

Psalm 5: Sinners And Saints

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- [0 : 00] I'm going to open your Bibles up to Psalm 5. We're looking at a few psalms this month. Next week we'll have a guest preacher. I'll be here. I'm not going anywhere, but we'll have a guest preacher, a missionary, who's going to come and share with us from the scriptures about missions, and he'll share a little bit about what he's going to be doing.
- He and his family are going to be moving to India next month, and so I'm excited to have... His name is Wiley Jenkins, and he lives here in Kingwood right now, and is a member of another church in the area, but he's going to come and share with us.
- And then after that, we'll begin a new series in the book of Romans. But right now, we're in Psalm 5 this morning, and so I want you guys to stand as we read these 12 verses. Begins with the inscription, To the choir master, for the flutes, a psalm of David.
- Give ear to my words, O Lord. Consider my groaning. Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to You do I pray.
- O Lord, in the morning You hear my voice. In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You, and watch. For You are not a God who delights in wickedness.
- [1 : 12] Evil may not dwell with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes. You hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies.
- The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. But I, through the abundance of Your steadfast love, will enter Your house.
- I will bow down toward Your holy temple in fear of You. Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of My enemies. Make Your way straight before Me.
- For there's no truth in their mouth. Their inmost self is destruction. Their throat is an open grave. They flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God.
- Let them fall by their own counsels because of the abundance of their transgressions. Cast them out. For they have rebelled against You. But let all who take refuge in You rejoice.
- [2 : 19] Let them ever sing for joy and spread Your protection over them that those who love Your name may exult in You. For You bless the righteous, O Lord. You cover him with favor as with a shield.
- Thank You, Father, for, through Your Spirit, inspiring David to write these words so that we might be built up this morning. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.
- How many of you ever get a sense? Do you ever just sort of feel like there's something just sort of missing in general from life? that maybe you're kind of in the middle of the mix of life?
- Maybe you're in that stage of life where you have kids like we are and you're really busy all the time and there are moments when you go, is this kind of it? Because I'm in the middle of it. I'm in the middle of life.
- Is this it? Because it feels like that sometimes there's something that's just not quite there. Or maybe you've already come through that and you're looking on the tail end and you're going, huh, that was good.

- [3 : 27] That was really good. That stage of life was good, but now having passed through that stage and raised my kids and now I'm looking and thinking, but it wasn't all satisfying.
- There's something, there's some sort of peace that at times felt like I was missing. Or there are times when you're just sort of in the stillness and quietness of life, when you lay down at night to go to sleep or when you find yourself alone, sometimes you begin to say, Lord, do you have something bigger in mind for me?
- Is there something else that you want me to do? Because I feel like maybe there could be something more between you and me. I feel like maybe there may be something bigger that you want me to do. And while there may be a lot of reasons for those kinds of feelings to sort of pass in and out of our minds and our hearts throughout life, I think one of the reasons that we encounter those kinds of thoughts, those kinds of feelings, is because what we lack is not excitement in our life.
- What we lack at times is a strong, intimate connection with the Lord in those moments. We are prone to think that God's greatest works always happen in the midst of great adventures.
- Maybe in the midst of some severe trial and persecution, you think, that's when God does His greatest work, and often it is. Often it is. Or you think, God's greatest work happens when people really do go to those hard places.
- [4 : 55] They go on the mission field to places like India or places in Southeast Asia where you can be persecuted for your faith. And if you were one of those kinds of people, if you lived that life, you would probably experience and feel more.
- And that might be true to a certain degree. But I'm convinced that the vast majority of God's great works in the lives of people happen in the humdrum of everyday, ordinary life of ordinary people all over the world.
- And the reason that we sometimes don't sense that, don't feel that, don't know that is because there is a lack of intimacy between us and the Lord, which another way to say that would be we don't pray enough.
- We don't talk to Him enough. We don't spend enough time in His presence. Let me read you a quote that I found this week by Charles Spurgeon, probably one of the greatest preachers who ever lived.
- He says this, he says, He who lives without prayer, he who lives with little prayer, he who seldom reads the Word, and he who seldom looks up to heaven for a fresh influence from on high, he will be the man whose heart will become dry and barren.
- [6 : 09] However, he who falls in secret on his God, who spends much time in holy retirement, who delights to meditate on the words of the Most High, and whose soul is given up to Christ, such a man must have an overflowing heart.
- As his heart is, such will his life be. Spurgeon's point here is that you don't have to grow on a great adventure to experience great things from the Lord in your life.
- Those things, the perception of your life, flow from your heart. And the depth of your enjoyment of the presence of God within your heart is determined by how much time you actually spend in his presence, on your knees, pleading to him and calling out to him and hearing from him through his word.
- And the reality is that most of us, myself included, we do not devote ourselves fully enough to doing something really easy, and that is just talking to the Lord regularly, often, or as Paul says, without ceasing.
- And David, I think, wrote this psalm for many reasons, but at least one of the reasons he wrote this psalm was to help us to see and to instruct us on the kind of person who is able to regularly come into God's presence.

