

Give Myself Unto Prayer

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[0 : 0 0] turn with me to Psalm 109. If you don't have a handout, Brother Chuck will hand those to you, and we're going to need your participation in folding it if you like it folded okay. But I would encourage you to take a handout tonight, and I know you have Psalm 109 in your Bible, hopefully, all right? If you don't, and you don't have a Bible, we'll get you a complete edition of it. But you'll see when you get the handout that dividing the chapter up kind of helps you follow it a little bit, and I think Psalm 109, you will benefit from seeing it like this. This is an imprecatory prayer. These are difficult. I'm thankful that we don't have, they're challenging. Psalm 69 and Psalm 109 are two of the major ones.

These, when I read it, you'll understand what makes them kind of difficult at times. Jim Roberts, the older Jim Roberts with the raspy voice, he told me this week, he said that he was at a church service, and Bob Jones II prayed a prayer, and he said, God, everybody that stands against you, would you have them removed? And he just prayed a prayer like that, and Jim said, I didn't know you could talk like that. But he was praying that God's word would prevail, and that those that stand in truth, and that's the nature of a psalm like this in a prayer as I'll read it to you, and you'll see what I'm talking about. But let's look there in Psalm chapter 109, verse number 1.

Hold not thy peace, O God, of my praise, for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me. They are spoken against me with a lying tongue. And so you can see why I chose the title here of, give myself unto prayer and not revenge. That's what David is praying here. Verse 3, they can pass me about also with words of hatred, and they fought against me without a cause. So here David is being accused and attacked without just cause. Verse 4, for my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good and hatred for my love. It was unjust. He showed good. They showed evil. His adversaries, he loved for my love. He had demonstrated love to them. And so this wouldn't really seem to speak of just an enemy army, but maybe somebody that had been close to him. It doesn't say, nor does it need to say, because this would apply to your life and my life. But then it says that I give myself unto prayer.

That's a big part of this passage here. Like giving himself unto prayer keeps him from being given to wrong things, to bitterness, to revenge, vindication. But then you'll see the bullet points here.

This is what he prays for his enemy. Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office.

[3 : 0 3] Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg. Let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him.

Neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following, let their names be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord. And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. That is pretty intense, isn't it?

I mean, it covers all the bases. Put people above him that would judge him, condemn him. Make it so that his prayers are not answered. He even begins to talk about his mom. I mean, this thing is getting very intense and personal, and this is cut off the memory from the earth. That would be a summary of all those bullet points that have been given. And then he says in verse 16, and he says why? It says, Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him. As he delighted not in blessings, so let it be far from him. He loved cursing, let it come upon him. He didn't delight in blessing, so let blessings be far from him. Verse 18, And as he clothed himself with cursings like as with his garment, so because he just wrapped himself in cursings, he was just consumed. That's who he was.

That was his character. He was wrapping himself in cursings. Let it come into his bowels like water and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as a garment which covereth him. And for a girdle wherewith he girded continually. Let those cursings be just run through him as a garment that would cover him continually. Verse 20, Let this be the reward of mine adversaries. And then these words are so important to the text, to our understanding of the text. It is from the Lord. He wasn't bringing this.

He wasn't doing this. Let his reward come from the Lord and of them that speak evil against my soul. Verse 21, But do thou for me, O Lord, for thy namesake, because thy mercy is good. Deliver thou me, for I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I have gone like the shadow when it declineth. I am tossed up and down as the locust. My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh felleth of fatness. And so this really has paid a toll upon David here, physically, emotionally, spiritually. His heart is wounded. His shadow is declining. His days are short. He's tossed like the locust. His knees are weak. He has been fasting about this, been praying about this.

[6 : 04] This is no small matter to him. My knees are weak through fasting. My flesh felleth of fatness. I became also reproach unto them. When they looked upon me, they shook their heads. It was so bad that when people looked at David, they just shook their head like, I have nothing to even say about this. And then he cries out to the Lord in verse number 26, help me, O Lord. O save me according to thy mercy, that they may know that this is thy hand, that thou, Lord, has done it. Let them curse me, but bless thou. Let them curse, but bless thou.

Lord, they're cursing me, but I'm asking you to bless me. And when they arise, let them be ashamed, but let thy servant rejoice, living in integrity. Lord, let them be ashamed for the way they're living, but let me rejoice in the way that I'm living. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth. Yea, I will praise him among the multitude, for he shall stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul. So it ends with the Lord standing on the right hand of the poor, which is the way that David sees himself, which is where David is.

