

Keeping Our Zeal

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[0 : 00] Psalm 69 at verse 9. We're looking really at verse 5 through to verse 12 together this evening. But verse 9 we can take together just now.

For seal for your house has consumed me and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. The psalm we just sang, Psalm 44, is again an experience of the psalmist going through so many different trials in this experience.

When you see words like crying out, awake, O Lord, arise from sleep, it gives us an indication that for the psalmist, God feels very far away in his affliction.

And Psalm 69 is another psalm that shows us that kind of experience as well. As you see at the beginning of the psalm, the psalmist is feeling overwhelmed in so many ways.

He feels the waters have come up to his neck. He is sinking in the deep mire where there is no foothold. He's being overwhelmed by it all. And so how in the midst of these kinds of experiences do people keep a seal for the Lord?

[1 : 12] How would we be able to say for seal for your house has consumed me even in the midst of great trials? Well, it's really what we are doing together this evening and what we do by ourselves as we worship God, when we come together to worship God.

It's by focusing on his word and how precious his word is, how many promises we find in his word that helps us through all our different experiences.

Last time as we began to look at this psalm, we saw David in this grim situation. There's enemies all around him and they're hounding him, they're slandering him.

But his greatest concern is that they're dishonouring God, that everything that they are doing is bringing dishonour to God. And we noted in the psalm that this is a prayer of David.

He's crying out to the Lord in this situation. And at the beginning of the psalm, you think it's a prayer that's just a little chaotic. It seems to be all over the place, disorganised in so many ways.

[2 : 21] He's jumping around in all different kinds of ways. In many ways, it's maybe a prayer that doesn't seem to make sense at times. And yet, when we think of our own prayer life, how often are we praying in that same way?

We're praying maybe where our minds are just so distracted. We're jumping from one thing to another. We're just not settled depending on our situation. It's wonderful to come and be still before God and come with a sense of calmness and peace in our experience.

But as we often know, it's not always the case. But that doesn't mean we don't come to God in prayer. It's at these times that we maybe more often should come to God in prayer.

So what do we see in this psalm that can help us in our experience? The psalm is one of the most quoted in the New Testament. And in the New Testament, it's always pointing us towards the Lord Jesus Christ, what he has done for us and how we can trust in him.

And as we continue to go through this psalm, we see how important prayer is in our own experience, how important it is to focus on ourselves in prayer, not just looking around as David could so easily do here and seeing all the enemies and praying against them.

[3 : 57] But David begins this prayer by looking to himself. He begins with a confession in his own heart that he knows his sin.

He knows he's not always right with God. But what his prayer is, it's a wonderful prayer. He says, even in this experience where I know I'm not right, he says to God in verse 5, O God, you know my folly.

The wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. He's confessing this before God. Then he says in verse 6, Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me.

He's got this longing that God will be glorified even despite his sin. And let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me.

It's like he's saying, Don't let those who are already yours be put off because of me. And don't let anyone who is seeking you be put off because of me.

[5 : 03] So he has this wonderful confession. But there's also, as we see this evening, we're going to look at three other lessons we can take from the psalm in verse 5 through to verse 12.

Lessons for ourselves as we go on on our own journey. And there's three things. And these three things I want us to take this evening are David's recognition of God.

How he recognises God in his experience here. And then secondly, we see his reproach because of his faith in God. And then thirdly, we'll see his seal for the Lord, his God.

So the first thing we see that in his prayer, there is this recognition of God. The psalm doesn't introduce us to what the problem is immediately.

We don't just know exactly what the troubles that are in David's life. But we know that there are enemies all around him. And how this is leaving him feeling.

[6 : 09] And a feeling of being overwhelmed. And so he comes to God in prayer. His prayer is not polished. It's not perfect. But the key is that he's drawing near to God.

He is praying to God. And it's as we pray to God that we are led to this nearness with God. That we come to experience and know who God is more.

We experience what he can do for us in prayer. How he is able to change. Maybe not the situation. Maybe not always the way we would want it.

But the way he's able to give us a calm and a peace in the midst of a situation. To know the nearness of God. And so we see this kind of change coming over David in this psalm.

From a feeling of being overwhelmed, we see where he's turning to. And who he is turning to. And his recognition is of God as his only hope.

[7 : 18] In verse 5 you see there, Oh God, he's crying out, Oh God, you know my folly. He recognizes there's nothing hidden from God.

And therefore he must come to him as the God who knows all things. There is this recognition of God. You know everything. Nothing is hidden.

And then as it goes on, you see in verse 6 how he describes God further. He says, Oh Lord God of hosts. He says, Oh God of Israel.

And he has this way of describing God. As you go through this psalm, His recognition is always towards God and who he is.

