

**“Jealous for the Glory of God” Psalm 74 Sunday
10:30AM 9/16/18**

Sometimes, because of what we are seeing and what we are feeling, we wonder if God might have forgotten about us. When the enemy appears to have the upper hand, when God is not stopping the growing tide of evil in our culture, when our past sins accuse us, we can find ourselves living with our backs pinned against the wall. This message reveals how the Father uses these seasons to develop a deep sense of urgency in His children. These are the seasons when we cannot go a day longer without the breakthrough of God’s glory exploding upon the world in which we are living.

I. What the Psalmist Was Sensing (1-8)

A. The absence of presence (1) - “O God, why do You cast us off forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?”

The Psalmist speaks on behalf of Israel who could not deny her sins. The implication here is not that Israel had been unjustly disciplined by God. The issue is how long the discipline would last. How long would God’s children sense the displeasure of the Father?

B. The absence of promise (2) - “Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your heritage! Remember Mount Zion, where You have dwelt.”

So often in Scripture, when the people of God were experiencing the reaping of the bad seed they had sown, we find them calling out to God in repentance, reminding Him of the unbreakable covenant He gave them. Notice the Psalmist’s repeated appeal when he cries, “Your congregation...You have purchased of old...You redeemed...Your heritage...where You have dwelt.” The strongest appeal for God to act on our behalf is not our own worthiness. The great foundation for seeking God to move is when we are motivated by His unbreakable promises, His irrevocable covenant, and His own glory. This is what the Psalmist is doing here.

C. The absence of honor (3-8) - “Direct Your steps to the perpetual ruins; the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary! 4 Your

foes have roared in the midst of Your meeting place; they set up their own signs for signs. 5 They were like those who swing axes in a forest of trees. 6 And all its carved wood they broke down with hatchets and hammers. 7 They set Your sanctuary on fire; they profaned the dwelling place of Your name, bringing it down to the ground. 8 They said to themselves, "We will utterly subdue them"; they burned all the meeting places of God in the land."

The Psalmist then highlights the advances that the enemy is making in the absence of any reversal from God. When we look around our world and see the rising tide of violence, injustice and immorality, we cannot help but to be provoked in our spirits. There is a deep agitation within the believer when the character, name and glory of Christ is buried beneath the sewage of the works of the flesh. If we are not careful, we can become like those who shrug at the increase of evil in our generation. The Psalmist was different. He specified to God all the unjust wrongdoing that taking place. Specifically, he highlights to the Lord to ruins which had occurred at the temple, the very place where God's glory was to be manifested. In essence, the Psalmist is telling on the enemy. He is provoked in his own spirit at the progress and apparent upper-hand that the enemy is revealing. He is asking God to do something to halt the enemy and restore His glory to the place of ruin and loss.

II. What the Psalmist Was Asking (9-11)

A. Where are the voices of the prophets? (9) - "We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long."

Now the Psalmist looks at the people of God to address the absence of power and the loss of prophetic voices in the land. The power for miraculous signs had vanished. There seemed to be no evidence of God's activity. The communication of Heaven's agenda had also gone silent as prophets were no longer speaking the Word from the Lord. People seemed to be wondering how long this would continue. This is the substance of Kingdom urgency: when we see the evidence of the enemy's activity rising while simultaneously noting the diminishing of God's ways, words and works. God raises up people in each generation who shout from the spirits, "Enough is enough!"

Psalm 119:126 - It is time for You to work, Lord: for they have despised Your law.

B. Where is the refuting of the lies? (10) - “How long, O God, is the foe to scoff? Is the enemy to revile Your name forever?”

