

Psalm 108/109

Good evening church, go ahead and grab your Bible and turn to psalm 108. We are going to start there tonight and then also try to cover 109 as well.

Before we jump into Psalm 108 if you were to turn to Psalm 57:7-11 and Psalm 60:5-12 and read those two passages then read Psalm 108 you would see that those two passages and Psalm 108 are almost identical.

What you have in 57 and 60 is a psalm of David, but in both of them, these are the sections of praise. In 57, the previous 6 verses talk are verses of lament and petition to God. And in the same way Psalm 60:1-4 is also a petition to God and lament.

So it seems that David has gone back to his previous writings and taken the praise sections of each, both 57 and 60 and put together a new psalm of praise and confidence in God.

Some scholars debate how and when his psalm would have been sung, some think it could have been a psalm sung before battles in the armies of Israel.¹

And that is our theme for this Psalm, Confidence in God in Trials.

108 : Confidence in God²

First we see David express confidence in God through praise..

We can be Confident in Praise (1-4)

David begins this psalm with a statement about his heart. David says his heart is steadfast, I think he is saying his heart is steadfast toward God, in faith and God and in confidence in God.

And David isn't simply saying his mind is in the right place, his emotions are in check with God, or his attitude is in the right place. But all of him is confident in God. His mind, emotions, attitude, hope, faith, will, everything is steadfast in his confidence in God.

This is shown in the next phrase when he says he will sing and make melody with ALL MY BEING.

¹ Stephen Lawson, *Holman Old Testament Commentary. Psalm 76-150.*

² Outline derived from Christ Centered Exposition, *Psalms 101-150.* Tony Merida.

David isn't about some half - hearted worship, he is all in. He isn't mumbling the words of the praise he is giving, he is fully giving his all.

Tim Keller refers to this phrase of David as David having an aggressive joy and confidence in God.³

One commentator says of David, That a steady heart is a singing heart.

David knows to whom he is singing and praising to, and because of his confidence even in the midst of trials and enemies around him, he is steadfast in his faith in God.

In verse 2 David calls for instruments, the harp and lyre.

He wants to wake in praise to God and he will wake in thanksgiving. And then the rest of verses 3 and 4 tell us where he gives thanks and why he will give thanks.

He says he will give thanks among the people, which would have been those around him, even his enemies, and among the nations.

It is interesting to note how evangelistic the psalms are, the nations are mentioned time and time again.

God is the God of the nations and he deserves to be praised by all of them, and the nations need to know that God is worthy of praise and thanksgiving. And David tells us why in the next verse, verse 4.

“For your steadfast love is great... your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.”

David's praise and thanksgiving to God is not wishful thinking, he does not think he can praise God into doing something for him. David praises God because of what he has already done.

David's confidence is rooted in truth, the truth and experience that David has of God's love and faithfulness to the people of Israel including himself that he has seen time and time again.

Application

³ Christ Centered Exposition, *Psalms 101-150*. Tony Merida. 90.

When we face trials and enemies of various kinds, where are our hearts? Are they filled with worry, are they full of anxiety, are they resting in our own strength to figure it out?

Do we have the resolve and confidence in God when things aren't going well?

Can we sing confidently to God in the midst of difficult times?

Illustration: It Is Well

Many of you know the story of the hymn, It Is Well.

Horatio Spafford penned the famous hymn after many tragedies in his line. First, he lost his 4 year old son in the Great Chicago Fire, which also brought him great financial difficulties.

Then he lost all 4 of his daughters when they and his wife were traveling to Europe and the ship carrying them sank, only his wife was saved. And as he was traveling across the same path as they did when they sank he wrote the hymn, It Is Well.

His heart is steadfast like Davids when he writes, "When peace like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to know It is well, it is well, with my soul."⁴

Let our hearts be steadfast and confident until the day we see Jesus face to face.

We Can be Confident in Prayer (5-6)

Next in verses 5-6 we see confidence in prayer...

In these two verse David appeals to God to do two things.

For God to glorify himself and let his glory be over all the earth, to make himself known to those around him.

And those around him were probably those who were his enemies. The context of the trials David is facing is not explicit, but there are places where it seems this could be referring to a military battle situation.

Why does David want God's glory to be over the earth, because he knows that if God glorifies himself, he will destroy the enemies of his people.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It_Is_Well_with_My_Soul

Here we see David's confidence in his prayer to God because he is confident in the covenant he and Israel have with God.

2 Samuel 7 is where this covenant is found.

⁸Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel.

⁹And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more...

David is confident in his prayer to God because he knows that if God is loving and faithful to his people, then he will defeat their enemies and save them, which will bring glory to himself.

We see again these two elements tied together as we see all over the Bible, God's glory and our good.

