

# The End

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 52  
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As we begin tonight, I just want to remind you and invite you to be with us on Saturday morning at 9 a.m. as we continue our study in systematic theology. We have a wonderful time ahead looking at the attributes of God and seeing things that, frankly, will be new to us in our teaching here at Truth Community, things that have been true eternally of God but things that we've just never had opportunity to teach on that are going to bring you to a greater sense of the majesty of God. So that's Saturday at 9 o'clock that I invite you to be with us.

For tonight, we have Psalm 52 to consider as we continue our systematic study of the Psalms. You know, it is the nature of our earthly lives, it is the nature of our fallen world, that we see and deal with the consequences of evil men and their actions, and the consequences are often great, and the question is: what do we do with that? And much of the Psalms is devoted to that.

Let me remind you of something that we said early on. Before you turn to Psalm 52, I want you to go back to Psalm 1. I invite you to turn back to Psalm 1 which is the introductory Psalm and it's kind of the entry gate into the entire Psalter; all 150 Psalms are introduced by Psalm 1. And when we taught on this Psalm early on many months ago, we said that Psalm 1:6, in a sense, is kind of the theme of the entire Psalter. That's a little bit of an overstatement perhaps but Psalm 1:6 says, "the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." And if you read the Psalms systematically, numbers 1 through 150, you'll find that this theme in this one verse is often repeated, it is expounded upon, it is expanded on, and so many of the Psalms are designed to help us work through the implications of that simple theme, "the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." And that is meant to be an anchor through which you view all of life. Whether you are dealing with it on a personal level and people have oppressed you and wronged you and made life difficult for you in an ungodly way, or if you're viewing it on a world level at the level of nations and what happens in our world amongst leaders and nations, the same principle applies. God is over all, God knows his people, he protects them, carries them through, and he deals with the wicked in his own way, in his own time, but always with a decisive clarity and a decisive finality when he rises to act.

So the whole point of knowing these things, the whole point of understanding these things, is that you would have a considered meekness, a considered trust, a considered spiritual composure as you go through life and you see wicked men prevailing for a time, wronging you for a time, you always fall back on that fundamental principle that "the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish," and that settles your soul and that answers so many, if not all, of the things that would agitate us in life. Whether it's inside your family, dealing with a wicked spouse, or whatever the case may be, you are designed, God has given you his word so that this is what you would continually come back to again and again.

And here's the thing, beloved, if that basic premise about the Psalms is correct, that so many of the Psalms are just designed to repeat this simple verse, "the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish," well, you might say, "Well, why do I need so many Psalms then if the principle is so simple?" Well, maybe just maybe you and I are kind of slow to learn, kind of slow to let it sink in, kind of slow to let that really take root in our lives and in our minds and let it focus so we get the benefit of a lot of repetition in the way that the Psalms teach us.

So with all of those things in mind, turn now to Psalm 52 if you haven't already. We will read Psalm 52 at the start. What do we do when wicked people rise and prosper? What do you do in your personal life when you're suffering under the hands of someone who has it in for you unrighteously? Beloved, write it down, it's as simple as this: we look to God and we trust him. We look to God and we trust him. It doesn't have to be complicated and you don't need a lot of new theological theories to help you process things. Beloved, it is as simple as looking to God and trusting him and seeing how Scripture plays that out in your life.

So Psalm 52. We'll begin with the inscription at the start of this Psalm, it's a lengthy one. "For the choir director. A Maskil of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul and said to him, 'David has come to the house of Ahimelech.'" Verse 1,

1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long. 2 Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit. 3 You love evil more than good, Falsehood more than speaking what is right. Selah. 4 You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. 5 But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah. 6 The righteous will see and fear, And will laugh at him, saying, 7 "Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire." 8 But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever. 9 I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, And I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones.

Psalm 52 gives us a stunning contrast between the wicked who plot against the righteous and the God who holds us in his hand. This is a Psalm that is built on a contrast between the wicked and between God. The Psalmist, as it were, stands back and sees the conflict between the wicked and the God who will judge them and he comes to this conclusion, what I'm about to say in three short simple sentences is the lesson of the entire Psalm, it is the point of what is to guide your thinking in those times of discouragement and persecution, even: look to the end, do not fear man, trust God. In some ways, it's humbling, I guess, to state things in such simple principles. It's humbling to teach it, it's humbling to say it, on your part, in one sense, it's humbling to hear it, that these things which are so simple and so basic need to be repeated again and again and again, and yet this is where Scripture leads us and sometimes you just need fundamental principles that you go back to multiple times a day, 365 days a year, in order to let that shape your thinking.