It may just seem like a few words when he's saying, Oh God, Oh God of hosts. Or Oh God of Israel. But there's so much behind these words.

[8 : 19] He is God, the living God. He is the one who hears prayer. He is the Lord of hosts. He is the one who has made and created all things.

He is the one who sustains this world and all its people. He is, Oh God of Israel. He is talking here about God's promise, His covenant relationship with His people, that He will never leave His people.

He's crying out to God in this way of recognition, calling to the living God. And the shorter catechism reminds us of this very thing as we pray.

The question is asked in the shorter catechism, What is prayer? And the answer is, Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to His will.

In the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.

That is the way David is praying here, in recognition of God in all of these things, that God's will be done, that there is confession, that there is thankful acknowledgement of His mercies, that He is the God who is able to save.

[9 : 45] It used to be, and it's not so much now, that you would hear in times of grief and tragedy, that they are in our thoughts and prayers. And more so now, all you hear is that they are in our thoughts.

Even the word prayer isn't added on now. And perhaps it's maybe just a swell when people who know nothing of God say you're in our thoughts and prayers.

Because who are they praying to? We hope that people would cry out to the God of David, the God of hosts, the God of Israel.

But so often it's just a token gesture. But for the Christian, it's so different. If you are saying to anyone, you are in our thoughts, and more so it is, you are in our prayers.

We are committing you and ourselves to the living God. And so we should never fail to pray. We should never fail to confess our sin.

[10:53] But we should never fail to remember who it is that we are praying to. Recognizing God for who he is.

That is the God who David is crying out to here in the midst of his trouble, in the midst of his affliction. That is the God we cry out here to this evening for others and for ourselves, to the living God, the one who can do so much for us, so much more than we ask or imagine.

We don't forget God. We don't forget God. Even in the midst of our most difficult experiences, we acknowledge to whom else can we go.

There is no one. We come to God through Christ our Lord, the one who has the words of eternal life. And so we come first in recognition.

Recognizing who he is and trusting in this God. The second thing we see here is the reproach that David experiences in his life.

[12:07] In verse 9 and 10, he speaks about this reproach. The reproach is of those who reproach you have fallen on me. And when I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.

So we're seeing a little more of what the turmoil of his life experiences is here. It's suffering reproach. But what is reproach?

You maybe hear the phrase when someone is above reproach. They're said they don't deserve blame or criticism in what they have done. They're above reproach.

But what about when someone is under reproach? I have been reproached, David is seeing here. The reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

So he's feeling this sense of burden, of reproach. But what is it? Well, we see it in so many different ways throughout the scripture, just what reproach is.

[13:14] It's criticism. It's taunting. It's ridicule. It's all of these things. But it's not just something light. It's not like we see today when people are so easily offended by something you say.

There's so much more venom behind this reproach. It's a reproach of many. The reproach of all around him. There's this just attack that David is experiencing.

It's coming at him from all kinds of different directions. Why is David hated so much? Well, we see here in verse 7, why?

For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach. The dishonor has covered my face. The very reason that they hate him is because he is identifying himself with this living God.

He's crying out in recognition of who God is. And this love for God has brought reproach. Is it justified? No. Is it deserved?

[14:22] No. But it's there. And what does reproach look like? We see it in another psalm, in Psalm 42.

The psalmist there says in verse 10, As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me or reproach me. It's a word used there.

While they say to me all the day long, where is your God? That is the reproach the psalmist was feeling there. This cry, where is your God?

This taunting, this reproach that they were under. And it's a taunt, it's a reproach we see so often today. We may not get it directly spoken to us, but I'm sure many of us do.

Ridicule for believing in God. Where is this God of yours when there's so many things happening in this world? So many cruelties, so much sadness, so much sorrow.

[15:22] Where is your God? You see it in the media so often. You see more and more nowadays people are so willing to put themselves up there and say, There is no God.

Ridicule from those who are in famous positions. I've seen over the last few years people like Stephen Fry, Ricky Gervais, even Lorraine Kelly, taunting, reproaching God's people saying, Your God's not real.

Where is your God in a mocking way? And we should feel that pain when we see other Christians suffering. And when we hear these reproaches, these taunts being spoken.

It should hurt us. But we should not be cast down. Because in Psalm 42, this question is asked, Where is your God?

There's this mocking. The psalmist says, Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God. For I shall again praise him.

[16:29] My salvation and my God. There is this confidence. And this confidence we see coming through more and more as we go through Psalm 69 as well.

Well, we haven't come to this evening, but in verse 13 it says, But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me in your saving faithfulness.

There's this confidence in God. Yes, there is reproach. But what does it remind us of?

Well, it reminds us of the one who has borne all our reproaches. Paul takes this psalm in Romans chapter 15, where he's speaking to the people about bearing with each other's weaknesses.