But we need to remember that sometimes God's glory is brought about through difficult circumstances, trials, times of being uncomfortable and it is in those times we need to see how it is working for our good.

Part of this psalm comes from Psalm 57, which is a psalm David writes as he is fled from Saul in a cave.

Here in this passage, the anointed coming king, hiding in a cave from Saul.

David knew what was to come, he knew he was to be the new king, yet during the waiting for Saul's demise, he continues to honor and praise God because he knows that even in hiding, in the waiting, the constant threat to him, he knows it is for his own good.

Can you imagine the closeness and dependence on God that was formed in David during these times in the cave and running from Saul?

Difficult times are sometimes the best places for our good and for God to get glory, and when we go to Lord in prayer in those times we can go confidently.

We Can be Confident in Promises (7-9)

Next David shows us confidence in God because of God's promises.

David appeals to God's promise as he says, "God has promised in his holiness" This in a sense is God promising through himself. There is no other greater to which to swear to so he promises on his own holiness these things in verses 7-9.

7-9 paints a picture of God taking up all the areas of the promised land given to Israel after being rescued from slavery in Egypt.

This is either a reminder of what God had done in bringing Israel victory in the past and or a prophecy for after exile that Israel would return to the promised land. But the picture here is of God's complete control and sovereignty over this land.

He is dividing, portioning it all out and he says it is his. Verse 8 he says Gilead and Manasseh are his, then Ephraim is his helmet and Judah his scepter.

Ephraim represented the Northern and eastern tribes of Israel while Judah represented the Southern tribes.

Also the helmet symbolism represented strength and resolve while the scepter represented force and dominion.

Lastly in verse 9 he speaks poorly of the enemies of Israel, Moab is my washbasin, Edom I cast my shoe, and Philistia I should in triumph. These are all phrases speaking to the truth that God defeats the enemies of Israel, his people.

Overall these verses show how David clings to the promises of God as he is facing his enemies.

For us we can cling to the many promises of Jesus as well. Here are just a few.

Jesus will never leave or forsake us. Hebrews 13:5

He will be with us till the end as we serve in his mission. Matthew 28:20

He will come back for us and is preparing a place for us. John 14:3

He is praying and interceding for us. 1 John 2:1

We can go to him for rest for our soul. Matthew 11:28-30

We should not be downcast for he has overcome the world. John 16:33

He is our friend. John 15:15

He is not ashamed of us and he calls us brother and sister. Hebrews 2:11

There is nothing more certain than God's promises, we can be confident in them.

We Can be Confident in Petition (10-13)

Because we can be confident in our praise, in our prayer, and in God's promises, we can be confident in our petition when we call out to God.

This is what David does in verses 10-13. He is basically asking the question, "who is going to help us, who is going to give us victory?"

Then he answers himself in verses 12-13 with a petition for God to be the one to help him.

Again, this could have been a psalm used before time of battle and it ends with the request that God be with them.

Verse 12 says, grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man." David knows that he himself cannot bring the salvation they need. He needs God and is confident in his petition to him as we see in verse 13.

Verse 13 David says, "With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes." Once again we see David's confidence.

He has asked the Lord to do something and he is confidently believing him to do it.

He knows that with the Lord they will do great and conquer their enemies and without them they will be defeated.

Of verse 13 Ligon Duncan who is the President of Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson says this, "That is a life motto: We will do valiantly, but God will tread down our foes. That's a motto for your marriages. If you find yourself in a perplexing situation in your marriage - God, by your grace, I will do valiantly, but You will be the One who gives us victory in our marriage."

As Ligon Duncan points out this confidence can be applied to so many other areas in life.

In parenting, "God by your grace, I will be a great parent, but You will be the One who gives me victory in parenting."

“God by your grace, I can be bold and wise to share the good news of Jesus with others, but You will be the One who gives me victory in overcoming my fear to share.”

“God by your grace, I can offer forgiveness to the one who hurt me, but You will be the One who heals the pain and gives me strength to do so.”

“God by your grace, I will ask them for forgiveness , but You will be the One who gives me humility to seek restoration.”

Verse 13 is a great verse to memorize and press into our hearts as a motto for seeking to live a life empowered by the Lord in all areas of our lives.

So as we finish 108 remember you can be confident in your praise, prayer, the promises of God and your petitions to God.

109

When we come to psalm 109, we are entering into one of the most extreme imprecatory psalms. An imprecatory psalm is when the writer is calling for judgment and wrath to come upon their enemies.

What makes these psalms challenging is the reality of being new testament believers and having Jesus’ teachings of loving your enemies and then reading a psalm that calls for wrath and judgment on ones enemies.

So before we jump in I want to offer a few helpful guidelines for us as we think about how to read and apply these types of psalms. These guidelines come from Dr. Tony Merida, who was one of my preacher professors in seminary.