You know, someone said to me after the service on Sunday, the kind of comment that was very insightful and very encouraging and showed a grasp of what biblical ministry is like. She said to me, "You know, it takes a long time for these things to sink in. It sinks in over time." You know, these aren't things that you hear once. For all of their simplicity, they're not things that you hear once and you master it and then you never have to wrestle through it again. The nature of our hearts are is that we are quick to distrust God, we are quick to forget the things that we know to be true, and we are quick to fear men who are in front of us rather than trusting the God whom we know but we cannot see.

So if you keep those things in mind, then you realize that the simplicity of these things – look, starting to get wound up already – the genius of God is found not so much in the complexity of the truth that he reveals in his word, sometimes the genius of God is revealed and is found in the simplicity in which you find principles that shape your perspective on all of life. As you go through a difficult life, as you deal with difficult people, what you need to do is to go back to these fundamental principles. Look to the end. You already know, if you know anything about biblical revelation, you already know the outcome. You know that God deals well with the righteous in the end. You already know that God judges the wicked in the end. You know that God will settle accounts in the end. Well, if you know the outcome, then what is there to agitate you in the meantime? You're supposed to look at that end and say, "Okay, I can rest. I can relax here. I don't need to be afraid of the wicked people who are threatening me with harm, who perhaps would use their power to take away the things that I love or to make my life difficult or to make ministry difficult. I'm not afraid of that. Why? Because 'the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.'" It's like the hub of a bicycle wheel that is the core around which everything moves and all of the spokes are connected to that one hub. Look to the end, don't fear man, trust God, and everything turns on that as you go through life, wanting to live a life that glorifies God. It's not all that difficult in principle but we struggle with it because we are slow to believe and we are quick to fear.

Well, Psalm 52, based on the inscription that's given to us here, is rooted in an episode in David's life from 1 Samuel 21 and 22. We're not going to turn there. It's a very lengthy

passage and for the sake of time, I'll simply kind of summarize it here. You may recall that David had a very close friendship with Jonathan, the son of King Saul, and Jonathan at one point warned David to flee because Saul wanted to kill him. And in the course of his flight, David went to a city called Nob, one of the cities of the priests, and he was alone and he went to the priests there and he lied to this priest named Ahimelech saying that Saul had sent him on a secret mission and that he needed supplies in order to further the mission that the king had sent him on. Well, Ahimelech granted that request, gave David some supplies, but not realizing that Saul actually wanted to kill David. So when it came out later from the mouth of Doeg that Ahimelech had done that, Saul interpreted what the priest had done as an act of treason. And Doeg was the chief of Saul's shepherds, he overheard that conversation between David and Ahimelech and eventually when it was convenient and the timing was propitious for him to do so, he told Saul about it and Saul commanded his guards to kill the priests. The king ordered his guard to raise their hand against the priests of God. The guards said, "No way. I'm not going to do it." Disobeyed a direct command from the king because they realized that that could not possibly be anything other than wicked. So what did Saul do? He turned to Doeg and said, "Doeg, you do it." And Doeg gladly complied. Scripture tells us that he happily killed 85 priests and many others in the city. And when the time came when David heard about it, he realized that it was his lie that had set the stage for the slaughter of all of these priests and it's that context that gives us, gives rise to Psalm 52. Psalm 52 is David's reaction to Doeg and in the midst of that horrific slaughter, David lays out principles for us that help us understand the way that we respond, the way that we should think when wicked people rise, when wicked people prosper, when wicked people carry out their dastardly deeds. I wonder if there were perhaps times when the Romans were slaughtering Christians, if perhaps some of our ancestors in the faith turned to Psalm 52 and found comfort when the hand was being raised against them and innocent godly people were being slaughtered at the hands of wicked men. There is enduring application here.

