

# Rejoice! The Judge Is Just

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please take your Bibles and open them up to Psalm chapter 9. Psalm chapter 9. And if you're able, I ask that you please stand for the reading of the Word of God.

We've been doing this lately, a new habit for us to stand in reverence for the Word before we hear the Word preached. And so we'll do it again this morning from Psalm chapter 9.

I ask that you listen as I read the Word. Listen with your ears open and your hearts open. And asking the Lord to speak to you again today through His Word. Psalm chapter 9.

It says, Sing praises to the Lord who sits enthroned in Zion.

Tell among the peoples His deeds. For He who avenges blood is mindful of them. He does not forget the cry of the afflicted. Be gracious to me, O Lord.

[ 1 : 57 ] See my affliction from those who hate me. O You who lift me up from the gates of death. That I may recount all Your praises. That in the gates of the daughter of Zion, I may rejoice in Your salvation.

The nations have sunk in the pit that they have made. In the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught. The Lord has made Himself known. He has executed judgment.

The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. The wicked shall return to Sheol. All the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten.

And the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. Arise, O Lord. Let not man prevail. Let the nations be judged before You. Put them in fear, O Lord.

Let the nations know that they are but men. This is the Word of God. You may be seated. Lord, we ask again as we open up Your Word now.

[ 3 : 01 ] That You would speak clearly and powerfully through Your Word. Lord, would You comfort us who are suffering, who are afflicted. Lord, deepen our trust in You and in Christ our Savior.

It's in His name that we pray. Amen. How do Christians suffer? We're wrapping up our series in the Psalms.

We've been in the Psalms this summer. We'll be jumping back into the Gospel of John next week. And it seems like we've been asking that question an awful lot lately, haven't we? This section, Psalms 3 through 9 especially, has dealt a lot with the topic of suffering.

So we've been reminded all summer long of what it means, what it looks like for us to suffer as a believer. And I know that even in a room this size, even in a church this size, that there are many who are here who are suffering.

And if not right now, then there are many who are here who have suffered. And if not, then I know with certainty that there are many here in the room who will suffer.

[ 4 : 07 ] How do we prepare for this? How do we ready our hearts to suffer as David does, trusting in the Word of God? My family and I, we went to go visit some friends a couple weeks ago.

And we went to their parents' lake house. And we got to go out on the boat, spend some time on the water. The boys got to go tubing back behind the boat. We had a great time. The weather was perfect. But when we pulled the boat in and parked the boat, we had a problem.

I don't know the technical name for this. It had a pulley system. You pull the boat in. It had some thick braided cords that wrapped themselves around this spinning contraption.

Basically what it does is it stabilizes the boat. It parks the boat, stabilizes it, lifts it up out of the water so that when it's secured properly, it won't float away.

And when the winds come, when the waters rise, if the storm were to come, the boat would be safe and secure. So we had to spend some time, once we parked it, making sure that those cords were in the right alignment.

[ 5 : 12 ] That they weren't tangled, that they were properly attached, properly aligned. Because we wanted to make sure that that boat did not float away. Well, as we bring our time in the Psalms to a close this morning, Psalm chapter 9 provides us with one more opportunity.

To make sure that our hearts are properly aligned with the Word of God. So that when the wind comes, when the storm comes, when the waters rise, when the waves crash, that we will not drift away.

But we'll be properly safe and secure, clinging to the Word of God. How do believers suffer? I have three answers to that question for us this morning from Psalm chapter 9.

Three answers to the question, how do believers suffer? First, when trials come, remember God's actions.

Remember God's actions. This is what David does in the first several verses of our Psalm. Look there to the beginning of Psalm chapter 9. I want you to have your Bibles open.

[ 6 : 23 ] It's important that you're actually looking at the words. Not just hearing my words to you, but hearing and seeing the Word of God. Sometimes these little inscriptions above the text, the kind of titles there, sometimes they're helpful for us in providing some context for what's going on in the Psalms.

So we know that David has been suffering. He's been struggling. He's been on the run. I have argued that this section of Psalms, Psalms 3 through 9, deals specifically with the trials he's endured from his son Absalom.

