

Psalm 7 (1-17) – This is How to Make Your Case

Intro: 9th grade transition into public school: an enemy became a good friend and defender. This is a huge area of concern for Christians. How is a Christian supposed to think, act, pray, when it doesn't seem like they are being treated right, whether by Christians or unbelievers, or when someone specifically targets them for abuse? This Psalm gives us some answers.

This is a poem, or a plaintive song. David is the plaintiff, bringing his case to God's courtroom. David prays for relief, declaring his innocence, and he asks that God deliver him from his enemies. He declares God's righteous judgment, defending the upright and destroying the wicked, whose own devices will work against them. He ends in celebration of God's power.

We are often "surrounded" by enemies it seems, and sometimes it seems or even for a fact it might be that some particular person has their sights set on doing us harm personally. We should learn from David here in this Psalm how to pray in these situations. Surely we want them to stop, and we as Christians would like them to repent, forgive, and be forgiven, but we also want God to be the judge of those things, as we can deceive ourselves as to motive and action. How can we pray for deliverance, when slandered, set up, abused, etc., without being personally vindictive, remaining humble and trusting God so we can rest in His righteousness?

This text is not everything *about* the subject, or the last word *on* the subject, but it is foundational *to* the subject. This message does not include all the issues that this particular text addresses, but this is biblically based instruction on *this* subject from *this* text of scripture.

David's Concern

Vs.1-2 – about concentration – singled out for attack, and focusing on a particular attacker. David has taken shelter in God and continues to do so, this is pointing to a definitive action with continuing results. David is saying he has hid himself in the Lord and will continue to do so, counting on the Just Judge to protect and deliver him.

Vs.3-4 – about cause – notice how he says begin with me first – every person has sin and is capable of deception and being deceived and deceiving themselves

Vs.5 – about consequence – Let them get what they are after from me, let them steal my dignity if I have not kept it before you. Can you pray this way? You can if you will bring it all to God first, not just your problems, but your whole person.

David knew he was innocent, but that didn't stop him from asking God to examine him as well. We can be innocent, but there may be some things God wants us to realize that may have provoked the other person in the first place, or some other thing God wants us to deal with (cf. Matthew 7:3-5). These things can be something we don't think relates to the situation, but God our Just Judge knows better than we do.

David's Case

Vs.6 – His call for the judge

Vs.7-8a – His call for a trial

Vs.8b-10 – His call for examination (again we see "begin with me first"). Establish the rightness of my doings, because I am looking for you. Stop them from doing what they intend and let your righteousness prevail. This doesn't mean just future judgment, but even for the

present, yet David declares that in any event, "You know the truth, and you will judge rightly, and I trust in that." If God judges now or later or both, whatever He decides is right.

David's Comprehension

Vs.11 – of God's character – He protects the righteous (9-10) and prepares the wicked (12-16)

Vs.12-13 – of God's righteous judgment (He gives space to repent / so should we)

Vs.14-16 – of God's sovereignty and man's sin – they won't get away with it, but it will come back to ensnare them, they will be victims of their own violence. Examples: 1 Corinthians 3:19-20 – Verse 19 – Job 5:13 (cf. Esther 7:10 / Psalm 9:15-16, 57:6) – Verse 20 – Psalm 94:11

The sun hardens the clay or it melts it to be used again. In Romans 9, Paul contrasts hardening with mercy, just as we might contrast light and darkness. The inference is that God's hardening of a man is God's act of not showing him some mercy. God withheld from Pharaoh "common sense" though others might like the term "common grace."

Further confirmation of this approach is given through the analogy of the potter and the clay. How does a potter harden a pot? The answer is, in part, by baking the pot, removing the water from the clay. The water that provides the softness is removed rather than some additional chemical that causes hardness being added.

WCF, Chapter 5, Section 6 – As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, does blind and harden; from them he not only withholds his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had; and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.

While God can send Satan to render us even more obstinate, it is sufficient for God to remove his grace from us. Like the earth that God softens with his showers (Psalm 65:10) our hearts can become instead hard and parched simply by his removal of the water of grace. And he can turn that parched ground into a pool if He wishes as well (Isaiah 35:7), showing mercy on whom He will show mercy and hardening whomsoever He wishes (Exodus 33:19 / Romans 9:15, 18).

David's Composure

Vs.17 – Contentment, confidence, patient endurance. David understands God's sovereignty, His righteous judgment, His protection of His own and His punishment of the wicked, and this leads to worship. Often, it isn't that men are insincere and deceitful in their desire to serve and know God; it is that we have been deceived into imitating the way of the world. We see these words and we identify with them, but we don't actually have the heart that is behind them, we want to get to the result without having to go through the repentance, the brokenness and turning to God that this scenario is supposed to create, not just the escape from trouble, but the running into our strong tower. David was a man who realized that judgment starts with him, and that God is just. David was innocent, but he still turned to God as his source, he knows he is needy, he knows he needs God's grace, and he looks to God in worship. Who among us can stand before God and think we need no mercy? This is reason to worship God.