So what you see in Psalm 52 is a contrast between the way of the wicked and the way of God. It's a contrast between the way of the wicked and the way of God and so that's what we're going to see in this first part. We're going to look at the way of the wicked as David addresses Doeg in the words that he says.

Look at Psalm 52:1 as we dive into the text now. Psalm 52:1, David says,

1 Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long.

And in light of the slaughter that had taken place, it's rather striking that David actually opens with something that is a bit of a taunt against the wicked man who had carried out this deed, and what he is expressing is astonishment at the foolishness of the wicked man, and what actually proves to be his own self-destructive ways. The wicked always think that they are clever in their deeds. They never contemplate the fact that there will be a time of accountability coming. They ride the wave of their present success, their present power, their present might to carry out their schemes, and have no regard for what comes

down at the other side of their acts. They think they're clever and they love it that way. And what is David doing? David opens up and rebukes them. He rebukes this evil man and this is the – watch this – this is the biblical rebuke to wickedness everywhere, to wicked men everywhere, Psalm 52 comes and rebukes them in their unrighteousness, in their ungodliness, in their persecution of the righteous. "Why do you boast in your evil, O mighty man?" He's mighty in temporary power but the whole point is this, the whole point of this Psalm is this, is that these wicked deeds are ultimately going to boomerang on the man. Why is that guaranteed? Verse 1, look at it there with me, "The lovingkindness of God endures all day long."

Look, God is a God of loyal love to his people. God is a God of complete veracity, complete truthfulness, complete faithfulness to his promises. Scripture has told us in a multitude of ways over and over and over again that the Lord knows the way of the righteous. Our Lord Jesus Christ says that he is the Good Shepherd and no one can pluck us out of his hand. Again and again and again you see these promises of Scripture that are like that. So knowing that God's promises endure forever, knowing that God never betrays his people, knowing that God is in perfect sovereign control, knowing that he is a God of perfect loyalty to his people, what can the outcome be of those who attack us except disaster in the end? Their ways are doomed to perish. Psalm 1:6, "the way of the wicked will perish." That is an unqualified statement of what God intends to carry out. God has ordered a moral universe where wickedness fails in the end. For us as God's people, we are designed to appropriate that and believe it, and trust in it, and rest in it, and even rejoice in it, before we see the outcome. Here's the thing, beloved: your walk of faith is designed, your walk of faith should be like this, you are so confident in the promises of God, so confident in his loyal love, that you say, "I know the outcome of this before it happens because I know the character of God and I rest in that, and I trust it, and I am certain of it. I am certain of the way that God will deal with me and with wicked people."

So when a wicked man, as it were, picks up a boomerang and flings it in order to attack the people of God, we can watch the flight of that boomerang going out and know that, do you know what? Sooner or later that's going to curve and come right back. I don't know if any of you have ever actually thrown a boomerang and watched that happen. It kind of takes a little bit of time to develop the skill to do it. But one time I did it and I did it right and it frightened the daylights out of me because I threw that thing out and it went out 50 yards or so and I had been trying to get this down for days and days and days, this was when I was a young kid; the one time that I did it right, it frightened me because that thing came back and it was coming right at my neck and just spinning around and it was going to decapitate me. I said, "Whoa!" I think that was last time I threw it. I thought, "This could hurt me here." Well, you see, that's the way that we think about, that's the way that we view what's going on with the wicked people, with wicked politicians, with wicked people in our lives, with those who do evil to us. We realize that sooner or later that boomerang is going to come back and it's going to zero in on their own neck and their wickedness is actually a threat to their own well-being, even though temporarily it seems like a threat to us.

Here's the perspective that you and I need to have, this is the confidence and the strength from which we should live: attacking God's people cannot turn out well in the end. So for those who are currently orchestrating things politically to try to make things more difficult for those of us that would uphold biblical righteousness, we look at them and we say, "We're not afraid. We realize you may get the upper hand, we realize that you may expand your power, we realize that you may make life difficult for us for a time, maybe for decades, we don't know. But do you know what? We're not afraid because we realize that that boomerang turns and it is inevitable, it is part of the order of the universe that this cannot come out well for you in the end." So rather than flee in fear from them, we look at the assault square in the face and say, "No. What you need to do is repent. You need to repent from your organized assault on the people of God, on biblical righteousness, because this can't go well for you. Consider your own well-being, you silly man, you silly woman. Think about your own well-being and put down your weapons of warfare against the people of God because it can't come out well for you in the end."