Now, several smarter people than me disagree with me on that, so this is just one option. But just for the sake of argument, I want to point something out to you this morning.

Flip over to Psalm chapter 3 real quick. And if you remember the inscription above Psalm chapter 3, you'll see it there. What it says is this. It says, This is a Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.

It provides some context there. When he fled from Absalom his son. And now Psalm 9, our text this morning. The inscription there at the top, if you're using the ESV, it probably says something like this.

[ 7 : 33 ] To the choir master, according to Muth Laban. That clears it all up, doesn't it? What is that? What does that mean?

This is the only place in the Psalms that this phrase shows up. The ESV translators, they played it safe. And they said, well, this is probably a musical or liturgical term. I mean, you think we're in the book of Psalms, right?

That's probably a safe bet. But one way to translate that, and this is what the NKJV does, as well as the NIV, if you're looking at those translations. One way to translate that is, interestingly enough, to the tune of death of the son.

You ever heard that tune? Death of the son. And I don't want to dwell here. I don't want to make too much of that point. But it would make sense to me, as I'm considering the context of the Psalms, could it be that this is a reference to the death of Absalom, David's son?

Absalom, the son of David, you remember, has risen up against him. He has betrayed his father. He's stolen away the hearts of the people of Israel from the king.

[ 8 : 45 ] And now he has plans to put him to death. He's coming against David with armies of men ready to attack. But David now remembers how God, in his power and his providence, has instead put Absalom to death and has delivered him from the hands of wicked and evil men.

So David responds with a commitment here in verses 1 through 2. Look there with me. A fourfold commitment as he remembers the work of God. He says, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

Commitment number one. I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you. I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

There's a connection here, isn't there, between praise and exaltation, gladness and worship and thanksgiving. But at the root of all of it, what is it? It's recounting, remembering, recalling all the ways that the Lord has acted in your life.

You know, if you find yourself slow to praise the Lord, if you found yourself coming in here and your heart was a little bit cold to worship the Lord this morning, one way to kindle the fire of our heart is to remember, to recall, to recount all the works of the Lord.

[10:05] Ponder what God has done in your life. This is what David does here in verses 3 through 6. He considers, he remembers the actions of God.

He says, When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence. You have maintained my just cause. You have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment.

David is looking back and recalling all the works of God. I wonder how often we stop and think about all that God has done.

How often do we stop and reflect and recount and call to mind all that God has done for us? You know, all too often, our attitude, if you're like me, it tends to be, Well, what have you done for me lately?

And all too often, our present circumstances speak much louder in our minds than our memory does of all that God has done for us. How has God already proven himself trustworthy in your life?

[11:06] Are you struggling to trust him now? How has he proven himself worthy of your trust?

He's good. He's worthy of your praise. David here, he looks backwards and he remembers and he worships.

But not only that, we see he also looks forwards. Look there to verse 5. He says, You have rebuked the nations. You have made the wicked perish.

You have blotted out their name forever and ever. The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins. Their cities, you rooted out. The very memory of them has perished.

I'm not certain that this has happened in David's life, has it? In fact, I'm pretty certain that it hasn't.

Yes, Absalom was gone, but the threats against God's people remained.

The threats against God's king remained. They were not yet finished in David's day and in ours.

The wicked still remained in David's day and in ours. Wicked nations still remained in David's day and in ours.

[12:10] He's speaking with this tone of finality that just doesn't really make sense. It seems a bit strange, doesn't it? How can he say this? David knows and trusts with confidence that what God has promised, he will do.

What God has promised, he will do. And he's praising him as if it's already done. But he remembers God has covenanted with David.

In 2 Samuel 7, he made him a promise that from his line would come a king. That under this king, under his rule, God's people would be safe.

Their enemies would be totally defeated. Their future would be totally secure. That they would dwell in peace in the presence of God forever. Ever. David remembers this promise that God has made.

This promise that has yet to be fulfilled. And he says with confidence, Lord, you've done it. Thank you for keeping your word. Thank you for fulfilling your promises.

