

Tuesday, August 16, 2022 • Read Psalm 64

Questions from the Scripture text: To whom was this Psalm entrusted (superscript)? Who penned it? What does he immediately ask God to do in v1? From what does he ask God to preserve his life? What does he ask God to do to him in v2? As what are the wicked using their tongues (v3)? How do they employ this weapon (v4)? What do they not do (v4b)? What do the wicked do to themselves in v5? Of what do they assure themselves (v5-6b)? Why can't we access others' (and perhaps our own) inward thought and heart (v6c, cf. Jer 17:9)? Who can access, and what does He do to the wicked (v7a)? With what effect (v7b)? Whom does He make the v3a weapon to wound (v8a)? What two things do others do in v8b? What do all remaining men do in v9a? In v9b? Why do they praise Him (v9c)? Who make the three responses in v10? What are those responses?

How can the righteous be delivered from fear of the wicked? Psalm 64 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these eleven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **we ought to expect the malicious and apparently foolproof attacks of the wicked, but when we see them through the lens of Who God is, we are delivered from a state of fear and brought instead into a state of gladness, confidence, and praise.**

The situations that we can expect, v3-6. David asks to be heard, preserved, and hidden in v1-2. v1b presents the greatest danger: fear. But the Lord is a deliverer from fear releasing us from its Satanic bondage (cf. Heb 2:14-15). How does He do that?

Firstly, He gives us reasonable expectations. If God gives us songs for when others use words with the intent of mortal harm (v3), and cleverly execute a seemingly foolproof plan (v4, 6a-b), to get clean away with it (v5)... then why are we surprised when we experience such things in life? Truly, their inward thought and heart are out of both their own range (cf. Jer 17:9) and ours (v6c); so, things may be better than they seem or even much worse. God's Word prepares us to be surprised by neither.

The God through Whom we must view such situations, v7-8. This Psalm turns on that same glorious hinge as in Eph 2:4, "but God." The situation hasn't yet changed, but the "But God" reminds him of how it must end, and that even before it does so, God is already acting according to all of His glorious character.

God is all-wise and knowing (v7a). The depth of men's hearts are out of our range, but not God's. He can see clearly to aim.

God is perfectly powerful and effective (v7b). His arrow always finds its mark.

God is perfectly just (v8a). The weapon from v3a ultimately enters into themselves, a symmetry that declares God's justness.

God is merciful (v8b). Whereas they had comforted themselves that no one would see, not only does God Himself see, but He makes others to see as well. Why? So that others may flee away. When God shows to us the dangers of sin in others, He mercifully warns us off of our own sin, and we should heed that warning.

The corrected response of the righteous, v9-10. Now that the righteous is viewing his situation through the lens of Who God is, his response has shifted 180 degrees. Fear of the enemy in v1b has been exchanged for the fear of the Lord in v9a. Instead of praying about the works of the enemy in v2b, he is declaring the work of God in v9b. Instead of anxiety over the shrewdness of the enemy in v6b, there is wise consideration of God's actions in v9c.

God will bring the righteous finally into that perfect blessedness that Christ, their righteousness, has earned for them. But even before then, the Spirit has given us songs and prayers like this one that bring us from a state of anxious fear to a state of joy, confidence, and praise (v10): joy ("glad in Yahweh"), confidence ("trust in Him"), and praise ("all the upright in heart shall glory").

When the Lord brings us into situations like David's, we may be sure that He intends for us to turn our attention to Him and to exchange anxious fear for that fear of the Lord that brings us into a condition of joy, confidence, and praise!

What people or circumstances is the Lord using to turn you to Himself in joy, confidence, and praise? How are you making use of those circumstances in order to have your heart turned to Him?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for the perfect wisdom in which You order our lives, and for the patient help that Your Word gives us for navigating the more difficult parts. Forgive us for when men seem big to us, and You seem small, resulting in anxious fear. Grant that Your Spirit would direct our hearts unto You, so that upon the hinge of knowing You, we might exchange anxious fear for that holy fear of You. Thus, bring us, we pray, into gladness and trust and glorying in Jesus Christ, through Whom we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP9B "Sing Praise to the Lord" or TPH64 "Hear My Voice, O God"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 64. These are the words of God to the chief musician. A Psalm of David hear my voice. Oh, God. And my meditation preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked from the rebellion of the workers of iniquity.