Now, there are two aspects to the wicked that set up the contrast in Psalm 52. Psalm 52:1 roots David's perspective in the loyal love of God. He knows God. God has set his favor upon him so he is secure and that is a way, beloved brother and sister in Christ, that is the way that you should think about all of life. It should be centered in your thinking, it should be anchored in your mind, "I am secure in the loyal love of Christ. No matter what else happens, I am secure. He will not fail me." Larry pointed out in the song, he will never ever ever forsake us; that's rooted in Hebrews 13 where there is a triple negative that says, "God will never ever ever forsake us." That becomes your defining perspective on life and all of a sudden when you let that anchor in, when you let it sink in deep, when you say, "I embrace that. I accept it. I believe it by faith in God's perfect word. I rest on that. I believe the promise of Christ," then you say, "and therefore I'm going to let it shape the way I view everything else."

Let's look quickly at the two aspects of the wicked that set up this contrast. First of all, David addresses his character. David addresses his character so this is a sub point: the way of the wicked and David in the context of the way of the wicked addresses his character. And it's very interesting, David almost takes the posture, you could think about it like he takes the posture of a prosecuting attorney and he prosecutes this man's character with his Spirit-inspired words. And what does David say? He calls attention to the fact that this man's speech destroys and cuts people in its deceptive assault.

Look at verse 2, addressing this wicked mighty man, verse 2,

2 Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit.

He says, "You're a liar and you love to destroy people with your tongue and don't think you're getting away from it, don't think you're getting away with it." This is evident and David takes and he exposes it by the power of the Spirit of God, he exposes it and lays it out for everyone to see.

And he goes on in verse 3 and addresses the heart that gives rise to those destructive words. Verse 3,

3 You love evil more than good, Falsehood more than speaking what is right.

I love the way that David just calls a spade a spade, don't you? I love the fact that there is none of the sissified speaking that marks political discourse today, that marks the way so-called spiritual leaders want to speak and want everyone to like them and never have room for a convicting word that speaks moral clarity into the fog of sin and wickedness and falsehood. Scripture is not like that. Scripture is not like that at all. This man that David was addressing, Doeg, he had betrayed and slaughtered the priests. Why did he do that? It's because in his heart he loved wicked things. He loved evil and David calls that out and says, "Your character is such that you love evil more than good. You prefer falsehood more than speaking what is right." It's a word of conviction that applies to our modern culture and society today, isn't it? People prefer deception that makes them feel good over truth that would convict them of what is right and what is godly.

David at the end of verse 3 says, "Selah." It's a word that bids us to stop and pause and ponder what you've just read. Here's what you're supposed to think, David had in mind Doeg, of the awful atrocity that he had perpetrated on the priests of God, but this is the way that we are supposed to step back and contemplate when we see wicked people at work in our own lives today, when we see them hogging headlines and being congratulated and prospering in the midst of it, "Stop and think about what's happening," David says. "This man prefers sin over truth." And what is he doing? He's gaining temporary benefit, this wicked man is but he's not looking any further. He can't see beyond his nose. He says, "This gives me favor with the king, this gives me temporary power," and they never think beyond that. They don't consider what lies ahead, what the outcome of it is. Their heart is so enraptured with the nature of evil and loving the sin and loving the sheer wickedness of it all, that they have no other perspective.

David goes on and continues the prosecution. He says,

4 You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

This is a judgment of Scripture that applies to all who love sin, not simply Doeg. And here's the thing, beloved: as you are looking to live with discernment, as you are dealing with people who bring manipulation to bear on your lives, people who deceive you, people who lie to you, you need to think with discernment about what's going on here. The deception and the lies on their tongue are giving you a window into what their heart is like. Jesus said that "the mouth speaks from that which fills the heart," Mark 7. Their wicked tongues and their wicked lives point to a wicked character.

So you exercise discernment based on that. You make evaluations. You understand what is going on in the midst of it. And the nature of things and the way that God orders life is that sometimes immoral men get the upper hand. Sometimes liars ascend to power.

