

The Defiant

Psalm 94:1-23
Halifax: 19 November 2006

Introduction

Every few weeks we break from our regular sermon series to hear a sermon from a Psalm that relates to the theme of our regular series.

- This Psalm then becomes our “Psalm of Focus” to be sung every week in conjunction with our sermon series.
 - In our present series in Matthew, we are now ready to begin Matthew 24.
 - This is a chapter in which our LORD tells His disciple how Jerusalem and the temple will be completely destroyed.
 - He has been denouncing the scribes and Pharisees as those who will soon shed the blood God’s messengers who come to declare the way of salvation.
 - Jesus disciples have been warned that they will be officially rejected by the Jewish authorities...
 - But in Matthew 24, He tells them God will bring down His vengeance upon these proud and wicked men.
 - Justice will be done and God will be glorified.

We also live in a day when there are many who oppose the true gospel of Jesus Christ, even many who are leaders in His church...

- Like the scribes and Pharisees, they will utilize whatever method seems to be the most effective to suppress the true gospel—and they will do all this in the name of God.
 - This is often very troubling to us as those who truly believe and who are seeking to follow our Lord.
 - These enemies of the gospel are among God’s people, doing all they can to suppress the gospel that brings life!
 - One bunch of them is busy trying to draw away disciples into corruption...we might think of the United Church promoting abortion and Gay marriage...
 - Another bunch of them is trying to lead disciples to trust in rituals or in their own works...we might think of the Roman Catholic church with its reliance on sacraments and traditions in place of Christ.
 - Yet another bunch is trying to lead disciples to rest in their feelings and their spiritual experiences rather than in Christ Himself...
- All these are enemies of the gospel of Christ.

- We need to understand that God will bring down vengeance on them and destroy them, even though they are part of the Church.
 - And because they are enemies of the gospel,
 - We need to ask the LORD to take vengeance on them...
 - And we need to admonish them to repent...
 - And we need to assure ourselves that the LORD will deal with them.

This is not something that we always think to do, especially in our day when imprecatory type prayers in not in fashion.

- But as God calls us to do these things, we need to obey Him...
- And so to help us as we begin to study Matthew 24,
 - I have selected Psalm 94 as our Psalm of focus...
 - In this Psalm, we do exactly what I have just described—in fact, what I have just described is an outline of Psalm 94...
 - That when you see the enemies of the gospel flourishing in their work...you ought to:
 - Ask the LORD to take vengeance on these defiant ones...(1-7)
 - Admonish the defiant ones to repent...(8-15)
 - And assure yourself that the LORD will indeed deal with them. (16-23)
 - You do all three of these things when you sing Psalm 94...

TRANS> Let us now look at each of these parts in turn...

- First, when you sing Psalm 94, you...

I. Ask the LORD to bring down His vengeance on the defiant (1-7)

A. The first two verses are a direct appeal to God to rise up and show Himself to be the God of vengeance that He truly is by punishing the wicked!

1. The burden of the prayer seems to be that God is not known in His true character as the God of vengeance...
 - a. He is twice called the God of vengeance in the first verse...
 - A very literal translation is “O Jehovah, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth!”
 - b. Asking Him to shine forth is to ask Him to show forth His glory as the God of vengeance...
 - To truly make Himself known as such and to let everyone see Him as such.

- To rise up in judgement against His enemies and punish them according to their works.
2. In our day, it seems almost *unchristian* to pray like this...
- a. And brothers and sisters, that is the very reason we **ought** to especially pray like this in our day...
 - precisely because God is **not** known in His glorious character as the God of vengeance.
 - That is one of the main problems with our society...
 - We fancy God as a powder puff, an effeminate God who is safe, a God who does not strike terror in His enemies!
 - And this false picture of God is promoted in almost every branch of the church!
 - We have been taught by false teachers to think this way!
 - b. Yet, God is gloriously revealed as the God of vengeance throughout the scriptures.
 - 1) The very first presentation of the gospel to Adam and Eve after the fall is the promise that the woman's seed will crush the serpent's head!
 - The LORD Jesus Christ is going to destroy Satan and all who are in league with him in his defiance.
 - This is not something to be ashamed of...
 - This is glorious!
 - This is the foundation of our hope!
 - The LORD will not allow Satan and his allies to continue to oppose His righteous government and destroy the beauty of His creation.

TRANS> All through scripture we have God's vindictive judgement presented as terrible and yet glorious...even glorious because it is terrible...