[7 : 30] and then what effect that regular coming into his presence can have upon the heart and life of a person. Because the first three verses open up with David pleading to the Lord to hear him.

He says, Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my groaning. Give attention to the sound of my cry, my king and my God, for to you do I pray. And then he says that prayer is the focus of his day from the very beginning of his day.

He says, O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice. In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. David is saying, I am constantly aligning and directing things in my life from the very earliest point of the day to be in intimate fellowship with you, to pray to you, to talk to you, to come before you, to lay my requests before you.

I'm doing that, Lord. Hear me. I'm coming to you regularly, often, and I trust you to hear me. And then the rest of this psalm suddenly departs, it seems, on the surface from the topic of prayer.

And he's talking about prayer. He's asking God to hear him. And then suddenly he says in verse 4, For you are not a God who delights in wickedness. Wait, what, David? I thought you were praying for a second there.

[8 : 49] And you were calling out to God to hear your prayer. And then all of a sudden you've sort of taken a side road here. And now you're talking about wicked people.

And in fact, if you look at this psalm, it flip-flops back and forth the rest of this psalm. He'll spend a couple of verses talking about those who do not trust in the Lord, who he calls the wicked or the unrighteous.

And then he'll flip-flop and he'll talk about those who do trust in the Lord. You can see it in verses 4 through 6. It's those who don't trust in the Lord, the wicked. And then in verses 7 through 8, all of a sudden he switches to his own confidence and trust in the Lord.

And then in verses 9 and 10, he switches back and he begins to talk about those who do not know the Lord, those who do not trust in Him. And then he's back again to those who do trust in the Lord.

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice in verses 11 and 12. So he begins by talking about prayer. And then he starts and he says, because, verse 4, he says, for or because, I call out to you, Lord, in confidence that you're going to hear me.

[9 : 55] I bring my prayers early in the morning because of this. Because you treat one group of people this way and you treat another group of people this way and I know to which group I belong. Therefore, I call out to you.

And so it's essential. If we want that burning intimacy with the Lord, we need to know to which group we belong. You have to know. There are at least possibly, conceivably, three categories to which you could belong in your relationship with the Lord.

You could be an object of God's wrath. He could direct His displeasure toward you. That's a possible category.

He could, in fact, favor you and love you and shower you with blessings and grace or maybe, perhaps, He's indifferent toward you. The only problem is the Lord is never indifferent toward anyone.

Which means you belong to one of two classes. You either belong to the category of sinner in God's eyes or you belong to the category of saint in God's eyes. There's a reason why most of Paul's letters begin by addressing to all the saints in wherever.

[11 : 12] Ephesus, Colossi, whatever city he's writing to. Because in Paul's mind there are two categories of people. There are those who trust in Christ and then are transferred to the category of holy one or saint.

A saint is not especially holy Christian. It's just another word for a Christian. All Christians are regarded as saints in the Scriptures. Or, you have not trusted in Christ, you're still in the category of sinners.

Jesus uses the terminology of sheep and goats. You either are in the category of sheep and the Lord is leading you and guiding you and protecting you or you belong to the category of goat and you're obstinately going your own way and doing what you want to do.

There are no other categories. In fact, Jesus makes this really clear. If you'll turn over to John chapter 3, most of us are familiar with John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life. But two verses later in verse 18, he says this, Whoever believes in him, that is Jesus, whoever believes in him is not condemned.

[12 : 20] But whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God. There are two categories of humanity in Jesus' thinking.

There are those who believe in Christ and there are those who do not believe in Christ. And which category you belong to determines how the Lord, how God himself regards you.

And so I want us to look in Psalm 5 to see how David describes these two groups of people this morning. We're going to not take this in order. We're going to kind of jump around a little bit just to kind of follow it logically. So I want us to jump in at verse 9 where David describes those who do not trust in the Lord.

He says, For there is no truth in their mouth. Their inmost self is destruction. Their throat is an open grave.

They flatter with their tongue. That's his description. That's what we would call a lost person. That's what a person apart from Christ. That's his description of them.

[13 : 27] Now some people would say, well you can't you can't take the Psalms and interpret these things as if they are just general truth statements about everybody in the world.