Sometimes in your employment context, in a political context, sometimes in a church context, hopefully not here, but most of you have been under the spiritual leadership of men who proved to be deceptive, haven't you? You know what that's like. What are you supposed to think in those times? Where is it that you can find a measure of comfort and security and confidence that will motivate you to continue and persevere on without fear with a sense of ultimate triumph guarding your heart, rather than collapsing under the weight of bitterness, resentment or fear? What's the confidence that you have? Well, the way of the wicked, you consider their character, we've seen that. Now David pivots and looks at the end. What is the end of the wicked?

You see, beloved, we just have to learn, we have to learn to think biblically. We have to learn to think spiritually. We have to learn to assess the environment in which we live and bring basic biblical principles to bear so that we see it clearly and so that we're responding in a way that is responding to truth rather than the illusion of the prosperity of the wicked that is around us. Look to the end, and when you look to the end, what do you see? What you see is this: the wicked are in the hands of a holy God. Their end is destruction. Their prosperity is temporary.

Look at Psalm 52:5 and, oh, it's a frightful declaration of judgment. If only the wicked would hear and understand, if only they would unplug their ears and open their eyes to see they would realize the outcome is a pit for them. Verse 5, David says, after having addressed the character and said, "You love what's wicked, deceitful. Your tongue is a razor. You love evil, falsehood, more than speaking right." But now look at verse 5 as he addresses the end of the wicked. He says,

5 But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, And uproot you from the land of the living.

You know, if you read that verse a little bit too quickly you miss the severity of what David is saying here. Let's slow it down and just kind of take it phrase by phrase. First of all, "But God," and that's always a glorious phrase in Scripture. "But God," you were dead in your trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2, but God being rich in mercy has made us alive in Christ. God changes the whole equation here. A holy God changes the whole equation of the way that you view the wicked and what has God got to say about it? What is he going to do? Well, look at the verbal phrases here: "break you down, snatch you up, tear you away, uproot you." It's fearsome and for those that are here maybe listening on the live stream and you're not a Christian and you cherish evil in your heart, listen this is a word of warning to you as well.

"Break you down, snatch you up, tear you away, uproot you." The collection of these verbal phrases picture a comprehensive devastating final judgment when you view them in their totality. "Break you down" pictures the demolition of a house. "Snatch you up" is like using tongs with precision to snatch a coal out of the fire; just with a particular precision, you reach down and you snatch it out and separate it from that which gives it heat. "Tear you away" pictures forcing someone away from his home. "Uproot you" gives the image of a tree pulled up by a storm. A house demolished. A coal precisely removed



from fire. Someone brought out of his house against his will. A tree falling over and uprooted from its very roots by a major storm.

What is David saying here as he speaks and addresses this wicked man directly? He says, "I know what's ahead for you." And it's as if the Scriptures are poking its finger right in their chest and saying, "Here's what's ahead for you. God is going to break you down. God is going to snatch you up. He is going to uproot you. Don't let your present prosperity fool you. The end that is ahead for you is nothing but devastating final judgment. Don't trifle with God because he will have the last say. Your evil ways will be stopped. God will hit you with a blinding fury that is beyond anything that you could contemplate. And sure, wicked man, you have the upper hand for the moment but don't you see that it's temporary? Don't you realize that you're a man who simply has his breath in his nostrils? Don't you realize that a self-existent, infinite Spirit of God dwells above you in unchallenged supremacy, in unchallenged holiness, and that he will vindicate his ways? Why? Because he knows the way of the righteous and he will make sure that the ways of the wicked will perish. You're boasting in your wicked triumph when you should be trembling before God in fear." He looks at the wicked person and says, "You have a completely wrong view of reality."

Doeg had slain the priests. Scripture doesn't record it for us but God certainly judged him and dealt with him. And David starts to pivot now to those of us who belong to God, belong to his kingdom, in the New Testament era, those of us that belong to Christ, that have turned from sin and have submitted to the Lordship of Christ, have received that blood atonement as that which would cleanse our souls from sin and reconcile us to a holy God, who fear God and submit to Christ. David starts to pivot now and look at verse 6. He's still addressing the wicked but he brings the perspective of the righteous to bear on it and says,

6 The righteous will see and fear, And will laugh at him, saying, 7  
"Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the  
abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire."

