

Let All the Earth Rejoice

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[0 : 00] to the end of the psalm. You can read again just verse 34 though. Psalm 69 reading at verse 34. Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there and possess it. The offspring of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it. We come back to look at this psalm for the fourth time and final time this evening. We've looked at it a couple of times now, just seeing how real the psalmist is in his prayer to God here. It's not a polished prayer, it's a prayer that so often seems to be just jumping around from one thing to another. He's distressed, he's in turmoil at what's going on around him and within him as well, and just questioning of God, why, and crying out to God in so many different ways. His opening cry in verse 1, save me, O God. So we see immediately that there's this sense of trouble that the psalmist is in. Verse 5 has a confession,

O God, you know my folly. The wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. So he's not hiding the fact that he has done wrong before God. But we saw then, secondly, that there was a recognition of who God is as he's praying to him. He realizes who he is praying to, recognizing his reproach, his suffering, unjust as it is, is for God, because he still loves God. And he spoke of the seal for God that has consumed him and his cause. Then the last time we were looking at verse 14 through to 21, and we saw how he was crying out in prayer, initially saying, Lord, answer me in your own time. And then coming to the point where he's saying, Lord, answer me quickly. Look at the suffering I'm in. Is it hidden from you? But we saw too that in verse 19 that God does know. Verse 19 says, you know my reproach. You know my suffering. And in these words, there is confidence. And it's this confidence that we see grow towards the end of the psalm. So the psalm is a prayer. And it's a powerful reminder to ourselves that at all times and in all circumstances, we can pray to God that he is there for us. William Barclay once said, there are three things that we should remember as we pray.

The first thing is the love of God that wants the best for us. The second thing is the wisdom of God that knows what is best for us. And the third thing is the power of God that can accomplish it. Now you hear these things and it would be great to approach God in that way each time to have this this confidence, the love of God that wants the best for us, the wisdom of God that knows what's best for us and the power of God that he has to do it. But we acknowledge at times, just like the psalmist here, there's times when we come to God forgetting these things.

[3 : 29] And we always need to remind ourselves that we are not the ones who are powerful. We are not the ones who are wise. We are not the ones who can do, but that God can. And so the psalmist here, he knows his situation. He knows his reproach, his suffering, and he feels he doesn't deserve it because of his love for God. And that's why he is crying out to God. But he knows too, that he is redeemed by God's grace, and that he lives in a fallen world where there are always enemies around. And that is true for ourselves today as well. He doesn't downplay how deeply discouraged he is, how many questions he has as to what and why it's happening.

But what he does is take it to the Lord in prayer. You see many twists and turns in this prayer. And if you look at your own prayer life, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, you look back over your prayer life, and you will see so many of the same twists and turns in your own experience too. The times when there's great rejoicing and hope and joy in the Lord, and the times when there's great challenges and many questions that you're asking of God. And sometimes the two are just together in the same moment. But what it does, what prayer does is, it brings us to God. It brings us to his word. And that is what always brings us back on track and keeps us on track. And that's what we see as we conclude this psalm. There's three things I want us to take just briefly in the conclusion of this psalm. There's three final sections we want to take from verse 22 down to verse 36. They're both challenges for us and encouragements to us as well. There's three things we have to deal with. And the psalmist makes it clear for us. First of all, we have to deal with

our enemies. We have to deal with our enemies. The second thing is we have to deal with ourselves. And then finally, we'll see we have to deal with God. So we have to deal with our enemies first. The psalmist's prayer here in verse 22 to verse 28. What you see is a cry to God that he would have this outpouring of judgment on his enemies. And you see it in very vivid language here. He's talking about things becoming a snare and a trap, their eyes to be darkened. Pour out your indignation upon them and let your burning anger overtake them. There in verse 24. There's so much powerful language here about the psalmist crying out, deal with these people, deal with them in this way.

But remembering this psalm and how we've seen how much it speaks to us of the suffering of Christ. Christ. That's why we read in Luke chapter 23 as well. We're in the midst of the enemy bringing Jesus to the cross. What is Jesus's cry on the cross? Father, forgive them for they know not what to do.