[13:20] This is what stabilizes God's people in the face of adversity. God's people, we are anchored by the works of God. Both past, present, and future.

If we trust in the promises of God that he's made to us, we can praise him for his future works just as fully as if they've already happened.

Here's what this might sound like for you. You might say, God, I am struggling. I am suffering. I am having such a hard time putting this sin away.

But I praise you, Lord, that you have already defeated this sin for me on the cross. God, I am sick. I am struggling.

Lord, I am struggling with this illness, this sickness. But I praise you, God, that because Christ has come and defeated every enemy, that this sickness one day will be wiped away forever.

[14:19] Lord, we pray for an experience of that future blessing here and now, but we praise you and thank you that it's as good as done. Because you've promised that to us in Christ.

One sure way to endure suffering that all of us will endure in this life is to remember all of God's actions.

How has he proven himself trustworthy in your life? Praise him for what he has done. Praise him for what he certainly will do. You know, we do this exercise at Thanksgiving every year.

Maybe you do this in your family too, where before we actually start eating all of the feasts that we've prepared, everybody goes around and we say one thing, two things that we're thankful for.

We call to mind the works of God and we give thanks. You know, that's not just meant to be a once a year exercise. This is supposed to be a daily habit, a daily discipline, daily recounting the actions of God.

[ 15 : 23 ] There's an old song, maybe some of you remember it. Count your blessings. Name them one by one. Count your blessings. What? See what God has done.

That is a very biblically wise, biblically sound song. The habit, the dependence, the thanksgiving of the Christian, it comes from recalling all that God has done.

Not only this. Second, when trials come, remember God's attributes. Remember God's attributes. We've been talking about this in our grow class hour.

Remember not only what he has done, not only what he will do, but remember who he is. His actions, all of God's actions are rooted in God's character.

His actions in history, in our life, are rooted in his attributes, who he is. And the same is true for us most of the time, partially. If you give generously, someone might say, well, that's a generous person.

[ 16 : 26 ] If you make people laugh, if you like to tell jokes, you might say, well, that person is funny. They're humorous. But it's not always consistent, is it? We don't always act consistently with our character.

Sometimes we act out of character. Sometimes we act out of line with who we think we are. That is never the case with God. All of God's actions are perfectly revealing all of God's attributes.

Think about some of the attributes of God on display here in this passage. And think about how these anchor us in our suffering, okay? First, we see we worship a sovereign God.

We worship a sovereign God. David sees the events of his life as the outworking of the sovereign plan of God.

His enemies turn back and they stumble before God's presence. Why? God has maintained my cause. God has executed judgment. God has rebuked the nations. God has made the wicked perish.

[ 17 : 33 ] Yet David knows these aren't accidents. David's not just fortunate. He's not just lucky. The ball's not just bouncing his way. He's not in control of these circumstances himself.

David's comfort is that no matter what happens in his life, no matter what happens in your life, our God is in control. Not only this, we see the power of God.

We worship a powerful God. You know, there's really no fight here, is there? When God decides it's over, guess what? It's over. David says God's made a full end of his enemies, totally wiped out. Everlasting ruins, he says in verse 6. His enemies are defeated forever, but do you see the contrast there? Verse 6 and 7. Look there with me.

The wicked perish. They are wiped away forever, but, verse 7, The Lord sits enthroned forever. He is sovereign, he is powerful, and he is eternal.

[ 18 : 38 ] We worship an eternal God, which means no matter how much the enemies rage, no matter how strong and how powerful, how long your suffering seems to be, the Lord is still on his throne.

The Lord remains on his throne forever. Now, we used to play this game in school. Maybe you used to play this too. King of the Hill. Anybody used to play that?

There would be a jungle gym, and one person would make their way to the top. They were the king of the hill. And all the other kids would try to make their way up to the top of the hill and remove the king from the top and take their place at the top of the hill so they'd be clawing and scrapping and pulling legs and pulling shirts and pulling arms and pushing kids down, trying to make their way to the top of the hill.

And the person at the top, they were trying to keep everybody else away. So they'd be kicking kids and pushing them off the jungle gym and scraping them away from their grip, from their hands.