What is David saying here? He's saying that somehow the righteous will see the judgment of the wicked and they will recognize the laughable folly of the way that they pursued their lives, and they will recognize that God, they will see and recognize that God has vindicated his judgment, vindicated his righteousness at the fall of the wicked.

And here's the thing, beloved, here's the thing. This is the way that you think about life, this is the way that you should think about what you are seeing in your country going on around you: the brief victory that wicked people have maybe in the courts, maybe in the ballot box, maybe in oppressing you in a private way, their brief victory, their temporary success is only going to prove to be an accent color on their final doom. It's only going to highlight all the more their folly. You know, it's not a biblical phrase but you just realize in the way that my mama used to speak to me, "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." The more wicked they are, the more obvious their wicked triumph is in time, the greater the clarity and finality and vindication of the judgment of God on them will be. And all of

a sudden when that occurs in time, when that plays out, we're going to see in a fearful, majestic sense of quiet hush the vindication of the glory and the holiness of God against all that have opposed him and the complete settling of every account turned to justice.

That's the end that lies ahead. That's the outcome and so in the context of Psalm 52 as you're looking at this, you recognize the wicked character and that can't last under the hand of a holy God; that can't flourish forever. You see it happening and you say, "This is temporary by definition because the way of the wicked will perish." Then you look to the end and say, "God is going to have a judgment that will right every wrong." The commentator J. J. Stewart Perowne says this, a commentator from the 19th century, he says, "There is such a thing as a shout of righteous joy at the downfall of the tyrant and the oppressor, at the triumph of righteousness and truth over wrong and falsehood." There will be a righteous joy that takes place when God settles the account, when God brings forth his judgment and vindicates his righteousness against all the wicked of mankind forever. Do you know what I'd like to ask each one of you? Which side of that judgment are you going to be on? You young people, it's not too soon to start thinking about it; 10, 12, 14 years old, you're old enough to understand what I'm saying. What side of God's judgment are you going to end up on? Think ahead. Choose wisely because these things are real. This is truth that matters and that every man is going to give an account to.

For those of us that know Christ, that are resting in him, we step back and we look at this and we say, "Okay, I see what's happening here. I get it." You say to yourself, "I get it. This time of the prosperity of the wicked that we go through personally, politically, whatever, I understand this is just a parenthesis. This is just a short period of time to walk through where my faith is tested, where it grows, where I look to God, where I come to know him better, where I glorify him even if no one is paying attention. I know that God's eye is on me because he knows the way of the righteous. So I walk through this and I don't let myself get swept up and caught up in everything that's happening around me. I can walk through with a measure of serenity and confidence. Why? Because I understand that God prevails over the wicked and he keeps his people in the end. It can't be any other way. It can't be any other way. There can be no possible other outcome when a sovereign holy God reigns over all." So even in the midst of sorrow, this is sorrow and not even necessarily connected with things that are wicked, just the sorrow of living in a sin-cursed world that brings sickness and death and setbacks, you come back to these same principles and say, "I'm going to rest in my God whose lovingkindness endures forever. I know that I belong to him. I know that Christ suffered for me on that cross. I know that he has brought me into his family. He is going to keep me and I am going to rest in that spiritual reality no matter what I see going on around me." And beloved, do you realize that that's a comfort for your soul? Do you realize that that is sufficient? That Christ's love for your soul and that Christ's rule over the universe is sufficient to give you perfect spiritual rest and peace no matter what? Do you know that? Do you believe it? Do you rest in it? Because that is the simplicity and the comprehensivity, to make up a word, of biblical Christianity. For those who trust in Christ, better things are always in store.

Now, that's the first seven verses, the way of the wicked. David contrasts it now with the way of God. The second point here: the way of God. And in these two final concluding verses, David contrasts the way of the wicked with the ways of God. First of all, he spoke at length about the character of the wicked, now in verse 8 in a beautiful parallel, he speaks about the character of God.