And he says there in verse 3, Quoting this psalm, applying it to Christ.

[17:48] Christ our Lord, the one who was innocent, the one who bore our reproach on himself, who took our sin on himself.

The spotless lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world. The one who was innocent and yet condemned for us.

And it's a wonder how you see this psalm again and again in the New Testament context, always pointing us towards Christ.

Teaching us about him and our need to rest and abide in him. We suffer reproach, but he has suffered all our reproaches.

They've all fallen on him. And so the third thing, the final thing that we see in this psalm is the seal then that David has.

[18:46] And the seal that we should have. In verse 9 it says, For seal for your house has consumed me.

Although the day was hard, although the attacks on the enemy, they were many. We see David with a great seal for God and for his house.

And look at the way he says it. The seal for your house has consumed me. It is everything to me. You, Lord, are everything to me.

I love your house. I love your worship. I love your kingdom. I love your people. Seal for your house has consumed me.

Even in the midst of my sufferings. Therefore you're sick. Because I love you with all my heart. As we read in the Gospel of John, we see there how it picks up these very words.

[19:48] In the context of Christ's cleansing of the temple. When he sees his father's house becoming a den of robbers.

My father's house, a house of trade. It says, as he turns over all the tables, his disciples remembered that it was written, Seal for your house will consume me.

And how our Lord served his father. Seal for his house consumed him in every way when he saw the sin of this world.

He not just cleansed the temple in that sense. But as he went on to speak in that passage, he said, destroy this temple and I will build it again in three days.

How he was speaking about his body. How he would lay down his life for his people. How he was consumed with a love for his people.

[20:54] Jesus came not to be popular in this world or to be friends with all. He came to serve his father and seal for his house consumed him.

And it's the disciples remembering that it was written, that it was written. These words in Psalm 69. For seal for your house has consumed me.

And we ask ourselves, is that how we live? Is that the seal that we have? Is it for God's house? For God's people? And for God's cause?

Are we trusting in our God in this way where seal and love for him consumes us? And it shows in us that we have a passion for Christ.

We have a passion for his word. We have a passion for his cause. Are we consumed by seal for him?

[21:54] There's a story told of a famous English actor. And he met a well-known preacher. And the two of them struck up a conversation.

And the preacher, he said to the actor, I wish you would explain to me something. And what is it? Asked the actor. I don't know what I could explain. How I could explain anything to a preacher.

And the preacher said, what is the reason for the difference between you and me? He went on to say, you are appearing before crowds night after night with fiction.

And the crowds come wherever you go. The preacher went on saying, I am preaching the essential and unchangeable truth. And I am not getting a crowd at all.

The actor, he thought about it for a minute and he said, well, the answer is quite simple. I can tell you the difference between us.

[22 : 55] I present my fiction as though it were true. But you present your truth as though it was fiction. There was no seal for the word.

There was no seal that this was truth. That it was essential truth. That everyone needed to hear. And what should mark every Christian is with a zealous seal for the truth of God.

That we are trusting in the precious word of God. That we are trusting in a saviour who came for his people. That we are trusting that he is going to come again.

That we are trusting that everything that is said in the word of God is true. When you look down through the generations of God's people.

What stands out is the seal of God's people. Whether you think of Stephen as he was stoned by those around him and a seal for the people.

[24 : 00] When you think of Paul and his own experiences throughout the New Testament. When you think of people throughout our own history in our land here. The Covenanters. When you think of preachers like Spurgeon or Martin Lloyd-Jones or many others.

You can think of famous people. But it's also marked in faithful Christians in every walk of life. Seal for the Lord consumes them.

And it's all because they see in Christ the seal that he had for them. And that is how we are to be ourselves as well.

How Christ came to take away the sins of this world. Seal for your house has consumed me. Can that be said of us?

Can that be said of you? Can it be said of me? A seal for the Lord is what consumes us. It is what's keeping us going. As we think of the recognition we give to God.

[25 : 05] Who he is. As we think of the reproach. The taunts that his people suffer. You and I included. As we think it's our seal for him.

Who bore our reproach. And it was consumed by seal for his people. May this word go with us day by day.

Reminding us of who we worship. Who we pray to. What he has done for us. The seal that he has for his people. And the seal that we should have for him.

Let us pray. Lord our gracious God. We thank you for your word. We thank you how it directs us in the paths of life.

How it is a life giving word. How it reminds us that no matter our troubles in this world. That we have one who has borne our grief. We have one who has taken away the sin of this world.

[26 : 07] As we put our trust in him. And we pray Lord that as he speaks of seal that consumed him. That we too would have a seal for the house of the Lord.

And for the Lord's people. And for his cause in every way. We pray Lord that you will continue to bless us. And to guide us as we ask all these things. Asking the forgiveness of our sin.

In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to.