It is a terrible game, now that you look back on it. But that's how things work on a horizontal human level, isn't it? Everyone is clawing and kicking and climbing and attempting to make their way to the top of the hill.

[ 20 : 01 ] And in our sin, in our sin, that's how it works. That's how we attempt to do things on a vertical, spiritual level. We try to climb our way to the top and dethrone God.

Take his place on the throne of judgment. Say, we're in control now. What does this verse tell us? It tells us no matter what we do, no matter what wickedness happens in our life, in the world around us, no matter what evil we endure, God is on the throne forever.

He cannot be taken off of his throne. Fight him all you want. Resist him all you want. No suffering, no trial, no sickness, no enemy, no rebellion.

Can change the fact that the Lord is king forever. Let me tell you something. These three attributes alone are not enough to comfort anyone.

Do you realize that? There's two more here that propel God's people to look at our trials and rejoice even.

[ 21 : 17 ] What good would it be if God were totally sovereign, if he were all powerful, if he were reigning forever, if he were not good? What good would it be if he was Lord forever, sitting on the throne, if he were not just?

We see here two more. God is just and God is faithful. Look there to verse 7. It says, The Lord has established his throne for justice.

He judges the world with righteousness. He judges the people with uprightness. This is wonderful news for God's people. And it's terrible news for God's enemies, isn't it?

Every sin, every act of rebellion, every ounce of wickedness will be addressed.

God will not let a single infraction go unpunished. How could he? He's just. A corrupt judge might let a few slide here and there. He might play favorites.

[ 22 : 21 ] A corrupt judge might could be bribed. Not God. God, every ounce of wickedness will be punished. And you ask, how is that good news for us? If all of us are wicked, and we are.

If all of us are sinners, and we are. If all of us are guilty, and we are. How is this good news for us? You know, Christians are not perfect. Amen? If you're here and you are not a Christian, if you're not a believer, please don't hear me say that we think, well, we're the good ones, and everybody else are the bad ones.

We're the righteous ones. Everybody else is sinful. That is not the case. Every sin will be punished, including ours. But to be a Christian is to know with joy that my sin has been punished in Christ.

That my sin has been punished already in Him. I don't have to bear it anymore. Christ has taken away my punishment.

I don't have to fear the judgment to come, because the verdict is in. I am righteous in Christ. Christ has been made sin for us, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God.

[ 23 : 36 ] God's justice for the believer is reason to rejoice. But for the non-believer, it is reason to repent.

Why? Because God is faithful. Look there to verse 9. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. What a comfort it is to know that if we are burdened, if we are oppressed, if we are weighed down by sin and guilt, the Lord bids you come to Him.

Turn to Him with your sin. And He promises all who trust in Him, He will never turn away. He is faithful. This truth, church, it demands a response, doesn't it?

Our third point this morning. How should we respond to a God like this? Third, when trials come, God's people respond appropriately.

[ 24 : 57 ] And we'll see this in three ways here. This is how we should respond, having considered His actions, having considered His attributes, because the Lord is trustworthy. Response number one is praise.

It's worship. This is what David does. He calls us to this because God is trustworthy. He says, Sing praises to the Lord who sits enthroned in Zion.

Praise Him. Why do we gather here? And why do we sing songs every week? Why do we do this thing called church worship every single week? It's because it is an expression of our worship.

It's an overflow. It's a response to who He is and what He's done. We sing His praises. We worship when we gather. And, verse 11, then we go to tell among the peoples His deeds.

Our response to the glory of God is to praise and to pass it on. It's to sing of His glory and then to share His glory. What are we rejoicing in here?

[ 26 : 04 ] This is incredible news. Christ has defeated every sin. We believe Christ has risen from the grave. We believe Christ has promised that one day soon He will return and make everything right.

He will defeat every enemy, sin, death, and the devil. Is that not worth rejoicing in? Is that not worth worshipping the Lord for? Is that not worth talking about when we leave this place with our neighbors, our friends, our co-workers, our family members?

Should we not be sharing this good news of the gospel of Christ with all who live near us, near and afar? We have such good news to share, especially with those who are suffering.