- 2) There is the great flood in Noah's day when the whole earth with the exception of one family is destroyed...
- 3) There is the bringing down of Pharaoh in the plagues of Egypt which is everywhere celebrated as showing that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the LORD (Yahweh).
- 4) There are those grand portraits of our God like that of Isaiah 63 where our LORD Jesus is presented as coming with blood stained garments after
 - trampling His enemies in His fury. He declares:
 - "I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth."

- He declares that this, His day of vengeance, is in His heart...
 - “For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.”
- 5) And these descriptions of the glory of His vengeance are in no way limited to the Old Testament as some want to pretend...
- a) Our LORD Jesus speaks of eternal vengeance: of a Gehennah where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched...
- He explains that His appearance on earth in the flesh was not to condemn the world, but to save it...
 - but He in no way disparages the judgement that will come in the end...
 - He continually presents it as something glorious!
 - As the Day when the Son of Man comes in all His glory with His holy angels with Him!
- b) The Apostle Paul describes this coming of LORD as:
- “the Lord Jesus revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - He says “These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and admired among all those who believe...”
 - His wrath and judgement is not something to embarrassed about, it is the glorious revelation of our God!
- c) Likewise the apostle John, in the book of revelation,
- shows those martyrs who were then perfected in heaven crying out to God to reveal His glory in avenging their blood that was shed on earth...
 - Hallelujahs rise up from the great assembly when the LORD unleashes His wrath upon His enemies.
 - In fact, the word Hallelujah is used exclusively in the NT to praise God for destroying His enemies!
3. And so you see brothers and sisters that you ought to be zealous to see the vengeance of our LORD revealed...
- It is something glorious about our God that we are strangers to and because **we** are strangers to it, our society is even more so.

- The fact that so many don't think the display of God's vengeance is glorious and beautiful does not make it less glorious...
 - it only shows that we are ignorant and blind and do not know our God.
 - We should want God to be known in this way and we should want to see Him in this way ourselves.
 - Ask Him, therefore, to stop hiding Himself from us and to shine forth!
 - This is what you request of Him when you sing verse 1-2...
- B. Then in verse 3-7, you give Him reasons why He ought to bring down His vengeance on the defiant...
1. First of all, because they have triumphed for a long time!
 - Verse 3 says:
 - "LORD, how long will the wicked, how long will the wicked triumph?"
 - a. When you say "How long will the wicked triumph," the clear implication is that they **have** triumphed for a long time...
 - 1) By triumph, it means that they have been successful in obscuring the true knowledge of God and resisting the gospel of grace.
 - They have been successful in their primary business of either drawing or driving people away from Christ.
 - 2) Not that they can truly triumph over God Himself, but they can and do obscure the knowledge of His glory on earth...
 - They are often quite successful in spreading lies about God and obscuring the gospel.
 - b. Obviously, this is not something you should be indifferent about!
 - You are to say,
 - "LORD, how long will this go on? How long will you let them continue to succeed?"
 2. Four aspects of their ongoing wickedness are listed in verses 4-7.
 - You are to let the LORD know that you want Him to stop these things...
 - When you sing this psalm, you are asking Him how long He will let the wicked go on doing these things...
 - a. First, how long will you let them defy you with their words? (v. 4)
 - Verse 4 says: "They utter speech, and speak insolent things; all the workers of iniquity boast in themselves."

- 1) The word “utter” here means to boil forth, or pour forth these insolent words...
 - They will describe the truth about God and say things like, “I could never serve a God like that...”
 - When they hear his law, they say, “Who is the LORD that I should obey Him?”
 - They say daring things like, “How could a good God allow little children to suffer?”

- 2) A person deserves to be slapped down at once for such insolent speaking,
 - But God is very longsuffering with such things and waits to bring His judgements...
 - Nevertheless, this in no way makes persons less deserving of judgement...
 - Like David, we should be greatly offended by such defiance...
 - David was moved to fight against Goliath primarily because Goliath had dared to defy the living God with his insolent words!
 - It was not first of all the oppression of Israel that stirred David to battle, but the boasting of this giant in the presence of God.
 - If you have a heart after God, you ask Him,
 - “How long will you let them speak with such insolence?”

TRANS> But this does not mean that you will not also be stirred up to pray against the wicked because they oppress God’s people...