First, the people being cursed are not enemies over minor matters.

These would have been people who were wicked and had a proven track record of unrepentant harmful sin. These are not folks who cut you off in traffic or pick a fight with you on social media.

Second, we have to remember the covenant context of the Old Testament.

Israel had been promised to be blessed when they were obedient and cursed when they failed to honor God, so David is wanting justice on those who are hurting him and his people since they are innocent.

Third, the OT held in tension the need to love God and others but also hate evil.

So here again, the evil is being carried out by an enemy and they are in some way being hateful toward the evil doer.

Fourth, these curses are poetic and can include elements of rhetorical hyperbole for effect along with righteous anger being expressed.

Fifth, these curses express moral indignation, not a personal agenda. They show a zeal of God's honor and name. These curses are not because one person is affected but because many are affected as well as the glory and honor of God.

Seventh, these curses in a sense have a prophetic significance to them.

This psalm is quoted in Acts 1:20 speaking of Judas and the demise that came to him because of his betrayal of Jesus.

Paul also uses psalm 69, another imprecatory psalm, to speak to the insults made against Jesus during his ministry.

Eight, NT disciples can pray for justice and wrath in praying for the second coming of Jesus.

We know in much more detail than those in the OT how Jesus' second coming will bring a resolution to any and all injustice in the world, so as we see and experience injustice we can pray for Jesus' second return instead of calling for wrath on particular people.

Imprecatory psalms in many ways are more for our instruction than our imitation.

I think there is a cause of imitation if we see that the injustice we are facing is detrimental to believers and to the honor of God's name.

I think of mostly contexts where persecution particularly toward followers of Jesus happens in a known systematic way.

If you are in those contexts, then I think it is appropriate to pray these types of prayers.

So with those guidelines, I want to take a survey of the text and point out a few elements here and there, then take some time before we finish and point out a few application points for us.

Explanation

Lamentation v. 1-5

First in verses 1-5 we see some verses of lament.

David first calls on God to not be silent. He is about to share a request with him and David wants an answer.

In verse 2 he begins his lament by giving an account of the situation he finds himself in.

He is getting slandered, lied to, lied about, and it sounds as if there are enemies trying to ruin his reputation and are verbally attacking him.

However, in all this David is adamant he is innocent and has done nothing wrong to deserve this action taken against him.

Verse 3 he says, “they attack me without cause” and verse 4 he offers love and they accuse him, and then lastly in verse 5 they bring evil and hatred and again he brings love.

David is sure of himself that he has done nothing wrong against these men.

David laments this situation for 3 main reason I think.

First, as we have seen he is innocent. There is nothing he has done to deserve this verbal abuse, lies, and character assassination. David might see the reason why this is happening to him if he had done something and been in the wrong, but says over and over he has not.

Secondly, he is the King, and these enemies are bringing hatred and lies against the king of Israel which should come with consequence.

Thirdly, he is the King whom God appointed, and in a sense David see this hatred and evil as an extension to God as well being that David is innocent and he is God’s

appointed king for the people at this time. This evil is dishonoring to God by dishonoring his anointed one.

Imprecation v. 6-20

This next section is the Imprecation. The place in the psalm where David calls for justice and wrath to bring on his enemies.

We see him shift from saying they, to him, denoting he is speaking about the ring leader of this hatred and evil toward him, and he has quite a few terrible things he wants to happen to him.

Taste of His Own Medicine

Verse 6-7 David calls on God to bring someone to be against him in the same way that this ring leader is against David. He wants someone to bring a true accusation against him and he be found guilty.

Life Cut Short

Verse 8-12 David calls for his life to be cut short. Basically David is calling for the man's death.

His speech is dark as he hopes for this man's children to be fatherless and his wife to be a widow.

Then as a result of his death he desires poverty and difficult circumstances for this man's children.

For them to have to wander and beg. For his creditors to come take all he owes at once leaving the children with nothing. He wants strangers to come and take all he has worked for.

David doesn't pray for the children's death, but for horrible circumstances for them to be in.

Legacy Destroyed

Verses 13-15 David wants this man's legacy and influence gone. He calls for this posterity to be cut off.

The CSB says, “let the line of his descendants be cut off” this is David’s way of asking God for this man’s sinful influence to stop with him. For him to not be creating more and more men and women to act in his sinful ways.

In a way David is connecting passages such as Exodus 20:5-6 to his situation which says, “Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers’ iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands.”

David wants this man’s sin to carry to his generations so they cannot influence more and more evil and hatred.

Carry a Curse

Verse 15 speaks of their sin being before the LORD continually so that the LORD might execute justice toward them and cut him and his legacy off forever.

In verses 16-20 we get an evaluation of why David wants this judgment to come. We get insight as to the type of things this ringleader attacking David is doing.