Look at verse 8. I love this and you should love it too. David says in verse 8,

8 But as for me

You see, he's pivoting now. Now he's moving into his contrast. He has addressed the wicked, he has spoken about their end, their character, and now he pivots away from that and says, "Now let's talk about the other side of reality. We've looked at the coin and we've seen the side that has the wicked dealing with it, now let's flip it over and see what we say about God and his ways." What a great place to finish your thinking. And what do we say about God's character? Well, God will uproot the wicked but those who know him are going to take root.

Look at verse 8, David says, "But as for me, I'm not like the wicked. I'm in a separate realm from them. I reject that. I repent of my own prior wickedness," and now under the care of this sovereign holy God he says,

I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever.

You see, David comes back to the loyal love of God. He opened the Psalm that way, didn't he in verse 1? Look at verse 1 again, he says, "The lovingkindness of God endures all day long." The steadfast loyal love of God that can never fail. That's how he opened the Psalm, now he comes full circle as he so often does in his Psalms and he comes back to that theme and he says, "I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever." This is why what we're going to talk about on Saturday is so essential for your spiritual well-being, to know the character of God; to know the attributes of God. To know who God really is as he has really revealed himself to be, changes your whole perspective on life. David says, "I know and I trust in God's loyal love. He will never leave us and he will never forsake us therefore I can trust him."

I don't mind the repetition. I don't mind saying the same thing to you again and again and again. You can truly trust Christ with everything. There is nothing in your life that is outside the purview of his omniscient seeing observation and care. There is nothing in your life macro or micro that is beyond the realm of his omnipotent power to address. God has the power to do whatever he pleases to do. He has a loyal love for his people and he knows our every circumstance, he knows our every need. And beloved, those of you that are in Christ, it is that God that has set his protection upon you when he saved you in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if you are under the care of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God who is self-existent, who can never die, who can never lie, who can never fail, who never breaks his promises, who knows the way of the righteous, what can

go wrong? Truly, what can go wrong? And I say that being fully aware of some of the difficult circumstances you're facing, the challenges from an earthly perspective are great but, you see, we're not here to preach to men, are we? We're here to see what God says about himself and to bring ourselves under the umbrella, as it were.

David says, "I'm like a green olive tree." That sounds kind of funny to our ears. None of us, I'm guessing that none of you have ever said, "Do you know what I'm like? I'm like an olive tree." If you said that in our American context people would say, "I think you need help." But not so in David's day, in David's culture, in David's geography. This made perfect sense. The olive tree was a picture of stability. An olive tree could live, and they do live, for hundreds of years. So these trees that were there for generations prior were going to be there for generations to come, were an ongoing testament of strength and stability and fruitfulness, giving fruit that was essential to the economy, giving fruit that was essential to daily life. David says, "I'm like that stable olive tree that abides and is strong and is stable." He's saying, "That's what I'm like." He says, "I have stability in the house of God. In the presence of God, I'm stable. Despite the presence of the wicked that I've been talking about, I'm stable. I'm strong. I am secure. And why am I secure?" Verse 8, "because I'm resting in the loyal love of my God." The character of God endures and it is righteous and it is loyal and it is loving toward his people. It's a complete contrast to the character of the wicked, evil, temporary, destined for judgment. David looks at the character and says, "This is temporary and is going to pass away. It's going to evaporate under God's judgment, but that's not me. I'm resting in God's character of faithfulness and so I am secure. I am strong." You and I are in that position of security. We have hope, we have strength, we have confidence, we have spiritual power no matter what is happening around us. That's the reality of our position.

David goes from the character of God to the end, to the outcome that belongs to those who walk in the way of God. Look at verse 9. It's so sweet. This should just fill you with a sense of anticipation and desire of what yet lies ahead for those of us who know Christ. Verse 9,

9 I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, And I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones.

Do you know what the end of your trust in Christ is? Do you know what the outcome is? Do you know how it turns out for you? Beloved, it turns out like this: you will be in his presence, you will see him face-to-face and with the saints through all the ages, you will be giving thanks and glory to his name in an environment of splendid bliss that is beyond anything that we could ask or think. That's the end. That's the outcome for you. And David says, notice it's kind of interesting the grammar here as it is translated for us here, "I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it." You have done it. The outcome is so certain even though it's still ahead, the outcome is so certain that David can speak about it as a past event. In the mind of God, the outcome for his people is so certain that there is no distinction, there is no condition between what God has promised and what God has already done. They are both of equal certainty and that is the refuge for your soul.