And there lies the challenge that we see to ourselves here. The psalmist has to face up. Is it right to pray like this? There's so many things that we look at in the world today and we know it's wrong. And it makes us angry. And is this our prayer today for so many people and situations?

Lord, pour out your indignation upon them. Let your burning anger overtake them. I'm sure there's times when we feel like praying like that. Maybe we do pray like that. Is it appropriate to pray like that? Well, here we have. It shows us that it is. That the prayer for God's righteous judgment is not a wrong prayer. That seeking God, dealing with people who are obviously doing wickedness to so many people in so many different situations. It's not wrong in and of itself. But it shouldn't be the only prayer that we have. But there is a reminder to us here that God's judgment is something serious.

[8 : 33] And it's a reminder to us. So we said of this psalm, it's one of the most quoted psalms in the New Testament. And when you're looking at the judgment that he's speaking about here, you see it quoted in the New Testament in situations where there's a cry for judgment. One example is in the book of Acts, chapter 1, 1 and verse 20. And there it's speaking about Judas. In verse 19, it says, sorry, verse 24 is written in the book of Psalms, may his camp become desolate and let there be no one to dwell in it. Now, this is in the midst of the Bible. And it's speaking about Judas, who it speaks of in verse 16. Brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. So it's speaking there about judgment. In Romans chapter 11, verse 9 and 10, it's speaking about God's judgment upon an unbelieving people, unbelieving Israel. And it's quoting verse 22 from this psalm, let their own table before them become a snare. And when they're at peace, let it become a trap. It's a warning of judgment. In Revelation chapter 16, verse 1, there it says, go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God. And it's so close there to what is in verse 24. Pour out your indignation upon them and let your burning anger overtake them.

So it's not a case of you just see a wrathful God in the Old Testament and God in the New Testament is just a loving God. You have the wrath of God throughout in the same way as you have the love and grace of God throughout as well. So we have to see this psalm is showing forth that God will judge.

But we see too how it reminds us of the Lord Jesus too. How we've seen it speak of his suffering. How it speaks of the fact that he was going to come and die for our sins, that he is the one who would redeem his people. We've seen all of these things. And notice here how it says in in this psalm as well, it speaks about that they gave him in verse 21, they gave me poison for food and for my thirst, they gave me sour wine to drink. That is what they gave to Jesus on the cross. And yet in the very next verse as it speaks about judgment coming. We see that Jesus too in Luke, what did he say? Father, forgive them for they know not what they're doing. And you see a powerful contrast there for us. When it comes to dealing with our enemies, how do we deal with them?

You see, judgment is right. But we have to remember that will come from God. And what we see with Jesus is that he came to show mercy and grace. Because we can't judge. Where would we be without the grace of God ourselves? We are under the judgment of God. And it's only through repentance and forgiveness of our sins that we don't receive the judgment that we deserve.

And so it's a challenge to us. Yes, we can look on our enemies, the ones we see on our screens day by day, but those people around us who stir us up in our hearts, who reject God, who we can become angry with.

[12:51] How do we deal with them? What's more important to us this evening to see a people judged or to see a people receive the mercy of God? The mercy that we have received for our sins? Matthew 5 verse 44 says, But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Yes, we can at times pray, Lord, we know, come in judgment. But Lord, we pray to come in mercy.

Turn these hearts that are wicked to you. Just like our hearts that are wicked, let them be turned to you. So dealing with our enemies. We look to God. The second thing we see here is dealing with self.

And the two go hand in hand. When we move through to verse 29 down to verse 33, we see David in the psalm here move from pain to praise.

And what is it that makes the difference? How does it come to this point where there's such a change in his experience? Well, it's about focus. And here we see David dealing with himself and doing so in two ways.

[14:20] First, you have to take in that section, verse 22 to verse 28, how he deals with his enemies. What does he do? Is he going to deal with them himself? Is he going to get an army together and go and deal with them in that way?

