

Psalm 52 • When creepy people enter your life

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Psalm 52. I entitled this one, When creepy people enter your life, because that's kind of what's going on. I don't know if you've ever actually had a truly evil person enter your life, but that's what this Psalm is about. Because that's what happened to David and it's what inspired him actually to write this Psalm.

It took place during a time when David was running from Saul, king Saul, because Saul was jealous of David and the blessing of the Lord on his life. And so Saul wanted him dead. And there was a time when David went to a place called Nob. And there he conferred with the priest at Nob, a man by the name of Ahimelech. And he talked to the priest about getting some provisions and things like that some food.

And there was a man who was there at the time, who was a friend of Saul. He was not a Jew. He was an Edomite and his name was Doeg. And that man went back to Saul taking information about David saying, David had gone to go see the high priest. He'd received provisions from the high priest and so forth.

And the report was essentially accurate, except that a Ahimelech the priest, was completely oblivious to what was going on between Saul and David. He saw David as one of the king's men. He was like, well, yeah, the king's men. It would be an act of loyalty to my king to give provisions to this man, David. He didn't know David was on the run and that Saul was trying to kill him.

When Saul found out that the priest had helped David, he was enraged. And he gave orders to his men to go kill Ahimelech and his entire family. His men wouldn't do it. They were conscience stricken about doing such an evil thing and they refused. And so David, or excuse me, Saul turned to Doeg the Edomite, and he commanded him to carry out the murders himself, which Doeg was all too happy to oblige.

We actually read about the specific act in 1 Samuel 22. Let me put it on the screen for you. We can read it together. It says,

1 Samuel 22:18-19 (ESV)

Then the king (and that's Saul) said to Doeg, "You turn and strike the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey and sheep, he put to the sword.

Then the king (and that's Saul) said to Doeg, "You turn and strike the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey and sheep, he put to the sword.

In other words, first he went on a killing spree. And it says he killed eighty-five people who wore the linen ephod. And that doesn't even count the people who lived in Nob, the women and children and so forth.

How would you like to have been David and had this staggering weight of all those deaths on your shoulders because you're on the run from this madman king? And a man sees you there, reports it to the king, and the king goes and murders the priest and his entire extended family.

I don't know what you would do if you had that kind of weight on your shoulders, but we have this psalm to tell us what David did. He went to the Lord and he took it to prayer. And he said, as you read with me here in verse 1,

"Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man?" (ESV)

Pause there for just a moment. That term, "*O mighty man*" is not what you think it means. It's kind of more equivalent to you and I calling or saying to someone, you big shot. Something like that. Why do you boast of evil, you big shot. It refers, to, well, it's an expression of contempt. Let's put it that way.

And then the word "boast." Why do you boast of evil? That's an interesting word too, because it speaks of a person who's crowing about his accomplishments. From the standpoint that, he just exudes an attitude of self-sufficiency. Self... a superior kind of an attitude. Why do you think yourself so superior you big shot? would be a way that we would probably say it today.

And then he goes on to talk in that verse about what evil men like Doeg, don't ever stop to consider. And that is "*The steadfast love of God endures all the*

day." So, men like Doeg, they boast about their own accomplishments and abilities. But they do so in the face of God's steadfast love toward His people.

And so what David is kind of saying is, why do you boast in the face of God's faithfulness toward His people? Why do you sit and shoot your mouth off, when you know, and if you don't I'm telling you, that God is faithful. He has a steadfast love toward those who love Him. And you're boasting in the sight of God and in the hearing of God, expressing His own heart of love toward the people about whom you're boasting.

David goes on in verse 2 to say,

"Your tongue plots destruction, like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit.

3 You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking what is right.

4 You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

5 But God will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living."

So what is David doing as he's composing this Psalm? He's allowing the Holy Spirit to speak prophetically through him of the judgment and destruction that awaits all those like Doeg, who completely ignore God. Who speak only in boasting tones of their own accomplishments and their own superior abilities. And David is going on to say that, this is what the Lord is going to do to you.

He says in verse 6,

"The righteous shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying,

7 "See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!""

I want you to notice in these 2 verses, 6 and 7, the emphasis here. It sounds like he's talking about Doeg, but he's... The emphasis here is God. God against such men as Doeg. God against that sort of an attitude. David is kind of using this psalm to remind himself, if you will, that judgment belongs to the Lord.

He says, the righteous are going to see what God's going to do to you. And they're going to be in awe of the hand of the Lord as He reaches out to punish

you for the things that you've done. Because why you've trusted in your own abilities, your own wealth, you have not made God your refuge made. You've made other things, your refuge. So he's declaring, if you will, that judgment belongs to the Lord, and this is going to happen. And the righteous will see it, and so forth.

Now, by contrast, David goes on, beginning in verse 8, to speak of his own life before the Lord, and he says,

"But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

9 I will thank you forever, because you have done it. (And then I want you to notice this next statement.) I will wait for your name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly."

And I want you to see that because that's very important. Because this is David's conclusion, that instead of taking matters into his own hands, he's going to wait for the Lord to bring His own judgment on men like Doeg. And man is that hard! Man is that hard!

When we see somebody doing something that is just unspeakably evil, just cruel, cruel people, there is such a huge temptation in us to respond to that injustice and that evil. And it's a very strong inclination inside of us to respond. And we love to see other people respond against it, because it just, it does something. It feeds something for us to say, yes, he got his!