He practiced severe injustice in not helping those who were poor and needy, but instead he took advantage of them, pursued them and even put them to death.

He also loved to curse others. This should be seen in opposition to blessings. Instead of being someone who brought blessing through their interactions with others, he brought curse and misery.

Because he is a man of curse, David wants curse to surround this man.

He uses imagery of a curse coming on him, clothing him like a coat that seeps into his body like water and then oil in his bones. He wants it to be like a belt that is put on everyday, so day in and day out this man experiences curse all the time.

David finishes this section in verse 20 asking for these things to be this man's reward.

In a way, David wants this man to simply reap what he sows. For him to be cursed, his legacy to be destroyed, and even be put to death.

Desperation v. 21-29

This next section of 21-29 points to David’s desperation.

In light of all these attacks and hatred toward David, he calls out to God in desperation for deliverance. Verse 21 David asks the Lord to fight for him, “deal on my behalf.”

David is confident in God’s love for him and uses it as the foundation to be able to ask God for help and deliverance.

22-25 David speaks to how these attacks and dealing with this man’s evil has affected him.

He is poor and needy in spirit, his heart is wounded. He is physically weak from fasting and from lamenting. He compares himself to a shadow at evening and being shaken off like a locust.

He is in a dire estate and he calls on God to help.

Verses 26-29 we see David’s call of desperation for God to act and again David is banking on God’s love for him to bring Him to action.

David wants judgment on these men and he wants them to know it is God doing it, that God is in a way on David’s side.

Also, in light of their cursing and hatred, he calls the Lord to bless him so that it might be obvious they have messed with the wrong guy. God is on his side and he wants them to know it.

Ending this section in verse 29 he wants at the end of this ordeal for his enemies to be put to shame and dishonor.

Adoration v. 30-31

Lastly, David praises God in adoration because of who he is.

In verse 30 David contrasts the actions of his enemy who uses his mouth to attack others, speak lies and hatred, with what David does, which is praise God and give thanks.

And he will do this in front of many, probably speaking of his enemies. He says, “I will praise him in the midst of the throng,” which is a large group of people.

I think what David is doing is he has been attacked and lied about and his reputation is being destroyed, but instead of doing the same to his enemies, he will instead praise the Lord, who he has confidence in will take care of the issue.

Why does he think God will do this? Verse 31 tells us, “For He stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.”

David knows God is close to the needy and brokenhearted and trusts God will come to help him.

Application

So I want to offer a few elements of application before we finish up with 109.

Pray Through Anger and Attack

The first point of application comes from just the example that David gives us that in the midst of being attacked and I am sure full of anger, he goes to the Lord.

He doesn't hold back his feeling and emotions of what is going on. He lays out his heart before God.

In the same way when we encounter times of attack from others or in situations that brew up anger in us, we can run to the Lord in prayer and petition.

He wants us to come to him in those time just as he wants us to come in times that are good.

Even in situations of anger or attack it is a possibility to connect with the Father.

Don't Get Even / Romans 12:19

When all of this attacking and evil toward David is going down, he does not plot a plan to hurt this man, instead he prays.

Romans 12:19 expresses this principle. “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.”

In most circumstances when our reputation is being tarnished or we are being slandered we are tempted to do the same to the other. To look up dirt, or create lies to make the other person sound terrible as well.

Instead we should go to the LORD in prayer and pray for the slander to stop, pray for the truth to be revealed, and pray for God to restore our reputation. Pray for others to stand up for you in the areas where slander is happening.

Social Media, Gossip, Lies

One area that David did not deal with but this psalm has principles for us is in the world of social media.

We live in a world where in a matter of seconds a lie can be created about someone and it can be shared to thousands of people within minutes.

As we engage on social media we need to be careful as to what we read and what we share, because there is a possibility that we might be contributing to slander of others by sharing things we can't know are true or not.

This does not just apply to just individuals you know, but to also others in politics, pop culture, or business. These are still people made in the image of God and we should not be apart of slandering them if we are not sure what we are sharing is true.

Look to Jesus

Lastly, when we find ourselves being slandered or lies being share about us we should look to Jesus.

We have a savior who went through the same exact thing.

Hebrews 4:15-16 reminds us that, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Jesus was lied about, slandered, mocked while hanging on the cross, but he goes to the cross to pay for their sins.

So we can press into knowing and following Jesus because he has walked that path before us and did not sin.

But furthermore, not only did Jesus walk that path of being sin against, he also died to forgive those who sinned against him.

As he is being mocked on the cross he asked the Father to forgive them for “they know not what they do.”

So when we might experience this type of sin against us remember we can press into Jesus because he has been there and can go there with us and walk with us in that, but also that those people are made in God’s image and Jesus died so that they too might become worshipers of Jesus.

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