is. Simply.

This. There. We. Too. Are. Safe. In. Ancient. Times.

To. Go. Back. To. Dr. MacDonald. In. Ancient. Times. He. Who. Killed. Anyone. Unawares. Had.

To. Flee. To. His. Refuge. At. Once. Not. A. Moment. Could. He. Tarry. For. On. The. Way. He. Might. Be.

[27 : 08] Slain. Near. The. Gate. He. Might. Be. Slain. Touching. The. Wall. Falls. His. Life. Blood. Might. Flow. Once.

Over. The. Threshold. And. Within. The. Gate. Not. A. Hair. Of. His. Head. Could. Perish. Safe.

In. The. City. Of. Refuge. Thief. And. So. Is. It. It. It. He. Continues. With. Every. Sinner. If. It. Is. True. That. Out. Of. Christ.

There. Is. No. Safety. It. Is. Equally. True. That. In. Christ. There. Is. No. Danger. and then he goes on to quote that great opening statement of Romans 8 there is therefore no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus it's where you are if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus yourself safe in Christ and it is not as though God has been frustrated of his purpose and it's here that the analogy breaks down because I can well imagine this avenger of blood gnashing his teeth in frustration that his prey has escaped him and hammering on the door of the gate in his frustration because he cannot get what he wants

Lord God God is glad when we find safety in Jesus God will be glad if you come this evening for refuge to Jesus because Jesus is his merciful provision and he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked it is his joy men and women young people boys and girls in their danger and need cross the threshold and by faith take refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ so let's think then about being safe in Jesus what makes Jesus a safe place to be like this city of refuge of which we've been hearing well think to begin with of what he has done with our sin and what he has done with our sin is he has borne that sin himself we go back to the very first point of contrast this man in our story he's not guilty of a crime it was a horrible accident

[30 : 23] God is making provision here for the protection of innocent blood but we are not innocent anything but we are steeped in sin and God is just and is bound to punish sin how then can there be a city of refuge for us somewhere where we can really be safe where we can justly be protected the sheer wonder of it the one in whom sinners take refuge has borne their sins the very sins for which justice pursues them the very sins that make them liable to the anger of God that is what makes

Jesus safe a safe place to be that's why you will have nothing to fear if you take refuge in Jesus tonight the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all to go to Jesus is to go to the sin bearer it is to take refuge in the sin bearer and there is just no better no safer no wiser thing than for sinners to take refuge in the sin bearer because through that there is forgiveness and deliverance so we understand what a safe place Jesus is when we think about what he has done with our sin and to when we think what he has done with God's wrath he has borne that too he has endured God's wrath it's what sin bearing is all about when we begin to break it down and to understand what it's all about it's all about accepting our liability to the wrath of God standing in our place choosing to take it himself so that there might be none for us to take propitiation for our sins lovingly bearing the whole of our guilt and the wrath that is due to it so that we might be forever shielded from it isn't that amazing Jesus our city of refuge just the safest place to be no condemnation for those who are in Christ

Jesus that's how Paul begins Romans 8 do you remember how he ends all the assurances that he gives to those who have taken refuge in Christ lest any should fear that somehow or other it's all going to unravel and they're going to be lost anyway not at all God is for you he says and there is no

one who can be against you because he did not spare his own son but delivered him up for us all how will he not also along with them graciously give you all things that you need to keep you safe to heaven how he has justified you and how because he has justified you there is no one who can bring a charge against you that will stick and Christ who has lived and died and risen again is interceding for you at the right hand of God and then he comes to that magnificent climax and asserting and arguing that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus you put all of that together there are just no words to express how safe we are if we are in Christ so I ask you tonight are you in Christ have you taken refuge in him have you come to him for salvation if you have not you have everything to fear because God knows who you are and at any moment he may take your life isn't that a fearful position to be in for as long as you are separate from Christ that is the position that you are in and it puts me in mind of the Saviour's parable of the rich fool and how

[36 : 18] God said to that man who supposed that he had so many years left to eat and drink and make merry thou fool this very night thy soul is required of thee can you be sure that this very night God will not say the very same thing to you but if by faith you have come to the Lord Jesus Christ and to be in him you have nothing to fear for you are in the one who has borne your sin you are in the one who has borne your wrath and there you are safe this man in our story he is safe the very moment he crosses the threshold and enters that city he is safe and you are no less safe indeed you are immeasurably more safe if you have made

Christ your refuge if you will make him your refuge so we've been thinking about the Lord Jesus tonight as the city of refuge and how if we are in him we are safe and as I conclude let me appeal to you if you have not yet fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus that you would do so without delay before it is too late and lest any should fear that somehow or other Christ is not for you be persuaded that the contrary is true and it's the very thing that he wants it's the very thing to which he invites you the very thing that he pleads with you to do to come this very night will you do that what is it that holds you back is it the love of sin sin will be your undoing is it unbelief you have been hearing the word of God tonight is it the hope that you have plenty of time you do not know whether you have another moment or is it a fear of the reception he will get after so long and so many invitations and so many refusals and such long continuance in sin you may dismiss those fears very God who knows who you are and who at any moment can take your life is there in love ready just like the father in Jesus parable to receive the prodigal no matter how far into the far country he has gone no matter the mess that he has made no matter how long it has taken you to return don't go from this place still exposed to the danger with the justice of God in pursuit come and find refuge in Jesus lift up your heart to him even where you are plead with him to be your saviour and surely he will hear your prayer let us pray almighty god our loving heavenly father so work we pray that those here will be persuaded of the truth of these things about which we have been thinking this evening bring us face to face we pray with the

reality and the gravity of our sin and the justness of the wrath that rests upon us and the and the we thank that that is not the end of the story that you have given Jesus your son to be a city of refuge for us thank you so many so many of us by grace have found refuge in him we are safe in him our beloved saviour and we pray for those here this evening who have not yet fled to him so work most gracious god in their hearts that without any delay just as they are oh let the good news so come home to their hearts that this night before its hours are at an end they will be safe in

Christ in whose great name we pray Amen returning for our closing praise in the Scottish Psalter to Psalm 91 this is on page 351 Psalm 91 he that doth in the secret place of the most high reside under the shade of him that is the almighty shall abide I of the Lord my God will say he is my refuge still he is my fortress and my God and in him trust I will

Psalm 91 in the Scottish Psalter page 351 we'll sing verses 1 to 4 he that doth in the sacred place of the most high reside be that as in the secret place of the most high reside under the shade of him that it is the rade and abomb b thanks everywhere and i i hope the Lord my God will stay. He is my refuge still.

[44 : 44] He is my God, present my God, and in end of wrath I will.

Asher in thee, he shall be saved, and give thee deliverance from sacrifice.

I will be saved, and give thee deliverance from sacrifice.

His weather shall be high, I trust.

Under earth's wings shall be. His faithfulness shall be a shield.

[46 : 12] And I may grace, mercy, and peace from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with us all, both now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.