Perhaps the most alarming component of this overwhelming awareness of the need for God’s glory to breakthrough is the growing acceptance of the enemy’s lies in the land. The children of God have their beliefs mocked. Biblical values are scoffed and scorned. The very name of Jesus Christ is reviled while the objects of false systems of religion are embraced and honored. We ask God to arise and defend His name. We await His response to establish His glory in the land and to silence the foes of the Gospel. Undoubtedly, when we see no move of Heaven, it creates in us an increased unease of the soul. We find ourselves jealous for the glory of God. Lesser desires are placed on the backburner and the thirst for revival begins to flavor who we are, what we speak and how we pray. The massive sense of Kingdom injustice arises when the name of King Jesus and the messaging of His holy reign is muzzled while the communication of a fallen world is amplified.

C. Where is the vindication of your glory? (11) - “Why do You hold back Your hand, Your right hand? Take it from the fold of Your garment and destroy them!”

Now the Psalmist expresses his irrepressible desire for God to DO SOMETHING. He cannot bear the thought of another day of prolonging this season where God’s glory is detested. The Psalmist cries out for a response from Heaven. He asks God why He is being still and silent. He goes so far in his jealousy for the glory of God to be manifest that he requests that God act immediately and destroy all that opposes His name. While we might not be comfortable with the extreme request for God to kill all his human enemies, we should also not be comfortable with the opposite extreme: silence and indifference by believers when the glory of God is being held in contempt in a generation.

III. What the Psalmist Was Declaring (13-17)

A. Who God is (12) - “Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.”

Perhaps the Psalmist was now sensing the need to still himself as he waited on God to act. When evil abounds, and the enemies of the cross seem to prosper, a beautiful discipline for believers is for us to quiet ourselves and remind one another who God is. The Psalmist begins this process in this verse by reminding himself of the longevity of God's faithfulness and ability to provide deliverance for His own children. He places God atop the power-structure in the universe. He centers himself in the reality that God is the sovereign King over everything. Though He might be still in the moment, He has proven that He cannot ever be said to have disengaged. Even His stillness and silence are part of His battle plan to destroy the works of the devil.

B. What God did (13-15) - “You divided the sea by Your might; You broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan; You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. 15 You split open springs and brooks; You dried up ever-flowing streams.”

Earlier in verse 9, the Psalmist lamented that there were no signs to validate the presence and power of God. When we do not see God's wonders in the present moment, let those glorious manifestations from the past serve to silence our present fretfulness. Has God not performed last minute wonders in the past? Does He not show himself mighty to part Red Seas and halt the flow of Jordan Rivers? When flood waters of circumstance are rising against us and while our own personal Pharaoh is chasing us down, God knows how to make a way when there seems to be no way. While the Psalmist did not see God's hand moving early and quickly, he did discipline his soul to wait on the Lord and be of good courage. God sometimes waits until last moments before bringing us the answers and relief we crave.

C. Where God reigns (16-17) - “Yours is the day, Yours also the night; You have established the heavenly lights and the sun. 17 You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; You have made summer and winter.”

God rules comprehensively over both time and space. When the Psalmist mentions to God that His dominion encompasses both day and night, He is declaring that God is supreme over time. When he mentions the stars and the sun, He is testifying to God's reign spanning all of the cosmos. When he speaks of the boundaries of the earth, he is highlighting that human activity and the created order all have their boundaries fixed by His authority. Nothing is

permitted to go beyond the limits which God has established. He does not honor the human clock. He does not obey time as humankind views it. God reigns. And He reigns over everything at all times. This reality is not meant to breed fatalism in us. It must not create apathy in us either. The fact that God reigns over everything should prevent us from panicking when we cannot discern His movements. It should also motivate us to long for the glory of His dominion to be released across the earth.

IV. How the Psalmist Fights (18-23)

A. Rooted in the glory of God (18) - “Remember this, O LORD, how the enemy scoffs, and a foolish people reviles Your name.”

Do you notice how the Psalmist seems to have calmed himself a little? He earlier demanded from God, “How long?!” Now he is requesting of God to note and remember what the enemy is currently doing. He appeals to God on the basis of God’s own glory. It is not just for the enemy to go on scoffing at the name of the Lord. It is an affront for foolish people who do not know wisdom to be allowed to go on reviling the holy name of God. The Psalmist is just about done presenting his case before the Lord. These final verses serve as a closing argument for the Psalmist as he indicts the wicked of his generation and petitions the Lord for justice.

