

# Biblical Response to Contempt

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     wonderful to hear singing about a God who is worthy of praise in the storm. No matter where we're at, it's because of who he is. You should recognize the ending part of that song from Psalm 121 verses 1 and 2. I lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. And that was our psalm a couple weeks ago. A couple weeks ago, that was my favorite psalm. This week, my favorite psalm is Psalm 123. I expect next week, my favorite psalm will be Psalm 124, whatever one we're studying. But these pilgrim psalms we've been looking at. So if you look at the passage of scripture, we have four verses. I would like to bring you a brief sermon tonight. I probably won't, but I've always wanted to do something like that.

That's what my father-in-law says, but I really can, Brother Wayne, if you're watching. I'll show you how to do this, all right? 20 minutes. Four verses in the psalm that we're looking at tonight, and they're the pilgrim songs. The children of Israel find themselves in captivity. And so there's two stages here. There's the God who's promised great blessings, but there's also the surrounding and the turmoil and the captivity that they are experiencing. So these are songs that they could sing as they're on their pilgrim journey, or the ascent psalms, or the step psalms, where they are walking to Jerusalem. And we've seen there's times where they would need God to direct their steps, that they would be fearful. There could be thieves that would be coming along the hills, so they direct their eyes to the God of heaven. And we are reminded of the fact that this is not our final destination. We too are pilgrims, and we take great comfort in these pilgrim songs.

And we've seen a cycle in them, where they take off the joy of the house of the Lord, waiting on the Lord. And then we start again here in verse number 123, looking with their eyes unto the heavens. And so God has said one thing, but they're experiencing something else. So there's two competing realities that are happening. The promises of God and the blessings, the turmoil and the captivity, which leads to the question, is God going to keep His promise and do what He said? And it's these realities and this question that form the backdrop for this section of these pilgrim songs.

Before I read the four verses, I want you to go ahead and notice, we're going to see a contrast. It will start off with I, then it's going to move to us. They will be personal and singular, that they're going to lift their eyes up. But then it's as a community together, they're going to worship the Lord. And looking higher than the hills, which we just sung about, or the Cook sisters just sung in Psalm 121, lifting their eyes unto the hills. Now we are lifting our eyes to the one that dwellest in heaven. And so the theme for this psalm is seen in verses three and four, is Lord having mercy upon this community of people as they experience scorn and contempt.

And that word contempt is at the end of both of those verses. And so that's what we're going to see. It is a short psalm, or it's a short prayer. Like what Charles Spurgeon says about short prayers, he says, every prayer is long enough if it be fervent and proceed from a heart that understandeth the necessity of the saints. So it's a short prayer for us tonight, but it's a fervent one. So let's look together. Psalm 123, I'm going to read four verses for you, then we'll pray together.

[ 3 : 27 ] Unto thee lift mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of the servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. Heavenly Father, we come tonight, and we are just so grateful in what we have heard, and the areas in which we get to rejoice in the testimonies from Ohio and from Bolivia, and how you're opening doors for our missionaries. Lord, we've come tonight to you, and we've shared our prayer request, and we've asked you to bring healing among our congregation and to work, and Lord, we thank you for allowing us to experience so many wonderful things as a church family. Lord, engagements this week, and a coming wedding, and people coming to know Christ, Lord. I'm thankful to get to go on this pilgrim journey with these people. Now, Father, we come to your word because we've experienced something in this life, and we turn not to the hills and not to one another, but we look above all that, and we look to you. So,

Father, I pray that you'll help us as we look at your word and see a biblical response to the contempt, that what you would tell us to feel is what we would feel, but how you tell us to respond is how we would respond. Father, I pray that you'll give us understanding, and Lord, in obedience, we would react in the way that you would call us to react. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

So, we're looking tonight at a biblical response to contempt. The people of God often know contempt of this world, and what are we to do when this is to happen? I don't know what you think of when you hear the word contempt. I think of you're going to be held in contempt, right, by the court, the lawyer.

That's the first line I think of. That's the same word, isn't it? It's the contempt that says, it means that a feeling or a person is beneath you, that somebody would see you as worthless or undeserving. It's the way that I felt on the golf course on Tuesday when we came in last place, and people asked us what we scored. I felt like they were looking at me, Stephen, with contempt and pity, all right? And so, it's that when somebody looks upon you with feelings of you being underneath them, being worthless and undeserving, and that's the word that is used here in verse 3 and 4, is that being saturated and filled with these feelings of contempt. We know it from God's word that as believers, we should expect persecution. We should expect this is the way we're going to be viewed. But outside of just understanding it, we've experienced in life. You've had it. Friends, families, co-workers, there's been times that you have felt that you were looked at where there was contempt towards you and your beliefs. These people making a pilgrimage, doing something that was a tradition that wouldn't be understood as they're making a journey, the way that they were living, which was in contrast to the other nations. There was many opportunities that as they lived out the principles of God's word, people would look at them with contempt. And examples in the Bible, you know the story of Isaac and Ishmael, the two brothers that are there. In Galatians, it said that the one that was born after flesh persecuted him that was born after spirit, even so now. There was that persecution verbally as defined as contempt. Jesus on a Sermon on the Mount, as he's speaking, he speaks about something being more dangerous than anger, or something more dangerous than even which anger is compared to murder. In Matthew 5, 22, it says,