And that is contrasted to verse number six, where it says, let Satan stand at his right hand, which is to say, God, just as sure as I am that my enemy is standing against you and on the things of Satan, I want to be also confident that I am on standing with God by my side. Because you know, in a story, there can, there's a, it isn't like the Westerns or maybe some of the Hallmark movies you ladies like. There's not always a good and a bad. Sometimes there can be a bad and a bad, right? And so David says, I know that my enemy is cursing me and I know that Satan's standing by him, but I'm not standing beside him. I'm on the other side. I'm standing where God would stand beside me, the poor. Heavenly Father, Lord, I pray that you would help us have understanding about this psalm. Lord, you know in my mind and my heart, Lord, have much confusion when I come to this psalm. Lord, much misunderstanding. And I'm so grateful for your word, being perfect and pure.

Thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit. Lord, not only in writing this psalm and preserving it for us, but in illuminating our hearts and our minds that give us understanding and make application to us in our day. Lord, I pray that's what you would do. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

So as I said, these are obviously very intense word. And some people, some commentaries try to just say, well, these are the words of the enemy that David is saying back. And so normally when you solve a problem like that, you just create more problems. And that isn't how they handle imprecatory psalms in the New Testament. These words were not just being the words of an enemy that David are saying. These are the words of David being prayed. And so what's important to remember is that this prayer ceases to be personal vengeance as he turns all of his wishes over to the Lord in prayer, thereby leaving it to the Lord to deal in justice with his adversary. He says it very clearly, help me, O Lord, you will do this, what you have done from your hand, make it very sure that you have done this. David had influence. David has strength, power, authority. David could have chose not to pray and he could have chose the act. But he says very early on in this, he says, Lord, I give myself the prayer. Strong language there. He just becomes completely, that's all he wants to be is a person of prayer in this matter. I would say this may be a weak analogy that the difference between an imprecatory prayer and this is speaking poorly of his enemy is the same, would be similar to the difference between a person who commits murder and a soldier that kills during war. A soldier killing during war is not the same thing as a person committing murder. What David doing here is not the same thing as a person acting in anger and vengeance towards somebody else, wanting ill for somebody. And it's important we hear that from him. David was well known, he was even praised for not being vindictive, long-suffering, and merciful. You can think of two stories, 1 Samuel 24 and 26, you know, when he has that opportunity. 1 Samuel 24 10, it says, Behold this day, thine eyes have seen how the Lord had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave. And some bade me kill thee, but mine eye spared thee. And I said, I will not put forth my hand against my Lord, for he is the

[10:39] Lord's anointed. So we know on a couple occasions that David could have killed King Saul, but he didn't because that wasn't the kind of nature that we'd seen in David. Remember another time a guy comes cussing and spinning at him and kicking rocks at him. And David doesn't retaliate there either.

And then in Romans 12 9, this psalm is being shared and it says, Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself, but rather give place in the wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. So we're seeing here the intent of the prayer is that David was handing over all this that was happening to him in prayer unto the Lord. He was choosing not to act in bitterness.

He was choosing not to be vindictive, but he was handing it all over to God in prayer. So as we've read it together, now I'd like to help you walk through this psalm one more time. Many of you are in the Sunday night class, the elective, expository teaching, expositional Bible teaching. And so what is helpful in a psalm like this that you could see why it was troubling to me as I read it is to put it in what would be called an exegetical outline that traces the thought and flow of the passage.

The teaching outline shouldn't deviate from this, but it ought to, it will help you better understand it. Let me give you, for example, it's giving a summary of the psalm. Let me give a summary to the psalm before I give you some application to it. Verses 1 through 5 tell us this, David calls from help from the Lord against his malicious enemies who surround him with evil. That's what's happening in the first five verses. David calls out the God because he feels surrounded. He calls for help against his enemies who are openly against him, verses 1 and 2. And then his complaint is about his evil enemies, verses 3 and 5. In verse 3, he is surrounded with the words of hatred from his enemies, his adversaries who repaid friendship with malice. He had loved, but they had shown malice towards him. And then in verse 5, they have rewarded his kindness with evil hatred. Then in verses 6 through 20, David pours out his prayer upon the enemy, appealing to God to make the wicked desolate and depose those of their love for destruction and cursing. And that's what we looked at in those bullet points. So verses 6 through 15, he details his curse. Let my adversary be against me and let him be judged as guilty. Let his days be few so that his wife and widow and his children be fatherless beggars. Let him be ruined by creditors. Let no one pity him, verse 12. Let his posterity be cut off from the next generation. Let his ancestral sins be remembered upon him. And what was the reason, verse 16, is that he has been hounded to death by a broken heart, the needy. That this adversary, this enemy, will not give any rest to the poor and the broken hearted. That he loved, his enemy loved heaping curses upon people. And the conclusion of verse 20 of that portion is that his punishment would be from the Lord upon the wicked. And in verses 21 through 31, David prays to the

Lord for help in defending against his enemies because he is in great need. He prays to God, the Lord will deal with them according to love, that since he is weak and perishing, that God will look down and show mercy to them. He prays for help so that they will know the truth.