I was watching a short clip from a movie. It was an old Harrison Ford movie. I won't mention which one. But there's a scene in this movie where he's standing by for a while and he's watching people being treated very, very abusively. And the people who are bullying and doing this are being very cruel about how they're making fun of these folks. And when you're watching the scene, it's just it's meant to make your blood boil. Because it's kind of hardwired into our DNA. We hate that stuff. We hate injustice and we want to see something done about it.

And then there, of course, there's a scene in the, in this clip that I was watching where the character played by Harrison Ford, kind of jumps to the defense of these people and starts knocking heads around. And you just, and you're just, yes! You watch that scene and you're just, yes! They deserved it and they got it! And yeah, I watched that clip and then I read this Psalm.

And I see what David says, and he says again there in verse 9, *"I will wait for your name," "I will wait for your name, for it is good in the presence of the godly."* And I thought, you know how difficult...

Here's the thing. David was a warrior. David was a warrior and he, at this particular time in his life, is in the prime of his physical condition. I mean, good grief! At age 16, he took down a, Goliath. And now it's years later; He's a young man; he's strong; he's capable. And if he wanted to hunt down Doeg, the Edomite, he could have. And he could have brought revenge. He could have done it.

And I'll be honest with you. There were other times David sought revenge, or at least, had revenge in his heart for lesser things than this, and almost played it out. But the point here is that, David really was a man who had the capability of carrying out that kind of revenge. And it impresses me no end to hear him say, *"I will wait for your name."*

And you have to ask yourself the question, why, what is good about waiting?" I mean, it's a legitimate question. Why not get revenge? The guy deserves it. Right? Good grief! How many people did he murder? Eighty-five of the priestly line. And then while he was at it, he was just in a murderous rage. So he went ahead and just killed everybody else in the town, children, infants, babies. Right? Women, killed them all.

Who would object to that man being put to death? Who?! I can't think of anybody. And had we been there in that time, we might have been... So, you know the people cheering somebody on to go or maybe even David. David, you need to go take care of that monster. That man is a monster and somebody needs to give him what he deserves! And David, I think you're the man!

So, what is so virtuous about David's statement here in this Psalm where he says, I'm going to wait, I'm going to wait God, and I'm going to let you take care of this. I'm going to wait for your name. What is so great about that anyway?

Well, let me show you some interesting statements that Jesus made related to this. Matthew chapter 5, up on the screen for you. We can read it together. Jesus says,

Matthew 5:38-39 (ESV)

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'"
Can I stop you? We'll keep that up there just a moment, but let me explain something. *"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"* was never meant to be a statement to encourage revenge. It was a statement meant to encourage equal justice.

In other words, if somebody pokes out your eye, you can't cut off his head. Right? If somebody steals your donkey, you can't burn down his house and take all of his cattle. You get me? The whole idea was for equity. God was giving them a rule for equity in judgment. Somebody steals a hundred dollars from you, you can't take a million from them. God was saying, *"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."* That was the idea. It has to be equal. It has to be fair. Okay?

But the Jews started using that phrase to say, he did it to me, I'm going to do it back to him. It's never the way God ever meant that to be interpreted. But that's the way they started to take it on.

In fact, when you hear people talk about an eye for an eye, if you ever hear that in a movie or you hear it in a, you read it in a book or something like that, it's always used for revenge. Somebody, you'll say, well, an eye for an eye... And that's their justification. I'm going to go out and do to him what he did to me.

Okay? Here's what Jesus says.

Matthew 5:38-39 (ESV)

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"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

That's a very difficult thing to hear Jesus say.

Now please understand, Jesus is not saying that police or military should not combat evil. They're the ones who are actually, who should. What this is basically doing here in Matthew chapter 5 is, Jesus is prohibiting us from taking personal revenge in situations where we've been personally injured. Okay. He's talking to individuals here, and He's saying, don't do that. Don't take personal revenge. Why? You could still say, why?

Well, I think there are 3 reasons. I'm going to give them to you. Number 1. For you and I to take revenge in our own hands is to forget something and that is, that you and I have a sinful heart; a corrupted heart. And it's very easy for you and I when we take revenge in our hands, to let it go too far.

In the midst of a flash of anger or self-centered passion, we could easily exact a punishment that far exceeds the injury that we ourselves had received. Okay. And if we don't, consider the fact that, I'm a sinful human being. And I'm flawed in my ability to meet out a just and fair punishment. That I'm... I don't really know my own heart. And I've kind of lost touch with reality.

Number 2. God already told us something very important in Romans chapter 12. Let me put that one up on the screen for you. It goes like this,

Romans 12:19 (ESV)

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

Beloved, (Paul writes,) never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

That's the next reason why it is good to do what Jesus said. Because we are obeying God's Word when we say, you know what? This is God's business. This is not mine to take it in my own hands. Even though I've been hurt, or whatever, or my family, it's not mine to take up the sword and to punish this individual.

God saw what happened. You think He missed it? You think He was looking the other way when it happened? God knows. And this passage in Romans tells you and I... (by the way, he's quoting Deuteronomy there) don't do it. Because vengeance belongs to the Lord. (Deuteronomy 32:41, 43)

And then the third reason why it's a good thing to wait on the Lord, is found actually a couple, it's another verse right down. Next verse, in Romans it says,

Romans 12:20-21 (ESV)

To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he's thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he's thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (And look at this last line.) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

And that's the third reason why you and I should not take revenge. Because instead of overcoming evil when we seek revenge, our hearts get so caught up to the point where we ourselves are overcome by evil. Very important reminders I think, from Psalms chapter 52.