But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, Reckham, shall be in danger of the counsel. But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hellfire. And it's speaking here of a hatred that's beyond that of one that a brother would have in danger of that. It says to call someone a fool. You might have heard this expression before, the opposite of love, it's not hatred, but it is apathy. It would be a contempt that they would have. And so that's what's being said here. To call someone a fool is to hold someone, see them with contempt. And limitations, which we've just been going through on Sunday nights, you may remember. Limitations 3, 25, The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Goes on to say that it's good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Telling us that it's good that as a young man that he would bear these burdens. He would sit in silence as he would bear them. So there's something that God can do in our lives during these times of persecution that might come verbally, might come from people being, calling us foolish, may come into life where there's trials that come in our way. And then it comes, Jesus says in Matthew 13, 57, and they were offended in him. But Jesus said to them, a prophet is not without honor, saving his own country and his own health. That the great pride of Nazareth was rejected by the Nazarenes.

[ 8 : 52 ] They were prideful. They had a contempt for the Lord. They had a familiarity towards him, and they didn't show a respect for him, for his authority that is there. And thus, that was a pride that was in their life. So through scriptures, Old Testament, New Testament, in your own life, you might consider where that pride of somebody else was treating you with contempt. And it's a hard season. It can be a hard season, especially upon a young believer. Think about making decisions and having family not understanding why you believe that you needed to do this. God has spoken. I want to obey him and just being seen as less or that you, or you're crazy, right? Anybody in here ever, anybody ever thought you were crazy? Would you raise your hand? Ty, raise your hand. Would you? Who else? I'm good. Just Jesus. All right. Some of you. Yeah, that feeling, you know, where you know that you're right, but you just sure wish that they do and it doesn't happen. I pray the Holy Spirit in here with believers will help you recognize where that word is making place because he tells us as believers, we will suffer persecution. There'll be times that you are being treated in this way, but we can't change that and we know what's going to happen. The question is how are we going to respond to it? That's what the Bible is telling us. How are we going to respond to this, our biblical response? So it tells us where to look during these times. Verse one, unto thee lift thy up mine eyes, although thou dwellest in the heavens. He's searching for relief from the scorn. He doesn't look to the circumstances. He doesn't look to the earth for aid, but he looks up to the heavens, remembering where God is. The psalmist grows in trust and confidence. Earth may have no mercy or help, but heaven has plenty of mercy and help. So he looks up to his father and then it says one that dwells in the heavens. This is not just explaining geographically or location, but it's speaking here of this place of authority. He's at the right hand, the right one to appeal to when you're under the injustice of an undeserved contempt. And he's just, he's not just enthroned on earth. He has the highest throne.

There is no higher court of appeal. It is the, our father. So when we pray, we say our father, which art in heaven, we're not just announcing a location, but we're speaking of the fact that he sits on the highest of thrones. He has the highest of authorities. If there's anyone that we can make our case to, if there's anyone that we could go to, it is the him. You would go to other people and they may say that we're right, but it doesn't do what it should because we know that he dwellest in heavens. And so our words in prayer, our words in our prayer are so important when we come to him, our father, which is in heaven, or we'd say our father, or we say it, or we speak to the Lord. At the very beginning of our prayers, we're addressing, we're saying the one that dwellest in heaven, the one whose opinion is the only opinion that ultimately matters. So that's where we take it.

You probably had burden, somebody held you in contempt and you felt bitterness and you had sadness. And so you went around peddling at the other people, trying to find that relief. And you found that nobody was able to do anything there for you. So you have to look up to the God of heaven.

So we've seen lamenting in our surroundings of 120. They lift their eyes to the hills of Zion in 121. They delight in the house of the Lord in 122. And now they look above the hills to the Lord.

James Montgomery Boyce says, the goal of the pilgrim is not Jerusalem, as important as that city was, or even the temple in Jerusalem, as important as it was, but God himself, whose true throne is not anywhere on earth, but in heaven. And we are thankful that we can go to our father and lift our eyes and pray to him. And then how should we go about looking? That's what verse two is going to show us. Behold, as the eyes of the servant look upon the hand of their masters, the hand of the master.