No, he lets God deal with them. And there is such an important lesson for ourselves. You know, he's talking there in verse 24. It's not I'm going to pour out my anger upon these people. He's saying to God, pour out your indignation upon them. So he leaves it with God. And we can do that ourselves as well. But for that, we have to deal with ourselves, with our own hearts, our own hearts that are so naturally inclined to anger and wrath against a people who do wrong. We have to deal with ourselves. But the book of Romans again reminds us to leave it with God. In chapter 12, verse 18, if possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.

If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For by so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

So again, there's both a challenge and an encouragement to us there. How do we deal with our enemies? Do we deal with them in this way? If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

[16:11] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. So we have to deal with that challenge in our own hearts. Lord, will you not change my heart that's so angry towards people?

It's so easy to let anger consume us. And when we're in that situation, it's so difficult to forgive and to love.

But remember how we looked at earlier in this psalm, in verse 9, for seal for your house has consumed me. Seal for the Lord.

Love for the Lord has consumed me. And that is the way we are to seek to live as well. That's a challenge to ourselves. What is it that we allow to consume our hearts?

Is it the seal in anger? Or is it seal for the Lord's house and the Lord's cause? Because the second thing you see about the way he deals with himself here is his focus turns to God for himself as well.

[17:30] As well as leaving the judgment of the enemies to God, he puts himself into God's hands. In verse 29, he says, But I am afflicted and in pain.

Let your salvation, O God, set me on high. Lord, lift me up. We've seen how he was sinking down in verse 1.

Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire. But now there's this change that's coming. Let your salvation, O God, set me on high.

Lift me up. Deal with me in this way. Help me to deal with myself, with my heart, my anger, this way I've been praying to you.

So selfishly at times, saying, Lord, do it now. Why, Lord, are you doing these things? All of these things we see throughout the psalm.

[18:27] But we're seeing here the psalm deals with us too. How we deal with ourselves. I'm afflicted and in pain, but Lord, let your salvation, let it lift me on high.

I will praise the name of God with a song. I will magnify him with thanksgiving. There's this sense of beginning to see God again, focusing on God.

Dealing with ourselves is one of the hardest challenges that we face. We maybe deal with others in a way that we know is not right. And we can judge so many different people in so many different

ways.

But what about ourselves? It's one of the hardest challenges to realize the faults and blemishes that are in our own hearts. Sometimes we know it all too well.

But other times we need them pointing out. They need constantly ironing out of who we are. And the Lord needs to be constantly working in us.

[19 : 33] And for that we need to be examining ourselves through his word. And looking to him and focusing on him. And praising him.

I will praise the name of God with a song he says here. We see there's a change. And that's what you find throughout this prayer.

And it's what we should pray for ourselves. That Lord as we approach you in prayer. You would calm us. You would still us. You would give us peace. So that our focus comes away from everything else that's going on around us.

That's out of our control. And we say Lord it is in your hands. Lord I thank you for your salvation. Your salvation that lifts me on high.

And I will praise you. C.S. Lewis once said. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy. Because the praise not merely expresses.

[20 : 32] But completes that enjoyment. So it's not just a case of this praise as we sing to God. It's expressing our praise to him.

It's completing our praise to him. It's reminding us how good it is to praise the Lord. How good it is that we have a song to sing to him.

A song that like Psalm 40. When it waited for the Lord our God and patiently did bear. But at length to me didn't climb my voice and cry to hear. That song that we're able to sing with that joy of salvation.

That assurance of salvation. That we find in Christ. And so it reminds us here. Not to put confidence in ourselves. But to deal with ourselves by bringing it to God.

And asking the Lord to change our hearts. To replace that anger that so easily consumes us. With that seal. For him and for his house.

[21 : 38] And that praise for his name. So we are to come in prayer with confidence. But it doesn't stop there. We see then in verse 34 to 36.

There's a conclusion there for us. Because here we see that it's about dealing with God. Dealing with God. There's both an encouragement and a challenge for us here as well.