- This is the second aspect of their wickedness described here:
- b. How long will you let them tear your body in pieces? (v. 5)
 - This is the idea in verse 5:
 - “They break in pieces Your people, O LORD, and afflict Your heritage.”
- 1) Now you know that the people of the LORD are the body of Christ, all joined to Him as their head...united together as one...
 - But the wicked delight to tear apart the body of Christ by heresies...
 - Just as they tore His flesh with their whips when He was on earth.
 - 2) They bring destructive teachings into the church and lead disciples astray after those teachings...

- As we have seen recently, they find the truth in something outside of God's word...
 - they teach disciples to follow the traditions of men,
 - or to put human reason and false science above scripture...
 - or to rely on their popular sentiment rather than God's word.
- 3) They also spread slander against God's true servants to discredit them and cause the LORD's sheep to distrust them...
- They try to make them appear foolish or deceptive or malicious...

TRANS> They do all that is in their power to tear the body apart, the people for whom Christ died!

- Ask the LORD, "How long will you let them go on like this?"
- c. Third, in verse 6, how long will you let them trample upon the weakest members of your people?
- It says, "They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless."
- 1) They are like the Amalekites who attacked the weakest members of the children of Israel... those who were trailing along at the back of the line when God led them through the wilderness...
- The LORD showed His displeasure against the Amalekites and cursed them and told Israel that they were to never forget what they had done!
- 2) Wicked men want to break out of the restraints that God has placed on them to do their wickedness...
- And as they are not always able to overcome the strong, they will attack the weakest ones...
 - They abuse the very ones that God calls them to protect!
 - You boys in our congregation, don't you ever be found striking a girl or a younger child!
 - That is the sin of the Amalekites, and the LORD hates it.
 - Do we not see politicians in our day gaining a popular vote by making it lawful to crush unborn children? (abortion I mean)
 - Soon they will be crushing the elderly as well...calling them a burden to society.
 - They are Amalekites and you should despise their behaviour!

TRANS> Seeing this should make you say, "How long will the LORD let them go on destroying the weak?"

- d. Fourth, you are to ask, how long will you let them dream that your judgement will never reach them? (v. 7)
- 1) Because God has been so long in judging them, they imagine that He does not see or care...
 - “They say, ‘The LORD does not see, nor does the God of Jacob understand.’”
 - 2) Notice the divine names that are used here...
 - a) They say, “The **LORD** does not see...”
 - In our English Bibles, the word “LORD” written in all capitals translates Jehovah or Yahweh, the self-existing one...
 - It is an absurdity and an insult for them to act as if He who is called LORD does not see...
 - No indeed, everything they do is right before His face—and one day, they will know that without a doubt...
 - Do not think because you deceive men and the elders that God does not see!
 - It is the deepest form of depravity to think that God does not see all that you do and think.
 - Yahweh, the self-existing one sees all.
 - b) Then they say “**The God of Jacob** does not understand.”
 - Here, the “God of Jacob” is His name.
 - It speaks of Him as the one who redeemed His people and called them to Himself...
 - They actually imagine that He does not care for His people as they oppress them...
 - This is intolerable...
 - How long will they be allowed to imagine such things before the God of vengeance rises to crush them?

TRANS> Let me ask you, brothers and sisters,

- Is it in your heart to ask God to shine forth in the glory of His vengeance?
 - That is what you are taught to sing in the first seven verses of this Psalm.
- But you must never suppose that by calling down vengeance on the defiant it means you should not care about them...
 - Quite the contrary—even as you ask God to judge them, you ought to tremble for them!

- The wrath of God is hanging over them like a lightning bolt ready to strike at any time!
- Even as you pray that His judgement would be fall on them,
 - you ought to be doing every thing you can to lead them to repentance...
 - You ought to be found urging them to flee from the wrath to come before it is too late!
- Certainly, you want them to be judged if they will not repent, you do not want them to go on forever in their defiance of God...
 - But you would prefer it if they would repent, and so,
 - Even as you call down God's vengeance upon them in this Psalm...
 - You also turn to them and...

II. Admonish the defiant to repent (8-15)

A. You urge them to open their eyes to the truth!

1. You have seen that they have come to dream that God does not see or understand,
 - a. so now you call them come to their senses and realise that **they** are the ones who don't understand...
 - The same word is used in verse 7 where they are said to suppose that God does not **understand** and in verse 8 where you admonish them to **understand**...saying
 - v. 8: "Understand, you senseless among the people; and you fools, when will you be wise?"
 - b. Sometimes, as God's people, you may be deceived by their confidence that what they are doing is okay or that they will not be judged.
 - They can seem so confident and sure of themselves that it can make you think that they must have some basis for all that confidence...
 - But the truth is that their arguments and evasions really are as senseless as they look to you on the surface...
 - I mean,
 - the very idea that this whole world evolved or
 - or that God's word sanctions something as filthy as sodomy (homosexual relations)...
 - Or the very idea that we can become righteous by our own works or that we don't need to be made righteous at all...
 - or the very idea that there is no distinction between the creature and the Creator or between good and evil...