Who sharpened their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows. Bitter words that they may shoot in secret at the blameless. Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear, They encourage themselves in an evil matter. They talk of laying snares secretly, they say, who will see them.

They devise iniquities, We have perfected, a shrewd scheme, both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep but God shall shoot at them with an arrow. Suddenly they shall be wounded So he will make them stumble over their own tongue. All who see them shall flee away?

All men shall fear and shall declare, the work of God for, they shall wisely. Consider his doing the righteous shall be glad in Yahweh and trust in him and the upright and heart shall glory.

So far the reading of God's inspired. And, and they're in tort the Psalm starts out versus one and two with David crying out for help. And then as he prays and sings under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Lord gives him the very help for which he has asked.

So that when he says, preserve my life from fear of the enemy and then we find at the end of the passage confidence and praising or the end of the psalm confidence and praising. We know that he has been delivered already by the Word of God and meditation upon it.

By calling upon God's name, remembering who God is, has been delivered from fear. This is a reminder to us that we may be delivered from the spiritual danger of a situation without actually having to be delivered yet from the situation. And, of course, part of that is to remember that the righteous who are only righteous through faith in Jesus, and Sophia.

How obedient has Jesus been? He's been perfectly obedient. And how much has he paid for sin? He's paid for all of sin. And so if you have Jesus, if you trust in him, all your sin is paid for and he has earned for you all of the blessing that you can possibly have in heaven and earth and in the new heavens and in the new earth.

And the reason he has earned all these things for us is because this is what his love has desired to give us from before the world begin. And so what his love has desired, he has also accomplished and now his justice demands. And so we know we shall ultimately be delivered from the situation itself but in the midst of the situation we have a greater danger than our enemies and that is the fear of our enemy.

Because if we fear the enemy instead of fearing, God, we might sin against God. This ultimately is what the Lord Jesus has done even with our greatest enemy. Hebrews tells us that he has delivered us from that slavery, to the fear of death because of him who held the power of death.

Who is the devil. And so we see that happening in this Solomon, the words in verse 3, especially to the end of the chapter by which the Holy Spirit and delivers David, from this fear. And by which, we also may be delivered from fear or anxiety in any difficult situation.

But especially when there is someone who is secretly attacking us or focus first on the sorts of things that the wicked are permitted to do and they're permitted. Not in order to punish us but in order to punish them. So the So A we shouldn't be surprised when it happens because we know in to some extent what God is doing.

There's a realization in this Psalm that's similar to the one that is coming up in Psalm 73 when he says I went to worship and then I saw there and they shall fall all at once. The Lord has set them and slip. Slippery places etc. So we see first, what the wicked are permitted to be like, what God suffers them or bears long with them, indoors them to be like, as he works out, his saving purposes, towards those whom he is bringing to faith.

And in the second place, we see several wonderful characteristics about God. And then in the third place, we see how the believing heart responds to these truths about God. So he starts with his attention, it's calling out to God, but he starts with its attention, especially to the wicked.

And then he turns his attention to God and who God is and what God is doing, makes who the wicked are and what they are doing recede into the background. We need to do this, especially if we are find ourselves often thinking about a particular person, and what they might be planning or thinking, or, or intending towards us.

We need to remember that. God is the greater person in the equation and turn our thoughts to Him. So that our primary response will not be fear and anxiety or resentment or hostility or art or betterness or whatever. It is towards the person towards the enemy, but since God is the primary person to whom to respond our response to the situation will instead be things like trust and confidence and praise and rejoicing.

Which, of course, if you have to choose between those two sets of things to be the condition and experience of your heart, truly God has given us the better part, much better to spend our lives in trust and confidence, and peace, and praise and rejoicing. So what are the wicked permitted often to be like, what should we not?

Be surprised to find them acting like, Well, they're hostile. Even murderous, they sharpen their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows. These are as Psalm 7 says, when it's God with the sword and with the arrows, These are instruments of death. But when the wicked prepare, their instruments of death, We remember that.