[ 12 : 50 ] What an incredible way to look at this. The eyes of the servant, that's you and me, we look to the hand of our master. Serving God is utterly different than serving anyone else. Example, Psalm 100, verse two, it tells us, serve the Lord with gladness, come into his presence with singing. Why can we come into the presence of our master with gladness? Because the Bible tells us, Paul explains it in Acts 17, 25, he says, neither you worship with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things. We serve with gladness because we do not bear the burdens of meeting his needs. We, this master that we're looking to his hands, we do not bear the burden of meeting his needs. And so the servant will look upon the hand of the master for the slightest indication of what he would want. And we want to respond. We, we don't have Kings, Travis and the Snodes. They know what it's like. They, they were under a queen for many years and they came to here and they have freedom.

And we're so happy for them. And, but we don't know much about a monarchy except for the Bible gives us tons of examples. Right. And so you may say, well, I don't know really what that looks like, but you do. And you remember the story when Esther goes before the King and, and she looks and she knows that that was a dangerous move. Right. I mean, if he allowed her in, he motions in, she's okay.

If he, if he says off with your head, that's a bad day. Right. And so she's noticed, he's watching the movements of her master and her King. And as we not having a master that has a need that we have to fulfill, but one that we want to, he was expressed his love towards us first.

And now we're looking to. And so this picture of the servant looking into the hands of the master shows a dependence. The hands of the master provide all that are needed. If you imagine the night, as we're thinking of our, our God and our master, we think of one who meets all of our needs.

A submission, the hands of the master would direct the servant's work. We were looking for him to guide us. And then a discipline, the hands of the master would correct the servant. Here then is the true way of looking for help from God is that of dependence, obedience, and a response to correction.

[ 15 : 09 ] So during these times, you're being treated with contempt. You turn to the Lord in prayer, and you just look to his hands and say, all that I need is going to come from you. All that I'm going to do is going to come from you. And Father, if I need correction, it's going to come from you. And all that's needed can be found in him. And so how long do you look?

It tells us that we look unto God that he would have mercy on us so that our eyes would wait upon the Lord. I remember reading the Psalm 32 verse 8 as a college student. And it says this, I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. I will wait upon the Lord. So my, so our eyes wait upon the Lord, our God, until we have mercy upon us.

Our eyes are looking to the master and we're looking. This speaks about priority and affection. The Psalm that I just read to you, it talks about him guiding with his eyes. What is important to our master is important for us. So this, this is a reprioritization of our lives. You know, in contempt where you feel bad and you feel like the things of the world are all that matter, and you can feel all of that. You look to the master and you say, whatever he puts his eyes upon is what I will put my eyes upon. Whatever he looks at. For me, this was a strong passage when it comes to missions, because I find in the scriptures that God is constantly looking for the next town.

He's always looking for a people. And so as a college student, I thought if the eyes of the Lord are upon the earth, if the eyes are upon the Lord about all those I haven't heard, then my eyes should be set upon those as well. But it comes at looking to the master, submitting ourselves to him. And so specifically, what is it that we're looking for? As we look and we wait upon our Lord, our God, and it tells us in this passage, we can expect mercy from a merciful God. Have mercy upon us, O Lord. Have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. That being filled with contempt, that speaks of this saturation. Have mercy, it comes. And that mercy that's going to come when we're filling with those feelings of contempt from others, it comes in several different ways.

Mercy can come in relieving you of the contempt and scorn that you're bearing. And that's what we pray for. That's option one, and it's the one we ask for. I would take a complete removal. I want this away from me. That's how he answers and shows mercy sometimes. Sometimes it comes in the strength to bear up under the scorn that you're experiencing. That's God's mercy as well. Or it comes in the glorious change of heart for those who are your enemies. That's his mercy as well. He works in their lives. Or mercy comes in the glorious change of heart towards our enemies and our heart towards him. But God's mercy comes, either removing it, giving us the strength, changing somebody else's heart, or changing ours.

[18:06] But his mercy comes, and we cry out for it. Have mercy upon us, O Lord. Have mercy upon us. It's repeated twice here. And we can remember that whenever mercy comes, we must remember that it comes at the expense of the contempt and shame that Jesus Christ bore for us. When you and I pray and we say, Father, we need mercy, he answers and says, yes, child, I will show you mercy. But that mercy came at the expense and the count of Jesus Christ. He's able to show us mercy. He took that contempt. We sing it as a church. We'll see if you remember it. I'm going to see. I'm going to leave you two words. It's a new game we're playing, okay? Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah. What a Savior. Okay, maybe we don't sing this, all right?

Or maybe it's one of the, it's a third verse of Man of Sorrows that we probably don't sing. That's where you hide all your questionable lyrics, all right? And that third verse. Do you know this one, Kristen? I always look, you know, good. I got validated fact checkers over there. This is a real song. If it's not, I just added another one, the Man of Sorrows, all right? Hallelujah. What a Savior. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood.