And to a certain extent that's true because the Psalms are very much prayers of individuals offered up to God. And sometimes they're offered from a perspective that's descriptive of how it feels to be in that position in that place and yet they're not the kinds of things that we would expect ourselves to be able to say.

So some places in the Psalms David and others will talk about their enemies and they will ask that their enemies not only be killed but the children of their enemies have their heads smashed against the rocks. I'm not praying that.

I'm not going to do it. Alright? And I'm not going to encourage you to pray that. Because at times the Psalms many times and most of the time the Psalms are God inspiring a writer David or someone else to really write down what they think and feel in the moment so that we centuries later can connect with that and understand these are real feelings of real people that God put in his book.

And so some people would say you can't take this and say that's a description of all people apart from Christ. This is just David kind of letting off a little steam and talking about his enemies and he's saying things about them that you don't want to say in general about people because just like you don't want to ask God to bash people's heads against rocks you don't want to say these kinds of things about people this is rude why would you say this?

[15 : 03] One issue with that the Apostle Paul quotes from this passage in Romans chapter 3 in which he is summing up his assessment of all humanity.

In fact I want you to turn over to Romans chapter 3 it's the last place that I'll make you turn outside of Psalm 5 this morning but it's so important for you to see this. Really beginning in chapter 1 of the book of Romans Paul is describing humanity apart from Christ.

He begins in chapter 1 verse 18 and says that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men and he chronicles and details the ungodliness of humanity in chapters 1 and 2 and then in chapter 3 he sort of brings everything to a head in verse 9 and he's going to summarize he's going to say that everybody whether you're a Jew or a non-Jew you're a sinner you're guilty here's what he says verse 9 what then are we Jews any better off no not at all for we've already charged that all both Jews and Greeks or Jews and non-Jews are under sin we're all sinners and then here it is as it is written now he's going to quote from various psalms as it is written none is righteous no not one no one no one understands no one seeks for God all have turned aside together they have become worthless no one does good not even one this should sound familiar their throat is an open grave they use their tongues to deceive the venom of asps is under their lips their mouth is full of curses and bitterness their feet are swift to shed blood in their paths are ruin and misery in the way of peace they have not known there is no fear of God before their eyes did you see it there in verse 13 he's quoting from psalm 5 verse 9 their throat is an open grave so for the apostle Paul he looks back on psalm 5 and he sees it as one among many descriptions of all all people all human beings this is generally true of human beings what's generally true of them there's no truth in their mouth their inmost self is destruction their throat's an open grave they flatter with their tongue what is he trying to help us to see here he's trying to help us to see that that in all that we do apart from Christ apart from faith in him there there is only sin failure darkness lying deceit and death he uses some pretty vivid language here their throat is an open grave but they flatter with their tongue in other words in other words they may say one thing to you but the reality is underneath that and behind that is only the stench of death in their throats it's like Jesus says he said that the Pharisees were like whitewashed tombs they look pretty on the outside they're all nice and painted up white and on the inside they're full of dead men's bones and David says something similar here he says people will flatter you the wicked will say good things they may even say good things about God and toward God but the reality is that behind those things in their hearts in their throats it's like a grave there's only death that's humanity without Jesus that's the reality of a heart not set apart and devoted to Christ we cover it we whitewash it but the truth is that's what we're like without him that's what we are like and because of that

David recognizes David recognizes that that sinners deserve God's wrath and anger he even calls upon God make them bear their guilt oh God he doesn't simply say God do something bad to them get them back no he says make them bear their guilt why because they're guilty because we're guilty because that's who we are we're guilty people and David calls out God let them bear their guilt and the only reason that David can call upon God to do such a thing is because he's aware of God's character take a look back in verse 4 this is who God is you are not a God who delights in wickedness evil may not dwell with you the boastful shall not stand before your eyes check this out you hate all evil doers that doesn't sound good at all does it it doesn't but it's the reality you destroy those who speak lies the Lord abhors that is hates the bloodthirsty and deceitful man not only not only are we walking living corpses full of sin but because we are that very thing we deserve and God is disposed to pour out wrath on us he does not delight in wickedness evil cannot dwell with him you you cannot just simply assume everything's going to be okay between me and

God God is a loving God I try my best I do my best everything's going to be alright David says I don't think so evil cannot dwell with God so I'm not evil David says everybody everybody's evil we all are this is all of us the apostle Paul says no one righteous not even one single person and we are either still members of that category the category of people whom God abhors who it says that God hates who he cannot delight in or we belong to the other category of humanity listen to how David describes he says in verse 7 but I so he's in contrast but I through the abundance of your steadfast love will enter your house now there's a you've got to catch this he has just said evil cannot dwell with the Lord that is settle down in a house with him you can't do it that's what the word means it means to be settled down to live somewhere evil cannot dwell with