The psalmist is talking here about a relationship with God. And you have these wonderful words at the end of this psalm. And it's almost like the change is complete.

Lord, save me was his cry. Now we're seeing the Lord has saved. And the Lord will keep. The Lord will guard.

And the Lord will bring it to completion. Let heaven and earth praise. And the seas and everything that moves in them. For God will save Zion.

[22 : 47] God will save his people. And build up the cities of Judah. And people shall dwell there and possess it. The offspring of his servants shall inherit it. And those who love his name shall dwell in it.

There's a sense of finality here. A sense of security. The Lord builds his city. And isn't that the reason that Jesus came?

When he said, as he came into this world, as he was about to leave this world, I go to prepare a place for you. That where I am, you may be also.

And we have this assurance of that in this psalm as well. The offspring of his servants shall inherit it. Those who love his name shall dwell in it.

They shall rest secure. Away from all the troubles and the wickedness of this world, One day we will rest secure with him. So the change is complete.

[23 : 53] From the beginning, save me, O God. We see the many twists and turns throughout this psalm. But ultimately it ends with a sense of confidence and a sense of security.

For God will save his people. And as we think of this time of year, What does it mean to us?

We can see Christmas and see, Yes, there's so many things wrong with it. So many things we'd love to be different. We may even say, Well, it's not even the time when Jesus was born.

But what is right about it? What is good about it? It is right and good to remember that God sent his son into this world.

That you shall call his name Emmanuel. That God will be with us. That he will dwell with us. That he came to save us from our sin.

[25 : 00] That is what is right and good to remember. For God will save Sion, his people. How? He will send his son into this world.

We've seen how much of this psalm points towards the cross. And the journey to the cross began with the word becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

God sent his son into this world. And that is our hope. That is our security. That we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So that even as we hear songs being sung at this time, we can praise God that he sent his son into this world. Joy to the world, the Lord has come.

Let earth receive her king. We can sing these words knowing that our king has come. That God will save his people.

[26 : 03] And you notice the words there in verse 34. Let heaven and earth praise him. Isn't that a wonderful prayer for us just now?

Let heaven and earth come to praise him. I came across a hymn that it's called Let heaven and earth rejoice.

And it says this. Let heaven and earth rejoice and sing. Salute this happy morn. The saviour which is Christ our king. He on this day was born.

Come let us join our hearts to God. And thus exalt his fame. To save us all. This babe was born and Jesus is his name. Wise men and kings.

Rich gifts did bring. To Bethlehem straight away. Conducted by a leading star. Where Christ our saviour lay. O Lord to thee all glory be.

[27 : 03] Whom heaven and earth adore. For our redeemer we will praise. This day and evermore. For our redeemer we will praise. This day and evermore.

Whatever else Christmas means to us. May it make us praise. Our Lord. Who came to save.

O Lord to thee. All glory be. Whom heaven and earth adore. For our redeemer. We will praise. This day and evermore.

May this prayer in Psalm 69. In all its twists and turns. Lead us to praise. Our redeemer. Today.

And every day. More and more. Let us pray. Our father in heaven. We thank you. For all that you have done for us.

[28 : 01] We thank you that you are a God. Of such love and grace and mercy. That you know Lord. The wickedness of our hearts. And you know the wickedness of this world. And we leave.

That wickedness in your hands. For you are the judge of all. You are our judge. As well as the judge of all. Who we see around us. You are the judge of all people.

And Lord we know that you will judge. Rightly and justly. But we thank you that in the midst of your judgment. That there is a hope. For you sent your son into this world.

To redeem his people. To save his people from their sins. And we thank you that as we hear the gospel. As we hear the good news.

It is that remind us to us. That God will save Zion. That you will save your people. That you will give them an inheritance. A place to dwell with you forevermore.

[28 : 59] And we pray Lord that we will know. That security ourselves. And that we pray Lord that heaven and earth. Will come to praise you. To praise your name today.

And forevermore. Lord may your glory come. In our lands in these days. As we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.