He who avenges blood is mindful of them. He does not forget the cry of the afflicted. Isn't this good news? And what a privilege to bring good news to the suffering.

Are you sick? Are you suffering? Are you dying? Man, have I got good news for you. Christ has come to defeat sin and death.

[ 27 : 17 ] Are you lonely? Are you guilty? Are you afflicted in any way? I have good news for you. Christ Jesus was afflicted for us.

Christ Jesus bore our guilt. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. Are we talking about this? Second response.

It's renewed prayer. Renewed prayer. Confident in who God is. Confident, reminded of who God, what God has done, David prays. Verse 13, Be gracious to me, O Lord.

See my affliction from those who hate me. O you who lift me up from the gates of death, that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation.

Again in verse 19, Arise, O Lord. Let not man prevail. Let the nations be judged before you. Put them in fear, O Lord. Let the nations know that they are but men.

[ 28 : 18 ] Let me ask you something. I want you to answer just in your own mind. Are you committed to prayer? When's the last time you shut off the TV, turned off the phone, removed all the distractions, quit thinking about work, quit thinking about stress, quit thinking about this problem, that problem, went into your closet, shut the door, and prayed?

Called out to the Lord in prayer. A response to who God is and what He's done, the fact that He's proven Himself trustworthy, our proper response to that ought to be to express trust to Him in prayer.

To ask Him to move in our life, to thank Him for how He's moved already. Here's an advertisement for you. One easy way to start. Second Sunday prayer.

We're going to do this every single month. Next Sunday, it's the first one. Sunday, 530. This is not flashy. It's not impressive.

It's not spectacular. It is an opportunity for you to come, sit, gather, pray with God's people. I want you to mark that on your calendar in permanent ink.

[ 29 : 32 ] Come. Pray. Express. Trust. To the Lord. One more response. We respond with renewed perspective.

The nations have sunk in the pit that they have made. In the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught. The Lord has made Himself known. He has executed judgment.

The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.

It's so easy, isn't it? To forget that this is what we've been promised. The afflictions that we bear when we look out around us at all the wickedness in the world. It is so easy for us to forget the promise that we have that Christ will return.

And the needy will not always be forgotten. But David remembers, the day will come when every wrong will be made right and all will give an account.

[ 30 : 42 ] Christ the King will come and He will reign and there will be peace in the presence of God forever. Church, this is our hope.

If you're struggling, if you're suffering, if you're afflicted in any way, church, anchor your heart tightly, securely to the promises of God.

Commit right now. Instruct your soul. Tell it what to do. Tell your soul to give thanks to the Lord with your whole heart. To recount all of His wonderful deeds. To be glad and exult in Him.

To sing praise to your name, O Most High, no matter what comes. We're going to do just that in just a moment. We're going to stand and sing praise, respond to the Lord, to the Word of God by singing this morning.

We're going to sing a new song together. It's one of my favorite songs lately and I want to read you the words before we sing it together. It goes like this. It says, The Lord is a mighty King, the King of all nations.

[ 31 : 49 ] The maker of everything. Let His handiwork say, I am His. I am His. Creator owns creation. See what power there is in the sovereign who reigns.

The Lord is a holy King. The judge rules from heaven. His wrath He will surely bring on the man who rebels. Oh my sin. Oh my sin.

How can I be forgiven? There is justice in Him. Is there mercy as well? The Lord is a gracious King for those who believe Him.

His Son is an offering for their sins to atone. I'm redeemed. I'm redeemed. By grace I have received Him. By His death on a tree I have peace at His throne.

The Lord is a faithful King. He will never leave us. His children will ever sing of His glorious love. Oh my soul, oh my soul, is safely bound in Jesus.

[ 32 : 50 ] All His virtues extol, for the Lord reigns above. Let's pray. Lord, we do extol all of Your glorious virtues displayed most clearly in the cross of Christ.

Lord, none of us can stand before Your throne in our own righteousness and claim to be accepted, Lord, by our own merit. And so we praise You that Christ has come to save sinners like me, like us. We pray now as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper together. Would You move powerfully in our hearts to remind us of the gospel. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.