[22 : 08] God and now David says I'm going to enter your house God I'm coming right in I'm going to move in with you and live with you how are you going to do that David remember Bathsheba you're not such a good guy David how are you going to do that David's fully aware of how he's going to do that through the abundance of your steadfast love there's not a man apart from Christ there's not a man who has ever been able to enter into God's presence on the basis of his own character and heart David knows that he would not be such a fool as to say but I am not like them I'm not in their category I speak the truth I do what's right and so I will come into your house he doesn't say that he says but I because your steadfast love is abundant

I'm going to come in I'm going to dwell with you David understands that to approach God to come into his presence is something that a sinner can only do by grace there is no other way if you think that your prayers are going to be heard for any other reason than the sheer mercy and grace of God then you are deceiving yourself if you think that anyone else's prayers are going to be heard for any reason other than the mercy and grace of God you are wrong we only come before him because he is a merciful and gracious God otherwise the moment we thought ourselves to be able to come into his presence his wrath would fall yet he is merciful and he is gracious not though merciful and gracious toward everyone just not notice what David says in verse 8 or I'm sorry at the end of verse 7 he says

I will bow down toward your holy temple and then listen here's the key how is David going to be able to do that how is David going to be able to come before God bow down how is he going to do that in the fear of you in the fear of you the Bible says over and over multiple places fear of God is the beginning of wisdom remember what Paul said over there in Romans chapter 3 at the end of that section where he is just detailing people's sinfulness in the depth of human depravity there is no fear of God before their eyes no fear of God there's good fear and there's bad fear of course in the world you fear other people you're afraid of what's going to come upon you in the world that's a bad fear but over and over and over and over the Bible commands us to fear God sometimes we weaken that sometimes we like to say well God doesn't really want us to be afraid of him this is just like we should be respectful of God that's what it means just sort of respect God because

God is who he is kind of like we often will say that you know we see maybe a little little old man 90 years old and he's he's withered away and we say you should respect him because he's your elder that's true you should but that's not what is meant here this isn't the kind of you know token respect that you hand out to somebody just because of who they are it's more than that fear means fear that's what it means that's what the word means this is not tricky you don't have to know Hebrew to know how to understand what the word here means fear means fear I can remember when I was in junior high we had we had this coach it seems like everybody has a coach in junior high he's like the muscled coach who comes in probably because he's younger than the other coaches as an adult you look back and you realize reality is not what you thought it was when you were 13 and in 7th grade but in 7th grade there's always a big muscled up coach probably because he's only 22 and it's his first job and that's why he doesn't get to coach at the high school and he's stuck with a bunch of 7th graders getting dodge balls thrown at him that's true and he just hasn't gotten old enough to lose all the big muscles give him 7 years and he'll look like the guys at the high school but in junior high you got the muscled up young coach we had a coach his name was

Coach Bishop and I look back now and I think I'm pretty sure he was short he was just a little short guy but at the time all I knew was his arms were enormous or they seemed to be to a skinny little 13 year old he seemed like the toughest coach ever made by God and put on the earth this guy was just that's how we thought of him he was probably not that way at all but that's the perception of him and he would like when 7th graders came together in athletics if it wasn't football season or some other season or you weren't playing that particular sport then you were in athletics and they had to do something with you and so his game of choice was always dodgeball and not the kind of dodgeball they play now with the squishy little nerf balls but real dodgeball with kickballs that sting and leave marks on you when you play and that's what we would do and there were certain times when the 7th graders would play with the 8th graders and that was never good for the 7th graders because there was this one big big old 8th grader his name was

[27 : 58] Kevin Dugott he was just bigger than everybody and he could really really throw the ball really hard and I was pretty good at dodging and that was sort of my game I didn't ever think that I was going to get everybody out but I could dodge most of the time and nobody wanted to get hit by him I remember in particular I'm not a person who remembers a lot of details from their childhood I just don't remember things but I remember this really well we're getting destroyed by Kevin Dugott and all of a sudden I mean there's not very many of us left all of a sudden Coach Bishop walks out on the court on our side of the court right he's on our side and Kevin lines up I mean he's got one of the bigger kickballs and he's going to waylay Coach Bishop like he's the man who can do it in 8th grade if there's any 14 year old who can do it this guy can do it and he wound up and he threw it as hard as he could and I kid you not Coach Bishop just went and caught it and we were all we just all thought holy cow

