

Psalm 58 • Surely there is a God who judges on earth

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Psalm 58. This is one of those Psalms that reminds us that God is righteous and He is the righteous judge of the earth. If that puts a scary thought in your heart, then stick with me to the end of this Psalm, okay?

David writes,

"1 Do you indeed decree what is right, you gods?"

(And he's not talking about the God of heaven, he's talking about others. He says,)

"Do you judge the children of man uprightly?"

2 No, in your heart you devise wrongs; your hands deal out violence on earth.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.

4 They have venom like the venom of a serpent, like the deaf adder that stops its ear,

5 so that it does not hear the voice of charmers or of the cunning enchanter.

6 O God, break the teeth in their mouths; tear out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord!

7 Let them vanish like water that runs away; when he aims his arrows, let them be blunted.

8 Let them be like the snail that dissolves into slime, like the stillborn child who never sees the sun.

9 Sooner than your pots can feel the heat of thorns, whether green or ablaze, may he sweep them away!" (ESV)

And by the way, that's just a reference to...Thorns and thistles were used as kindling. And they would burn them. They weren't good for much else. And so, they would take thorns, thorny vines and that sort of thing. And they would use them for fuel. And they would... They burn pretty quickly but they burn hot. And so, he says, "*Sooner than your pots can feel the heat of thorns,*" may he sweep them away."

"10 The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; (In other words, the vengeance of God) he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 Mankind will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous, (And then this last line, look at this) surely there is a God who judges on earth."

And so, you have one of these psalms that emphasizes the fact that God is the judge. And we know from the Bible that God has reserved a day for judgement. That's not to say that God isn't judging all the time. I mean that, there isn't the ongoing work of God's judgment in small ways. But we know that there is a day that He has reserved for judgment.

Jesus told many parables that depicted the judgment to come, in which usually there was a separation of the people from God and those who are of the world. And you'll remember in his vision the Apostle John saw Jesus riding forth. And we know that this will be fulfilled in the second coming of Jesus. And here's what he said he saw in Revelation chapter 19.

Revelation 19:11 (ESV)

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it, is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, (and look at this) and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

And then if you skip down just a few verses to verse 15, it says,

Revelation 19:15 (ESV)

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

This isn't one of our most favorite subjects, I supposed, to talk about when we talk about judgment and wrath. But I want you to understand something about God's wrath. And I think this is an important perspective.

You guys know that God is holy. God's wrath is an expression of His holiness. Okay. When God's holiness meets man's sin, there is a reaction and that is wrath. And it can't be any other way. But you have to understand that the holiness of God and what it's all about.

You see, God created this universe, He created this world and He created you and I. Sin is an intrusion on that creation. It's destroying it. And God's reaction to sin is the same reaction of a mother who is thinking about her young child who has cancer. And God hates sin the same way a young mother hates the cancer that is slowly stealing the life of her child.

That is God's response to sin. He hates it because it is ruining... It's stealing the life out of that which He created. That's why He hates it in your life. It's why He hates it in my life. It's why He hates it in the church. It's why He hates it in the world. It's stealing the life out of every good thing that He made. And His holiness must respond with wrath.

Now, having said all that, I know that there are a good many believers who have great fears whenever topic of judgment arises. And I get that. But I want you to know that if you are in Christ today, and what I mean by that is, if you're trusting what Jesus did on the cross for your sins, your fears are unfounded. And here's why, God's wrath has already been spent for you on His Son. And therefore, it's done. It's over. His wrath has been taken care of.

There's a word that we run into in our Bibles called, propitiation. Have you ever run into that in your Bible? He is the propitiation of our sins. Do you know what that word means? It means to take away wrath, to remove wrath. Jesus is the propitiation of our sins because He removed God's wrath. How? By taking it on Himself. He bore the wrath of God for you and I.

Now, what is our response? What is our response? Look at 1 John 4:17 and 18.

1 John 4:17-18 (ESV)

By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

"By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, (Do you have confidence for the day of judgment?) because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love."

You see, if you're afraid of judgment, you have not yet been perfected in Christ's love. That doesn't mean you're not a Christian, it just means you have not been perfected in His love. Meaning that, you have not embraced fully the love of God shown you through Jesus Christ, His son, which has taken the wrath of God, been your propitiation, removed that wrath from your life, and now set you free to have no fear. No fear.

I have said this many times from this pulpit, I'll say it again. If God on the day of judgment, brings up one sin in your life, then what Jesus did on the cross wasn't enough. And He was wrong when He said, *"It is finished!"* (John 19:30) Because *"It is finished!..,"* means, paid in full. And that means your sin, the penalty of your sin and my sin, was paid in full.

When you get ahold of that, this passage here begins to resonate in your heart in ways that it never could before. And you begin to understand what it means to be perfected in love. And it drives out fear. I have no fear of standing before the throne of God in judgment. I have no fear of that, because I know that my Savior already did it for me. I know that He did it and He did it perfectly. And He did it completely.

And I believe that His statement, *"It is finished!.."* was for me. For every last dirty, stupid thing I've ever done or said or thought, it's finished, Paul. It's done. I've taken it away. I have expunged the wrath of God on your behalf. And now what is my position? Romans 8:1.

Romans 8:1 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

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People, that's what judgment is all about. It's about condemnation. Those who are... Those who will be judged will be condemned. Condemnation is a judgment word. And what does the word of God say to you and I? It doesn't even exist anymore. It's not in our universe. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It's just not... It can't be found. Because Jesus was condemned on our behalf.

And eventually every believer has to just really settle their heart in this thing. Either Jesus was judged for your sin or He wasn't. And if He was, you have nothing to be fearful about, as it relates to judgment.