B. Convinced of the promises of God (19-20) - “Do not deliver the soul of Your dove to the wild beasts; do not forget the life of Your poor forever. 20 Have regard for the covenant, for the dark places of the land are full of the habitations of violence.”

While the Psalmist has strong and offended words about the enemy, his tone changes when he speaks to God of himself and his fellow believers. He is 100% dependent upon the grace, compassion and mercy of God. He refers to God’s people as the doves of God. Doves are harmless and defenseless. He asks God not to allow the enemy, the wild beasts, to consume the doves of God. While the enemy has prospered, the believers are described as being the poor of God. The Psalmist asks the Lord to be their defender as He remembers His irrevocable covenant which He has made with them. Rather than telling God why he and his countrymen deserved to be delivered, the Psalmist properly chooses humility and dependence as his themes. He is asking God to rescue them from an enemy who has gotten the upper hand against the people of God.

C. Appealing to the justice of God (21-23) - “Let not the downtrodden turn back in shame; let the poor and needy praise Your name. 22 Arise, O God, defend Your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at You all the day! 23 Do not forget the clamor of Your foes, the uproar of those who rise against You, which goes up continually!”

With the final stanza of his song, the Psalmist asks for restoration. He does not wish for them to finish their lives in shame while the enemy mocks and scoffs at God. He mentions again, “...Your cause...You...Your foes...who rise against You.” When we are jealous for the glory of God we will live with this type of urgency. We will stop making our prayers based solely on our isolated needs, our individual wants, our pitiful petitions for mere survival. When we live in urgency, our primary thirst is for the great name of Jesus Christ to be magnified in a world which despises Him. We will burn with a thirst for righteousness in the land and a great manifestation of God’s personhood and presence to cover the earth.

5:00PM Notes Below

“A Lifestyle of Urgency” Proverbs 6:6-11 Sunday 5:00PM 9/16/18

In God’s Word there is frequently found a call to engagement with Him. The father summons us or partner with Him to accomplish whatever it is that He is doing. In ancient times, a king’s invitation was not meant to be answered but, rather, obeyed. It is no different with God’s call on our lives. In this message, God cautions us about our procrastination, excuses and reluctance concerning His mission. He points believers to one of the smallest creatures on the planet - the ant- and asks us to learn from it. How can an ant teach us about living with Kingdom urgency? In the example from the ant, God calls us to preparation, proactivity and persistence. Anything less reveals that we lack the urgency that faithful believers are called to manifest in every generation.

I. Our need for humility (6)

“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.” **Look, listen learn**

Scripture never endeavors to flatter its readers. God is not into ego-building. If anything, the truths of Scripture seek to take us down off of self-made pedestals and put us on the level ground of Kingdom reality. In opening up instruction about what it means to live diligently and urgently, we are pointed toward a seemingly unimpressive creature. When humans see ants we usually do one of two things: avoid them or crush them. The writer of Proverbs 6 calls us to intentionally consider the ways of the ant. He does not do this for scientific education. He wants us to learn something about spiritual commitments from the tiny, lowly world of the ant. We are summoned here to learn from the ant and gain wisdom in the Kingdom. How humbling this is that God can train us in our soul with a creature that most of us would rather crush under our feet.

II. Our need for initiative (7-8)

“Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, 8 she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.”

