

Psalm 94 - A Meditation upon the Justice of God

Introduction

*1 The Lord is a God who avenges.
O God who avenges, shine forth.*

How comfortable are we with this?
We speak of a God of love and mercy often, not of justice and vengeance.
And yet here is spiritual reality and truth:
"Only the wicked can wink as evil."
In other words, the psalmist identifies God as just.
He is an avenging God.
He will not allow evil to have it's way.
In fact, he will not let evil and wicked people have their way.
Fire and Brimstone - the reality of hell.
I don't know what those things are, but they are bad.
Do not for a moment think that God's love is devoid of justice.
Our vengeance often oversteps the line of justice, but God's never does.

*2 Rise up, Judge of the earth;
pay back to the proud what they deserve.*

This is a cry for justice.
When was the last time you prayed for justice?
Prayed for Syria, the sexually exploited, the drug addicts?
When have you ever prayed for God of bring justice?
It's a tricky thing though - because we who have received mercy
we must know our own sins even as we ask for justice.
We must have dealt with the plank in our own eyes.
But this is a prayer of humility, honesty and suffering.
Not all our ducks need to be in a row.
God understands.

*3 How long, Lord, will the wicked,
how long will the wicked be jubilant?*

Isn't this what the heart of the prayer is?
How long?
How long will the wicked win?
How long do we have to wait for the second coming?
For the kingdom to come?
How long before the Youssef's are brought safely to Canada into a new home?
How Long?

Profile of The Wicked

- 4 They pour out arrogant words;
all the evildoers are full of boasting.*
- 5 They crush your people, Lord;
they oppress your inheritance.*
- 6 They slay the widow and the foreigner;
they murder the fatherless.*
- 7 They say, 'The Lord does not see;
the God of Jacob takes no notice.'*

This is an exposition of the heart of the wicked.

Arrogant & boasting.

Oppressive.

Murder the helpless - the widow, the refugee, the orphan.

Do you know why our church takes in refugees?

Do you know why we support Servant's Anonymous?

Do you know why we support International China Concern?

Because they deal with the people in this passage.

The woman who is oppressed, the refugee, the orphan.

This has been and always will be in the heart of God and his people.

These are the people who are being destroyed, exploited and yes, murdered.

The Wicked are Godless - "There is no God and if there is, he doesn't care."

That is what they think.

And this is the Biblical definition of the fool.

And the fool is not far from the wicked.

God Knows

- 8 Take notice, you senseless ones among the people;
you fools, when will you become wise?*
- 9 Does he who fashioned the ear not hear?
Does he who formed the eye not see?*
- 10 Does he who disciplines nations not punish?
Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge?*
- 11 The Lord knows all human plans;
he knows that they are futile.*

Does God see?

Does God care?

You bet he does.

This is an old testament passage but only the psalmist knew.

If only he knew how much God cared.

There is a reason why in the time of Jesus they expected an avenging God.

A Messiah on a white horse with a flashing sword and an army at his back.

But God's justice has not yet come.

In fact, his justice is preceded by a simple invitation.

Do you remember what the gospel is?

What did Jesus himself preach?

"Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near."

And it is after this message of the gospel that he invites to forgiveness and transformation.

We are the wicked.

We are the oppressed.

We are victims and perpetrators.

And he has come to save us.

He is a Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Can a murderer be saved?

A rapist?

A liar?

A thief?

An adulterer?

A smug and self righteous person?

A complacent selfish person?

The answer to this is yes - but only if they repent.

Only if they believe the Kingdom is coming, seek forgiveness and ask for help.

Because the Lamb is also a Lion.

God is not blind.

His eyes are full of tears.

And so he holds open the door of mercy for all.

Until the day of judgement.

And so the psalmist continues...

The Fork in the Road

*12 Blessed is the one you discipline, Lord,
the one you teach from your law;*

*13 you grant them relief from days of trouble,
till a pit is dug for the wicked.*

*14 For the Lord will not reject his people;
he will never forsake his inheritance.*

*15 Judgment will again be founded on righteousness,
and all the upright in heart will follow it.*

God's people are taught a new way of life.

We are given relief from trouble - but not always circumstantial trouble.

What are the real days of trouble?

Trouble within or without? Sometimes both.

And here is one of the keys.

Justice/Judgement is founded on righteousness.

Righteousness is Tsedek - Right relatedness to God and others.

Love, mercy, friendship, affection and yes, discipline & justice.

How much do you really desire justice?

Measure it with how much you desire to be righteous.

The measure is how you treat others.

How you speak of them.
How you think of them.
God have mercy - we ain't that righteous after all.

Rise Up!

*16 Who will rise up for me against the wicked?
Who will take a stand for me against evildoers?*
*17 Unless the Lord had given me help,
I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death.*
*18 When I said, 'My foot is slipping,'
your unfailing love, Lord, supported me.*
*19 When anxiety was great within me,
your consolation brought me joy.*

Who?

Well, God is certainly doing his part despite what the wicked or foolish think.

But there is an invitation here.

Silence and death are related - voiceless.

But you have a voice.

We have a voice.

Why does your foot slip?

Because you are moving - climbing, active.

The one who stands up.

"anxiety" here literally means "multitude of cares."

What do you care about?

Who do you care about?

God knows and understands.

He allows you to rest and have peace and joy.

Yes, the world is a hard place, but it is also a beautiful place.

Yes, there are wicked people in it, but there are also wonderful people in it.

Yes, you are imperfect, but there is something good in you that can grow.

Our daily living out of the Christian life at work, at school, at home, at play

is the greatest act of resistance we can offer.

We speak out against what is wrong.

It isn't easy but it is done.

We shine a light on dark places in all our conversations.

Inescapable

*20 Can a corrupt throne be allied with you –
a throne that brings on misery by its decrees?*
*21 The wicked band together against the righteous
and condemn the innocent to death.*
*22 But the Lord has become my fortress,
and my God the rock in whom I take refuge.*
*23 He will repay them for their sins
and destroy them for their wickedness;*

the Lord our God will destroy them.

This is the definitive.
It answers the questions.
Does God care?
Is he just?
Oh, yes he is.

You see - Jesus tells us that there are two paths.
One wide one that leads to destruction.
Many will travel it.
But there is also a narrow one that few will find.
It leads to him.
Well, which path are you travelling?
It will make all the difference.

Time of Prayer