- When you boil it all down, they simply suppose that there is no God in heaven to judge them.
 - It's all every bit as absurd as it appears—
 - and you need to tell them so and tell them with boldness...
 - You need to say,
 - “But there is a God who judges and He has made Himself known in the Holy Scriptures and in Jesus Christ...”
 - “When will you be wise?”
2. Go on and reason with them a little...as you see in verse 9-11...
- a. v. 9: “He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see?”
 - How foolish to suppose the Almighty One who designed eyes and ears does not Himself hear when His creatures speak insolent words and does not see when they oppress His people!
 - b. v. 10: “He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches men knowledge?”
 - Surely God is the source of all knowledge...
 - There would be no knowledge to obtain without Him... it is for us to think His thoughts after Him...
 - As the source of all knowledge, He is the One who gave you that conscience that you are trampling...
 - You know that you are a desperate sinner who has not lived up to His calling and standard...
 - You know good and well that you ought to be giving thanks to your Maker rather than denying Him...
 - Do you not know that He will correct you?
 - Is your heart too hard to accept the obvious truth?
 - c. v. 11: “The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are futile...”
 - Tell them,
 - You have tried to deceive yourself for so long that there is no God to judge you.
 - But He sees right through you...
 - He sees how futile—how vacuous—your thoughts are!
 - They are but a breath!

- You may have fooled men—you may have even truly deceived yourself...
 - but He sees through it all...
 - When will you wake up to the truth?
 - When will you be wise?
 - Surely you see that you need to be reconciled to God.
 - Put away all the nonsense and evasion...
 - Repent and believe on the LORD Jesus.

TRANS> This is what we say to the defiant in verses 8-11...

B. Then we reason with them further to show them how good it is to be taught by the Lord (and so delivered from all our foolish thoughts)

- Verse 12 says,
 - “Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, and teach out of your Law.”
- 1. The word translated **instruct** carries with it the idea of *correction* and *training* that leads to god-centred living...
 - a. Every person is, by virtue of the fall, full of vain and empty god-denying god-avoiding thoughts...
 - the foolish thoughts that we have just looked at that reach the conclusion that there is no God in heaven to judge...
 - that we can reshape God and make Him to be what we want and pretend that He has nothing to say to us and will never deal with us...
 - These are the thoughts that are natural too us in our rebellion...
 - b. What a blessing it is to be corrected!
 - 1) to be taught the truth out of God’s law!
 - The law of God (that is, the Torah), not only teaches us God’s moral law, but it also instructs us in the way of forgiveness and salvation...
 - It teaches us that God will pardon the sins of those who trust in His provision for our sins,
 - And that He will give a new heart filled with love for Him and His Law to all who earnestly seek it.
 - 2) In the Bible, this is called being taught of God...
 - He enables you to see honestly what you really are and to be convicted as a law breaker...
 - so you can do something about it!

- And He presents to you His Son and shows you how He died for your sins and rose again for your justification
 - and how if you will believe in Him, you will find mercy...
 - And at last, He renews your will so that you will turn from your own way to follow Him and to trust Him.
 - All of this is included in the LORD's instruction when he instructs you!
 - How good it is!
2. He teaches you all these things in order that... as verse 13 shows...
- "He may give you rest from the days of adversity until the pit is dug for the wicked."
- a. So that all along the way, even when the whole world seem to be swallowed up in iniquity and futility...
- you are able to have **rest** (tranquility) because of the salvation that He has promised...until the pit is dug for the wicked...
 - You are able to rest in the assurance that God will indeed crush the head of the Serpent and all who are in league with Him...
 - You are able to rest, even while they triumph and prosper in the earth...
 - Their grave is being dug...
 - They are like dead men waiting to be buried.
 - In the midst of the most ferocious persecutions or attacks on the truth that the wicked can every dish out,
 - you can be certain and confident in our LORD.
- b. Verse 14 says we can sure that He will not cast us off because we are His people and His inheritance...
- 1) Though the wicked seem to rend apart the people of God and to devour them,
- they cannot in fact bring the least harm to any one of Christ's sheep.
 - Ps. 91: "Even though a thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, it will not come near you."
 - That does not mean that you will never be persecuted, but it does mean that if you truly belong to the LORD,
 - none of the persecutions will harm you...
 - You will have rest from the days of adversity because God has taught you to trust in Him.