The first lesson we receive from the ant is rooted in the ant’s commitment and ability to take initiative and do its work without being directly supervised. There is no chief fueling over each ant in the colony. These small creatures are driven by an instinct that teaches them what to do, how to do it, and the manner in which their individual part cooperates with the entire colony. What an amazing thing in God’s Kingdom occurs when

His own children do not wait until they are compelled, recruited or forced into Kingdom industriousness. There is no begging of the ant to do her job. There are no threats nor guilt hovering over her if she refuses to budge. God has hardwired this tiny insect to instinctually engage in the work of the colony. Notice also that the ant works in one season in order to provide for the next season. The ant understands the labor-now-receive-later reality in the natural order. Likewise, every Jesus-follower who is walking in the Spirit will live with an instinct of laying down his or her life for the good of the King, laboring and sacrificing in the present time in order to store up reward for eternal Kingdom. Again, the ant is compelled by its DNA to do what it does in nature. Our spiritual DNA shifts when we are saved. We no longer operate according to the natural order of things. We enter into a greater order, a spiritual order. We no longer long to live for self. We view ourselves as a small (but significant) part of a much larger work being done through us and other believers. Spirit-led believers do not need to be guilted, manipulated or begged to do the work of the Kingdom. Any presumed believer who consistently avoids Kingdom assignments and opportunities, who must always be prodded toward sacrifice of time and resources, or who requires another believer to constantly oversee them in order for them to finish faithfully reveals that their spiritual DNA has likely never been changed. The ant lives by natural, instinctual initiative. The Christian lives by Spirit-fueled initiative.

III. Our need for awakening (9)

“How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?”

So much for seeker-sensitive approaches! The writer of this Proverb now sounds an alarm. He exposes the elephant in the room: some people are not living with any semblance of Kingdom instinct. Whether it is church work, foreign mission work, secular work or artistic work, we are to live proactive lives of intentional outflow. There is no distinction with God between what we view as sacred or what we call secular. God has birthed His very nature within us and we are reflections of His glory in all that we are and all that we do. The believer who is living with an appropriate understanding of Kingdom urgency will live with reasonable level of motivation. Not everything emotionally motivates us. We often lack the natural physical drive to complete our assignments. Sometimes we find ourselves overtaxed and under-resourced. The temptation might be to give in to a fatalistic heart posture of pulling the covers over our eyes and laying there as we hope what is required of us will go away. This verse awakens us out of a potential lifestyle of apathy, laziness or neglect. While it is a beautiful Kingdom truth that we have been granted rest in Christ,

this must not be interpreted as being granted perpetual leisure as a believer. Our works do not save us, but they clearly bring great glory to God in a generation that slumbers its way toward judgment. The two questions posed here are actually one alarm: you have wasted enough precious time and now is the appointed moment for you get up and get moving. This is not an appeal made to our emotions or intellect. This alarm goes straight into our human will. We have a choice to make.

IV. Our need for warning (10-11)

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.”

As has already been noted, God’s grace does not nullify our call to diligent labor. There is a principle that we all must embrace. A constant commitment to rest, leisure and retreat will not produce what is required of any of us. Show up on payday when you have not clocked in that week - see what you have awaiting you. Refuse to deal with the weeds in your yard at the beginning of Spring and see what kind of turf surrounds your home at the end of Summer. If we continually neglect our relationships then it is unreasonable to be surprised at why they fall apart. In these examples and countless others, we recognize the Kingdom reality that you not only reap what you sow, you reap in proportion to how much you sow. The writer states in this verse that our unwillingness to engage and be proactive eventually serves to rob us of what we desire and need. In fact, his language illustrates that the neglect takes place over extended time, little by little, but the undesirable result pounces on us like an ancient mugger. Christians must remain alert about the little-by-little tactic of the enemy. He does not mind bringing ruin to our lives incrementally. If we refuse incremental laziness then we will prevent the disastrous consequences of forfeiture of fruit, blessing and reward. While unlocked doors are an invitation to human thieves to come and plunder, laziness and lack of proactive urgency about Kingdom matters are easy ways for the most fulfilling aspects of life to be removed from us. We need this warning.

Also, for those who might protest that this sounds like restless legalism, it was the Apostle Paul who wrote, **“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”** - 1 Cor. 15:10. The man who wrote more about grace than any other biblical writer teaches here that true grace produces vigorous labor in the lives of believers.