Look at verse 9 again. "O God, I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it." What will I do in the meantime? "I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones." O God, I'll gather with your people and we will trust in the fullness of your character represented by your name. The totality of your character, God, is so good and your sovereignty is so great and you know the way of the righteous and you know that I'm taking refuge in you. So do you know what I'm going to do? I am just going to wait with a sense of security and trust and serenity in my heart while I wait for you to do what I know for certain you're going to do. And how do I know it's certain? Because you've revealed it, because you've promised, and because your promises can never fail. Therefore I'm sure and I'm confident. And because I know your character, because I know the outcome, O God, I am at peace.

So, Christian friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, fellow members of Truth Community Church, what do we do when wicked people rise in power? What do we do when our leaders are opposed to everything we hold dear? Well, first of all, let's just remember three simple principles as we close and we can pick them up from these last two verses here. What does Scripture impart to you to anchor your soul? How do you respond? First of all, you trust God. You trust him. Look at verse 8, David says, "I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever." You trust him. This isn't complicated. You trust him. "But, I've...." No, you trust him. "You don't know..." No, you trust him. "Haven't you seen the..." No, you trust him. And every time those impulses to anxiety burst up in your heart, you preach to yourself and you say, "No, I trust God. Period. That ends the discussion. I trust in the lovingkindness of God."

Secondly, you thank God. Look at verse 9, "I will give You thanks forever and ever." God, rather than living in fear as I see this world going on about me, as even family persecutes me, as laws go against me, in the midst of that, Father, I'm not going to fear. Do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to give you thanks. I'm going to give you thanks for the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm going to give you thanks for your lovingkindness. I'm going to give you thanks that you have blessed me beyond what I deserve. I am going to give you thanks for grace. I am going to give you thanks for the indwelling Holy Spirit. I'm going to give you thanks for the blessed 66 books of the Bible. I'm going to give you thanks for my hope of heaven. I'm going to give you thanks for the people who love me and the way that you show kindness through the body of Christ and within my family. God, there is so much for me to give thanks, I don't have time to dwell on the wicked. I'm going to give you thanks forever and ever. I'm going to give you thanks because your character is good.

So you trust God, you thank God, and finally, you wait on God. Trust God, you thank God, and you wait on him. Beloved, we're not living in a fantasy world here. We're not pretending that life is easy. We're not pretending that it's of no consequence that wicked people rise up around us. We're not saying that at all, what we're saying is that we trust Christ enough to believe that it will be well for us in the end and that is our hope through the trials, through the discouragement, through the wickedness. We trust him for the outcome which we know to be certain, which we know will be good, which we know will

be blessing untold, which we know as Scripture says that "this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory that is beyond all comparison." That's our hope. That's what we're waiting for. That's what we trust God for. That's why we can give thanks. Where is your heart anchored tonight, beloved?

Let's pray together.

*Father, take your word and seal it to our hearts. You are worthy of our trust and of our praise. We know you through our Lord Jesus Christ and we know the outcome. We know the end of all things and it turns out well for us in the end because you know the way of the righteous. And Lord, we are righteous not in our own merit but through faith in Christ. We are reconciled through the blood of a substitute shed on our behalf. We thank you that you have reconciled us to yourself through the shed blood of Christ and now we are secure in that and we rest in that. And if you loved us enough, Lord Jesus, to spill your blood for our sinful souls, how much more now being reconciled to you do we have hope and confidence as we look to the future. You'll never let us go. You'll never fail us. You'll never turn away. You would never give wickedness the final say in your holy sovereignty and so we are peaceful, we are joyful, we are confident as we leave this place tonight.*

*We pray for those who do not know you. We pray for those sinners even in this room who have not yet turned to Christ and we ask for the saving and converting power of your Holy Spirit to be unleashed on their soul in such a magnificent overwhelming way that they bend the knee to Christ even after years of rejection and hypocrisy and hard-heartedness. And Father, for our nation, for our world that just plunges deeper and deeper into darkness, Father, may we ask that you would send a spirit of revival that would reverse the wickedness that we see. Have mercy on others, Father, just as you have had mercy on us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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