[14 : 01] The verses 26 and 27 are important. He says, the reasoning that I want this to happen is so they would know the truth. He anticipates the outcome. They will be cursed and shamed, and he will rejoice because God has been saving the needy. So I've read it to you and kind of walked through it.

Now let's pull, let's look at some lessons. First, we see that turning to God is the only safe option when we have been offended. Lord, I come to you in prayer. I give myself unto prayer. I am going to pray. It's like running into a safe room. It is going to a place and saying, I'm not going to act.

I am fully giving myself over to prayer. The only way he's going to be able to protect his heart and his actions towards a person that's been treating him in such a way as if he engages in a prayer to our Lord. David is under an all-out malicious attack on his character, which the psalm will show him has taken a great toll on him. It says he's weak. It says that he's been fasting, that his heart is wounded. You can see that he's just really struggling. And the deception came from the heart, from hate in their hearts, and the attack apparently is completely unwarranted. It says in verse number three, they could pass me about also with words of hatred and fought against me without a cause. David knew in sincerity and integrity that he had not done anything against them, but loved them. And even though he had acted lovingly towards them, they had rewarded him with hatefulness. The word Satan just simply means accuser, right? The accuser is the same basic word in Hebrew that's translated for Satan, and that these people had become his accuser, his adversary.

And it appears that God is silent when he does not answer, when he does not speak, when he does not intervene and judge. And so here he's saying, God, hold not your peace, O God of my praise.

God, don't be silent about this. God, you see what's going on here. You see the condition that I'm in. You see what this person is doing. You see that I'm living in integrity. And God, I'm begging you to not be silent. And many times God is accused of being silent simply when he's not acting in the way in which we would want him to act. So David cries out to God. Then turning inwards would bring self-destructing bitterness. The story of Ahithophel in the Bible, a man who I've spoken about many times, had a violation of personal justice system, that instead of turning to God in prayer, he was so mad and so bitter about what had happened with King David that it says he went home, he got his matters in order, and then he took his life. It would have been better if it would have said Ahithophel gave himself unto prayer, but he didn't. Ahithophel gave himself over to all of the bitterness and to the injustice in his life. With all of that anger, with all that emotion, he had to do something with it. And it ought to have been directed towards the God of heaven, but because it wasn't, it created a great loss for that family. And then it says, return to God of our praise. What a great description. Hold not peace, Lord, O God of my praise. That was the description David is giving about God, that he is the God of praise. What a great way. And so it's a very bold prayer, which is hold not thy peace, but it's also one to say to

[17 : 20] God, that you are the one that I praise. So David turned to God in prayer, verse 4, for my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer. And so this is a great intense expression that is here. Giving yourself to prayer means like giving in to vindicating yourself.

While your enemies are uttering false words against you and against other people trying to do you harm, you should be speaking to the Lord. Next thing that we'll see here in this passage, verse, set thou a wicked man over him. We should only want God, what God would provide for them, for their, for their ultimate good and for his glory. And so one of the punishments that David prayed for here as ungodly leadership is a form of God's judgment upon people. David prayed, it said, set thou wicked man over me. One of the ways in which that we deal with the consequences of sin is to have wicked people over us. In Peter in Acts 120, he's quoting Psalms 109, 8. He says, let his days be few and let another take his office. Applying this verse, an evil man rightly condemning Judas, who was not an innocent man, but was wrongly, Jesus, who was wrongly condemned.

Another way, ungodly advice is a form of God's judgment upon people. So David is saying, wicked people put evil people over him. And also I pray that he has a bad advice, bad advisors, verse six, and let Satan stand at his right hand. Instead of wise counsel, he has given ungodly counsel. Don't let his ways prosper. Discernment by those around the enemy is a form of God's judgment.

Verse seven, when he shall be judged, let him be condemned and let his prayer become sin. Twofold, that in the court of law, that everybody around him would see what is happening and that they would have discernment, that also that the God of heaven would not hear his prayers, that his prayers would miss the mark, that his prayer, let his prayers become sin. Sin defined as missing the mark. Would his prayers just miss the mark? Would they not go anywhere?