God is preparing his and who do you think will win The Wicked? Or God. God, of course, he will be the one who wins, but we should not be surprised that the wicked are murderous. And even when it's not physical murder, they seek to do things like murder names and murder, our good intentions and service unto God, They seek to undermine all that is good to tear away the foundations.

Like Psalm 11 says So they are murderous and they're clever so they think and so they feel to themselves and if we forget God so we may end up feeling about them and yet, if we remember God, then suddenly they supposed cleverness of the wicked evaporates like morning mist.

Havel vanity in the Bible or cotton candy, which evaporates. And if you there is such a horrible creation. I don't know if there is as sugar-free cotton candy. I think that would be That would be what the wicked are like. Not only does it evaporate but it leaves the taste not as sweetness but of poison and bitterness in your mouth.

Like sucking on a rock of red 40, they shoot in secret at the blameless, they suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear. Okay. So they figure out a way that they think they're getting away with it. But remember our catechism lesson yesterday and the words before me, They think they're getting away with it as they shoot their arrow or swing with their sword but who is standing right in front of them a whom they shoot and through whom they must swing God.

That's right. Sophia. Do you think they can injur, God, No. Of course not. Do you think God will punish them? Yes he will. So they are encouraging themselves but they're deluded, they're insane. And we should take that to heart about our own sin, all sin is an insanity and a delusion.

We must remember God. The Lord help us meditating upon his word lifting our hearts to Him, never to forget him for a moment of our life not just so that we'll be encouraged against the threats of the wicked. But so that we'll encourage that we don't participate in the same types of thoughts.

As the wicked are actions, is the wicked that we will be driven by the memory of God. To love him who has loved us and serve Him. Who strengthens us for serving him? They talk of laying snares secretly, They say, who will see them? Well, I think even Sophia knows who will see them.

Exactly right. But the wicked is a fool. He has said who's told himself in his heart, what he knows to be a lie. He says in his heart, there is no God, even though he

knows it's a lie and everything he does is dependent upon the idea that God does not exist or that.

God does not see. Even though he knows the opposite is true. They devise iniquities, We have perfected, a shrewd scheme, both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep and that means that we can't get at their inward thought and we can't get at their heart. Often, we start to think about and wonder what other people are thinking.

Or planning or intending Fact of the matter is you can't know entirely what they are. We may be misperceiving. Oh, or it may be a great deal worse than we could have. Imagine it's out of our reach. It's out of our range. If you're a military guy and you're using different kinds of weapons, you have to know what the effective range is of whatever particular weapon or ordinance.

It is that you're using. God has no. What's such limitations? His range is from zero to infinity and his effectiveness is a hundred percent every time. So the inward thought and the heart of man are deep. They're out of our range. But God, she'll shoot with them with an arrow.

And so, you remember yesterday, when we were reading through Ephesians and we got in chapter two, and we were describing not only the condition of the I'm sorry. Not only the condition of the Gentiles, the sons of disobedience. But also those who are in the church who had the Word of God, who had the promises of Christ.

But all no, both those outside and those inside were by nature children of wrath. And then there was that wonderful phrase but God who was rich and mercy because of the great love with which He loved us. Well, there's another wonderful but God here in verse 7, isn't there After describing what the wicked are like and what we can expect people whom we encounter in our lives to be like.

And therefore if God gives us songs to sing and prayers to pray in response to such people, what fools we would be. If we encounter such people in our life and we say, I can't believe there's such a wicked person with such wicked intentions and who sings like they could get away with it.

Well if only there had been a message from God that there would be such wicked people with such wicked intentions who seem like they could get away with it. Okay. So let us not be surprised but on there that's not just not be surprised. Let us remember the wonderful but God And that's the second a big section of this all.

I'm not only what the wicked are like, but what God is like, First thing, God is like, is he is wise and he knows all things and he knows what to do in every situation. But God shall shoot at them with an arrow. Okay. So he's wise the inward thought and heart of man is deep.

We can't see it. God can see it and God can see it well enough to cite them in and shoot his arrow. He knows exactly what is happening, and exactly what to do about it. He's wise And the second place. He's powerful, suddenly they shall be wounded. So first shot with the arrow, they think they're safe inner thoughts of the harder deep and the arrow goes right through it's like the the guy at the other end of the two mile Canadian sniper shot in Afghanistan.