Hallelujah. What a Savior. Scorned by those that he is. So now it's going to give a description of the type of people that bring scorn upon us, that bring this, the way they would condemn us here.

Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. Scorn from those that are at ease. Sometimes others show contempt towards us, and it just doesn't seem to bother us. I tell that to my kids. Y'all listen tonight, kids. Y'all listen. Everybody else take a break, all right? They'll say, one of them will say, this one's, they don't believe me, or this one said that, and I just think, why do you care what your little sister thinks? You know, like, why would it affect you at all? But they just have a way of getting under each other's skin, right? Sometimes you can do this, and it just kind of rolls off of you like water off a duck's back. But then there's other things that just seem to get you, right? You don't know what it is, but it's just something that just really seems to bother you. And so there's times that contempt seems to be filled. It's exceedingly filled, as the passage says, exceedingly filled with the scorning of those, that saturation. It started raining, and now we're at saturation point, right? It's beginning to puddle up of them, and that's what we have. Derek Kidner says, it's illuminating that contempt is singled out for mention. Other things can bruise, but this is cold still. It goes deeper into the spirit than any other form of rejection. That feelings of scorn and contempt when we have those towards us. It just hurts, you know? I'll let Derek Kidner say it in a nice theological way. I'm going to tell you how I feel about it. It just hurts when people, they think less of you, that they scorn you, when they ridicule you, when they just don't have the same worldview, and they think that you're less than. And it's especially painful when it comes from those who seem to be at ease, who seem to have few problems or difficulties in life, scorning of those that are at ease. And so, not just the scorn hurts, it hurts deep, it bruises deeply, but it hurts even more when it seems to come from people who just seem to have no real problems in life and no real understanding. James Montgomery Boyce says, the reason people ridicule what they oppose, aside from it being so easy, is that it is demoralizing and frequently effective. It is effective because it strikes at the hidden insecurities or weakness that almost everybody has. It hurts so much because you're already having an inner turmoil, and they seem to put words to it. A life of worship in this ungodly age will always be the object of scorn and contempt. So, I can't tell you that you're going to be removed from it. And isn't that what he told the disciples? He said, I'm not going to remove you from it, but I will be with you. And then he says, as they've hated me, they're going to also hate you. But his mercy comes, right? Sometimes he removes it from us, sometimes he strengthens it, sometimes he does a change in their heart, sometimes he does a change in your heart, sometimes people will see your response and come to know the Father from it. But every time that you're in that place where you're feeling that scorn and contempt, you can turn your eyes to the God of heaven who sits upon the throne, who looks to you, that has mercy, and that cares for you, and it's all that matters. It's all that matters. Perhaps some of you, as God's children tonight, have wondered if you're pleased for mercy, have

God unanswered, and I tell you that they have it. And may God move our hearts by his word tonight. And may we look to hope to this world who may want to hold us in contempt, but we look to our master, we look to his hands, and remember those hands, we look to them and we find all that we will ever need. We look to his hands and we find his leading. His opinion is the only one that really matters. His direction is the one that does. So if, I think it was Bob Jones that says, do right if all the stars in the sky fall, but then still do right, even, you know, even if they do. And that's where you're at in life. You may not always be understood. It's not a promise that we've been given. And other people that are close to you and I should understand may not understand, but you look to your master, you look to his hand, you find all that you need. I'm going to pray this psalm with us, and then I think, let's sing, O Church Arise. We did quite good at that one, I think, all right? We didn't do half bad, did we, Grant, on that one. On O Church Arise, we'll sing that one before we leave tonight.

[ 24 : 01 ] Heavenly Father, thank you for the psalm, Father. I thank you for the simplicity of it. I thank you for its relevance in our lives as believers. And so, Father, we come to you tonight, and I pray that collectively in here that we would lift our eyes up to you, and we see you high and lifted up. We see you as the one that dwelleth in the heavens. You sit upon the throne that is upon every throne. You are the King of kings, and you are the Lord of lords. You are ultimately, Lord, all that matters to us in this world. We come to you tonight, and we behold as our eyes, as your servants, upon your hands, our master. Our eyes are of the maiden upon the hands of the mistress, Lord. Our eyes are upon the Lord, our God, and we pray that you would have mercy upon us. In your hands, Lord, we find all the direction we need. In your hands, Lord, we find all that we are dependent on. Father, if we need correction, you can provide that for us. We wouldn't need it from the guilt and shame and ridicule of others, but we would turn to you, Father, completely, and we ask that you'd have mercy upon us,

Lord. We feel at times that we're just filled past capacity with the contempt that others may feel for us, and our soul is filled with their scorning by those that are used, and they are with contempt.

But we look to you, and you minister to us, Lord, and then we are reminded, and we find strength, and we find hope to continue on our pilgrimage in this world. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.