And this is so important to David because David believes that he knows that he's living in the truth and his adversary and his enemy is not. And he is just praying that God would vindicate him because he refuses to take the sword. He refuses to do this on his behalf. But he says, people are being hurt. I am being hurt. And God, I can't do anything, but I'm asking that you will, that you'll pay attention to this matter. Not allowing the sin of this man to continue for years would be merciful. And that's what verses 10 through 15 are about. The children and the next generation, the iniquity of their fathers be remembered unto the Lord is that this would not continue, that the way of this evil man would not continue for generations to come. We find that through the Old Testament and it's unsettling to us that God in his mercy do not allow people to continue in their sins. So Spurgeon put it like this. He says, we are staggered to find the children included in the father's sentence. And yet, as a matter of fact, children do suffer for their father's sin.

[20 : 23] As long as the affairs of this life are ordered as they are, it must be so. And so God, David, says, I'm not going to act, but God, would you act in this way? And then David is able to explain a pure motive in his appeal. Much different. Any of you have, I've shared before, and I'm not something that I'm proud of, but being somebody who could run their mouth a lot and somebody, we just put a window in over here in the VBM office. It's a big window. And I've shared with you before how when I was in middle school, we would stand at a window just like that. It's what it reminded me of. It's about the same size. And everybody would go to the concessions, the snack vending machine, and we'd all stand at this window and we'd stare at my house, all right, because I lived right across the road from the school. And as a middle schooler, you don't want kids looking at your house, talking about your house, making fun of you. And so I would stand there and I would just wait for a kid to make fun of me. And as I was standing around with these people, I would just consider what I would say in retaliation to them. You're going to hurt me. I'm going to hurt you. And that's how I spent my break times in middle school, is them making fun of me and then me making fun of them. And so when I read this psalm, some of it in my heart was like, oh, that was a good one, David. I really like what you said there. I'll remember that one next time I'm in a fight with somebody. And that was what's being said.

And so, so many times the words that we would use, you would say, well, these sound like words I would say. And these sound like things I would think. But then let's contrast our heart to the heart of David here. And this is where conviction would fall upon me. His accuser is described as someone who is not merciful, persecutes the poor and needy, and slays the brokenhearted. That's verse 16.

His hateful ways went beyond just doing wrong to David, but he was hurting other people. Cruelty against people with a broken heart goes against the nature of God. Psalm 34, 18, for the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and savest such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 51, 17, the sacrifices of God are of a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart of God that I will not despise. His accuser loved heaping curses on other people. He loved cursing, verse 17, and so let it come upon him. He's closed himself with this as a garment. And since he loves cursing, may it come to him. Since he has no delight in blessing, may it be far from him.

And in Psalm 109, 21, it says that we can see here that he had a desire for God's name and based on God's mercy. But do this for me, O God, for the Lord, for thy namesake, because thy mercy is good. Deliver thou me. Just those few words, those four words, for thy namesake, changes everything about this prayer. No, not just because I'm hurting, not just because he's been bad to me, not just because he's brought shame to me.

Remember, people walked by and they shook their head at David. But the heart of David's prayer was not because he had been personally offended, but he said, God, would you do this for your namesake so that you would be glorified. So even though David is in a pitiful situation, his plea was based on God's reputation and not his own personal shame. And that is the difference between David and myself. And maybe the difference between David and you is that when a person in this world or a group of people in this world have brought something against you, are you most offended because it was against you? Or are you offended because it was a sin against the Holy God?

[23 : 51] Are you offended because their sin is going to hurt more people? Help requested with a heart for God's glory. What did he want his enemies to know? Verse 26, help me, O Lord, my God. O save me according to thy mercy, that they may know that this is thy hand, that thou, Lord, hast done it. He didn't want them to know that they had messed with the wrong man, that he was smarter, that he was stronger, that he was right and they were wrong. It was very important to David that his enemies and all who looked on him knew that his rescue was from God's hand and that the Lord had done it. David didn't want to be just smart. He didn't want to outwit this guy. He didn't want to just have strategy. He didn't want to just destroy his family, which would have been a very common thing for a king to do, right?

He had complete power to do such, but he said, God, I want you to act in such a way that would show that you have done this. He didn't want deliverance only for his own sake, but for the glory of God.

So David wanted God's blessings and not his accuser's approval. That's who he cared about. Verse 28, Let them curse, but bless thou. When they arise, let them be ashamed, but let thy servant rejoice.