Could not have possibly entered into his mind that someone was taking a shot at him, And it was several seconds from between when the shot leaves the muzzle. And when the, when the shot enters, the man and kills him. But suddenly the, the arrow arrives or the bullet arrives, and he's dead.

God has a perfect power and the perfect deficiency is wise. He's powerful. He's also just verse 8, so he will make them stumble over their own tongue. You see the justice? The symmetry of it. This particular case, there were the people are planning murderously and their weapon of choice is the tongue verse 3, who sharpened their tongue like a sword.

And so the word picture is then sticking there prepared sword in the back. And it's almost like there's, you know, the one of those dimensional portals. They stick their sword in and it strikes, the mark and the tip of their sword comes out of their own chest as it entered their own back.

So he will make them stumble over their own tongue. Feel even use the very wickedness that they had intended and they're deluded self-deceived, foolproofness of their scheme, to take them out, You see the justness of that the justice of God. And so as David in verse 7, turns his thoughts to God and he says, but God, He sees immediately the wisdom of God and the knowledge of God.

He sees immediately, the power of God, He's immediately. The justice of God. There's even the mercy of God second part or Second part of verse 8. All who see them shuffly away. How important it is for us to see that one of the things that God does when he punishes the wicked is he makes us all snap to our senses and realize there is someone who sees there is someone who repays You don't get away with sin and yet we are often foolish in our hearts and we don't take the lesson.

How many? See the dreadful consequences that come upon all sorts of wickedness and yet continue in the same path. The, you know, the drunk who hears about his friend, who whom he's been drinking at the bar every night for years and he dies as liver is destroyed. And yet he is there getting drunk.

The next night at the same bar, you know, lifting a glass to his pal, who just perished doing the very same thing that destroyed him. You know, the families who hear about the grown child who has gone away from the faith even though there were quote, unquote brought up in the church, but the families life was filled with activities instead of the worship of God.

And there was not the wholehearted following after God that Deuteronomy 6 describes and there was, there was not the constant evaluation of everything out of love for God. And the instruction of God, that Ephesians 6 commands. And they say, oh well they brought them up right? I guess I guess some kids just go away word and they continue with their own younger.

Set of children. What their friends had done in ignorance of negligence of God's word and then their children too are destroyed. God is merciful to allow us to see the consequences of others behavior and we need to respond to that mercy. But changing our own behavior before we suffer the same consequences.

We see the mercy of God in verse 8, all who see them shall fly away. So, you have the wisdom of God, the power of God, the justness of God, the mercy of God. And then of course the praise of God all men, shall fear and shall declare, the work of God for, they shall wisely, consider His doing The first part of responding to the character of our God is to praise him.

And so that is at the end in verse 10, when he finally returns to, I hope himself includes himself among the righteous in verse 10. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord. Okay. So joy, the right. Tourists shall trust in him confidence and all in the upright. All the upright and heart shall glory.

Praise Notice. He's still in his situation but he's been turned from fear to joy confidants and praise. And the hinge on when it, which it turned was verse 7. But God, when you are in a situation of anxiety or fear, turn the situation on that. Perfect, hinge. But God, redirect your attention towards in the situation.

Doesn't go away. But instead of seeing God through the lens of the situation, see the situation through the lens of God and you can shift from fear and anxiety to glad in the Lord's joy. Trust in him confidence and all the upright and heart shove glory. Praise, let's ask him to work those things into our hearts, by his spirit.

Oh Father. How we thank you for giving us such a Psalm as this for such a time as this truly. Oh Lord, you know how frail and fickle of heart? We are that we often feel like we're in the midst to fear and anxiety. Thank you for the way that even these worship.

Times act for us as that. Hinge turning our attention back to you. We pray that your spirit would make us not to do that only in worship times, but that he would be with us and bringing your word to mind and making our hearts to say. But God, so that we can swing from fear of man to fear of you which issues forth in gladness and in trust.

And in glory, do this for us? We ask throughout our lives more and more. As you grow us by the grace of the Lord Jesus. And the knowing of the Lord Jesus, which we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.