Dugott's going to die there's a kind of coach that had like you in 7th grade you made up rumors like oh man he popped so and so and he popped him so hard that his feet came 6 inches up off the ground he was that kind of guy but we all liked him because he was really nice and he was a really cool guy he's the kind of guy who's going to step in and help the little wimpy 7th graders against the 8th graders he was a nice guy and we liked him none of us he wasn't one of those coaches that everybody couldn't stand you always have some of those he was one of the coaches that you liked but you didn't want to mess with him like he had this because he had big arms and you know and you didn't there were rumors you didn't want to get taken into the office with the paddle by him alright everybody was genuinely afraid of him we were scared of Coach Bishop but we also really really liked him you see I think in a sense that's the kind of fear that the Bible is talking about when it talks about fearing the Lord we fear him not with the kind of fear that you give to a broken down 90 year old man just because he's old we fear him because he does have the power he does have the strength and he does have the ability to say no more and squish you like a bug he can do it at any moment at any time and he is a God who abhors the wicked and we sinners ought rightfully to fear him and at the same time recognize that by the abundance of his steadfast love we can come before him and I think real genuine saving faith is something that is composed half of genuine real fear because you've seen who he is you've seen him and you know him and you know what it is to know the dread of the Lord that's what part of faith is and the other half of faith is knowing also his abundant steadfast love that can rescue you from his deadly dangerous wrath that's what faith is and David says because of your love

I'll come before you and I come before you with real fear in my heart and that's what faith is that's real faith in the Lord you don't have faith if you just treat God like he's just your pal from down the street and you give him no honor and direct no fear towards him but you don't know the Lord if you think of him only as an angry vengeful God who's out to get people neither of those are biblical faith real faith recognizes him for who he is in all of his holy terror and then embraces him because of his limitless divine love how does David do this how can David come into the presence of a God who will not tolerate wickedness and evil and sin when David is wicked and evil and sinful because he trusts in him with genuine biblical saving faith that's how and that's why and the truth of the matter is you want God to hear and answer your prayers you approach him in genuine real biblical saving faith it's not a token that you throw out there it's not just agreeing with certain truths that you've been taught your whole life it's real it's vibrant and it opens the way into his presence and oh the things that happen when a way is opened into his presence by genuine real faith look at how David finishes off this psalm he says in contrast to those to whom God is going to let their guilt bring upon them what they deserve in contrast to that

David says but let all who take refuge in you rejoice let them ever sing for joy notice he does not say but let all who in righteousness come before you that's not what he says let those who take refuge in you let those who are dependent and needy and know it let them who beg for your protection let them rejoice let them ever sing for joy that those who love your name may exult in you and then finally finally at the very end there's a mention of human righteousness for you bless the righteous oh Lord you cover him with favor that is with grace as with a shield what does that mean David's a sinner David can only approach God because of God's grace and not by his own righteousness so what does this mean so bless the righteous oh Lord what does that mean it means that for those who have admitted their sin and those who have approached him in genuine faith it means that now as we rejoice in the Lord he has begun to work righteousness into us and he will bless those in whom he is working righteousness he will do it he begins to change and transform the heart and as he does that he begins to bless you and take care of you and protect you not to remove all trouble from your life but in the midst of trouble to cause you to exult in him to rejoice in him to sing with joy no matter the circumstances around you that little piece of you that at times feels like something is missing that little piece that little voice that little person how do you deal with him how do you eradicate him it's not complicated it's not difficult because those who take refuge in the

Lord those who in fearful faith embrace the love and mercy and grace of God no longer find in themselves this constant need to reach for something more something better something bigger something more adventurous because they found the better they found the more and they have found the adventure and now they ever sing for joy and rejoice in him there will be times when you walk with Christ when things become a bit cold and distant and you'll begin to feel that is there more what else is there what else does he want me to do is there something else happening and in that moment let that be a trigger let it remind you there's something wrong and the something wrong is you're not praying enough don't pray you've got to spend time in his presence in order to rejoice in his presence so let's pray it's amazing that we can even bring our requests to you because we don't deserve to father and we admit it we confess that we are sinners saved only by grace but we do come we do come because we don't want adventures we don't want something out there to come in and fill up the void that we feel that we have at times we don't want that we don't want we don't want intimate joy producing fellowship with you through your son and so my prayer for us as individuals as a church father is that you would over the coming weeks and days and months and even years that you would transform us into a praying people offering up more than token prayers more than the prayers we feel obliged to offer when we gather together at church or when we eat a meal fervently consistently unceasingly coming before you and then rejoicing in you make us into that kind of people we pray in

[38 : 14] Jesus name Amen