- 2) As Paul put it in Romans 8:
- Romans 8:31-39: What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - No matter how the wicked may rage, you can be certain that if God has brought you into union with Christ,
 - He will never cast you off.
- c. As verse 15 goes on to say, "judgement will return to righteousness."
- 1) What does that mean, "judgement shall return to righteousness"?
- The word **judgement** here speaks of outward government, the state of things and how they are governed...
 - There are times when the government of the world is in the hands of wicked men—
 - I mean, there is a Pharaoh who knows not Joseph or an Ahab with a Queen Jezebel at his side, or a Hitler on the throne...
- 2) Verse 15 is our assurance that such a state of affairs will not last...
- a) The day will come when "judgement" (outward visible government) will return to "righteousness."
- God is certainly reigning over all things in righteousness from the beginning of the world until its end,
 - But it is not until the end that He will fully enforce righteousness and establish it as the only rule...
- b) The LORD is preserving His people for this day and He will surely bring it to pass...
- It is this righteousness that all those who are taught of God yearn for, pray for, and seek to live according to even now...
 - They have been taught of God the way to have this kingdom...
 - And they are waiting in faith for God to bring it to pass...

- c) Does not Peter write of this very thing in 2 Peter 3?
- 2 Peter 3:11: Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.
 - Peter reminds us of the righteous kingdom that God will bring us to and encourages us to seek to live according to its principles even now.

TRANS> And so you see how blessed it is to be taught of the LORD instead of left to our own God-denying confusion.

- Let us be diligent, therefore, to urge the defiant to repent of their foolish imaginations that they may be taught of the LORD.
 - How blessed is the man who is instructed by Him out of His Law!
 - Instead of thinking that God will not judge, those taught of Him come to understand that He will judge and they themselves find the way to His reward!
- But the Psalm does not end here...
 - We are weak and it is not enough for us to speak to the defiant about what the LORD will do for those He teaches...
 - We are easily discouraged when we see wickedness prevailing in the earth...
 - And so in this Psalm, we are also taught to address ourselves as God's people for encouragement...
 - You are to...

III. Assure yourself that the LORD will indeed keep the defiant from harming you (16-23)

- In verse 16, the question is asked,
 - "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for men against the workers of iniquity?"
 - This is your cry when you recognise that the enemy is much greater than you are!
 - Who among the sons of Adam could ever bring down all the unrighteousness that has established itself so firmly in this world?
 - Who among us could ever bring about that new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells?
 - We feel the strength of sin daily even in our own souls...

- Who among us could ever dream of rooting it all out of this world when we can't even root it out of our own hearts?
- We need a deliverer, a Saviour...
- And so we are taught to say,
 - "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?"
 - "Who will rise up for me to crush the serpent's head, to destroy the works of the devil once and for all?"

TRANS> In answer to that question, this Psalm teaches you to assure yourself of two things...

A. First, that it is the LORD Himself who will rise up to keep you in His righteousness so that you will not fall away...

1. You are taught to say...

a. v. 17 "Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul would soon have settled in silence..."

1) By these words, you confess that the LORD alone is your helper and no other.

- He looked and saw that there was none to deliver, so His own arm brought salvation to us!
- As Jonah said when he was delivered from the belly of the fish,
 - "Salvation is of the LORD."
 - He simply could not deliver himself at that point!

2) No one else can pull it off!

- The idea here is that you can't even preserve your own soul in this wicked world...
 - You would be swallowed up and led astray a thousand times a day if it were not for the LORD who helps you.

b. Verse 18 adds,

- "If I say, 'My foot slips,' Your mercy, O LORD will hold me up."
- If you belong to the LORD, this is your own experience...
 - You may come into temptation as Peter did when he denied the LORD,
 - but your LORD intercedes for you and prays that your faith will not fail...as He did for Peter...
- And His mercy always holds you up.