To be able to come to God with this type of prayer, you would have to be standing in integrity and really have a true heart to say these words unto the Lord. David understood that the curse of his enemies could never triumph over the blessings of God in his life. This would make David rejoice and his enemies be clothed with shame, wearing this grace as if it were a mantle. The psalm ends with a praise being given to God. Though the enemy curses his name, he will be praised the Lord. His praise to God will define his life and not the cursing from his enemies. Verse 30, I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth. Yea, I'll praise him among the multitude. David had told the Lord the things that needed to be told, and now with his mouth, he wanted to praise the Lord as opposed to the other way around, as opposed to telling everybody in the world what he wished would happen to his enemies, as telling everybody in the world what his enemy had done. He shared that to God, and with his time, he praised the Lord. And we ultimately see that Jesus Christ is the one who took all these accusations and all these things, and he only lived and he died for the glory of the Father. He died in love for people. He did not seek revenge upon those that had killed him. Even going to the cross, he says,

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. The ability to love and to care for your enemy, the ability to love God despite what something's happening is to be Christ-like. God is nearer to us than the enemy can ever be. Verse 31, for he shall stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul. God, I'm going to take trust even though Satan is in the corner of my enemy and Satan stands at his right hand. God, I'm going to take comfort in knowing that you don't stand in my corner, but I stand in your corner. I stand, I know that you are right, and I'm going to live in my integrity. The psalm began with addressing the God of my people, and it ends with the confidence and a vow that the singer would yet praise him. It painted an adversary standing at the right hand of the wicked to condemn him, and it ends with the assurance that Jehovah stands at the right hand of his afflicted servant and as an advocate to protect him.

[27 : 07] So let me give you four things here before we close in prayer, and if you want to flip over your page and turn it upside down, kind of made a riddle out of it for you here, okay? Here's some practical lessons when going through a time of criticism and unjust accusation, and we all do, not on the level in which we see David here. Most of us don't deal with that, but in your life, you just have somebody that has made accusation against you, or maybe somebody is, there's a problem in a relationship, and that you just don't have it resolved, and you just decide that you want to take it into your own hands, that you could be the one that could do this, that you could bring vengeance upon that person, that you could humble that person, that you could do what is right, and you really need to say that you are a person that is given the prayer. And then share your heart with the Lord and say, God, if something's going to happen, you do it, because I am not going to do it.

So here's some practical lessons before we pray. Number one, no matter what the enemy may prevent you from doing, they cannot stop you from praising our God. God should be the God of our praise.

He started off this psalm, and he says, God, you are the God of my praise. No matter how bad all this thing's going on, and no matter how bad this person's accused me, you are still praiseworthy, and I'm going to praise you. Verse number two, turning to God will keep you from turning inward and becoming bitter. Give yourself the prayer and not debating. He went to the Lord. He told the Lord what he wanted to happen. He told the Lord his situation. He didn't debate with the person. He didn't debate with everybody around him about how wicked his adversary was. He went to the Lord.

Number three, trust God to provide what is needed to bring correction to your accuser. Do not take matters into your own hands. Repeatedly at the end of the psalm, he said, God, let it be done so that they will know that it was you. Verse four, don't only be confident that they are on the side of wrong, but stand in the truth. There is room for both of you to be wrong. David knew confidently that God was on his right hand, that he was not standing where his enemy was standing. So we know who's at the right hand of your accuser, but are you resting knowing that God stands at your right hand? You can trust him. Do not move, respond, or act without his guidance. Verse six, set thou a wicked man over him and let Satan stand at his right hand. Verse 31, for he, God, shall stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul. Knowledge of this allows you to give yourself the prayer because you know that he is the only one that matters. You do not need your accuser's approval, nor do you need to desire without God's guidance. So I would encourage you, turn to Psalm 109 next time you get into a place and that you want to talk to everybody in the world about your enemies. Look at the example given of David, look at his testimony, look at his motives, look at the way in which he speaks to God and look how he lets something go and says, God, this belongs to you. You are the God of my prayer. You are the God of my praise. I will give myself the prayer and then you can give yourself,

Lord, to do whatever you want in this situation. Heavenly Father, Lord, I pray that this will make application in the hearts of those that heard it, Lord, if not today when the time comes, Lord, I know that everyone in here has an opportunity to turn bitter and to turn hateful towards people in their life that have often mistreated them. Lord, I pray that we will take the testimony of this Psalm and that when this happens, we will give ourselves the prayer and not to revenge, that we will continue praising your name, that we will not be moved, that we will not join the side of the enemy, but we will stand, Lord, where you are on our right side, living with pure motives and with a right heart for your honor and your glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.