- God has promised to keep you if you are His.
 - The word “mercy” is *Hesed*, His covenant mercy that we looked at in Psalm 36 that is said to be in the heavens,
 - far above the changing scenes of this world!
 - His mercy will rescue you from the wicked’s grasp.
 - You may sin and sin heavily, but your faith does not fail and you do not utterly fall away.
 - He is faithful to continually preserve you.
 - As we saw from Romans 8, nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Christ.
 - It is impossible.
2. This assurance is what keeps you from despair when the world dishes out its very worst...
- Verse 19 says,
 - “In the multitude of my anxieties within me, your comforts delight my soul.”
 - In 2 Corinthians, God is presented to us as the God of all comforts...
 - What greater comfort can there be than the promise that He will keep us to the end,
 - that He will bring us safely into His perfect kingdom of righteousness!
 - Without this comfort, you would despair of following the LORD and would join forces with the rebellious.
 - The LORD Himself brings this comfort to you by pressing His word of promise on your heart.
 - In this way, you are kept by His covenant mercy from despair.

TRANS> And so in verse 17-19, we assure ourselves that the LORD will not allow us to be destroyed by the wicked as we struggle along in this world under their oppression...

- But who would want to continue like this forever?
 - Even though He should keep us,
 - our salvation is not complete until the wicked are actually cut off from the earth so that they can no longer molest us...

B. In verses 20-23, you are taught to assure yourself that the LORD will indeed cut them off—that He will remove them from the earth.

1. This assurance is grounded on the fact that the LORD will not share His throne with the ungodly forever.
 - a. As we have seen, He may allow them in places of authority for a time—
 - There are Ahabs and Manassahs that take the theocratic throne...
 - There are hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees that sit in the seat of Moses...
 - There are ungodly popes and priests and pastors and most reverend so in so that are ordained as His shepherds...
 - And all of these may wield great authority!
 - Their authority is given to them by God Himself....
 - He raises them up for His own purposes...
 - b. These are in a position from which they, as it says in verse 20, “devise evil by law.”
 - 1) This is the worst kind of wickedness of all...
 - It is one thing to have common robbers and bandits come against you to attack you...
 - but it is much worse when the wicked are established as judges and ministers and are able to pronounce judgement on you under the colour of law...
 - When they are able to take Jesus and His followers and charge them as a malefactors and order them to be beaten in God’s name and put on a cross by God’s authority!
 - This is to devise evil by law!
 - It can be quite disconcerting to be charged with doing evil when you have only been following the LORD.
 - 2) But in verses 20-21, you are taught to assure yourself before God that the throne of iniquity will not have fellowship with God...
 - God will lash out against those who have sat as His representatives in our civil courts and our church courts and even as the heads of their own household with a terrifying fury!
 - That He allows them to go on will only make their condemnation all that much greater!
 - God is holy and He will make it clear that He does not at all approve of their actions in His name!
 - They have been given a solemn responsibility and they will be given a solemn judgement for their abuses of their authority!
 - 3) Sometimes it may look like they will go on forever without interference...

- But the very character of God will not allow them to dare to share His throne any more.
2. In verse 22-23 you are taught to assure yourself that the LORD has brought on them their iniquity...
- a. He is putting it all onto their account...
 - 1) Nothing they do goes unnoticed; nothing will be overlooked...
 - 2) Therefore, He has been your defence and your rock of refuge...
 - You are safe because all of their deeds against you will be over ruled.
 - Jesus actually teaches us to rejoice when we are persecuted because our reward will be all that much greater in heaven...
 - No scorn, no reproach, no mocking, no false condemnation that you have borne for Him will be forgotten.
 - You need not take vengeance upon them,
 - vengeance belongs to the LORD and He will be able to administer it quite well...
 - b. And so the Psalm ends with the twice repeated assurance that the LORD will cut them off... in other words, that He will surely do so!
 - 1) "And shall cut them off in their own wickedness; The LORD our God shall cut them off."
 - You see how it says it twice...
 - This is something we are to assure and reassure ourselves of because it can sometimes seem to us that they will continue forever and never see judgement.
 - 2) The LORD will answer the prayer with which this Psalm opens!
 - He will indeed shine forth as the God of vengeance!
 - Wickedness will not continue forever.
 - It is an absolute certainty.
 - His glorious kingdom of perfect righteousness will be established and all those who have been taught by Him will be found rejoicing in that kingdom.
 - He will appear in all the glory of His vengeance!

And so I urge you all who know the LORD...

- Ask your gracious God of vengeance to shine forth...
- Admonish the wicked to repent and learn from Him...
- And assure yourself that your LORD will indeed shine forth to cut off the defiant.