

The Righteous shall Prevail

Psalm 52: 1-9

Our text today comes from an interesting psalm of David regarding the wickedness of Doeg, the Edomite. The setting for this psalm is recorded in [1 Samuel 21-22](#). David was on the run from Saul, fleeing for his life, when he came to Nob, where the Tabernacle rested. There he sought provisions from Ahimelech, the high priest. Unaware of the situation, Ahimelech gave David the showbread from the Tabernacle, along with the sword of Goliath, that was kept at the Tabernacle.

In the shadows was Doeg, a descendant of Esau who hated the Jew's, being descendants of Jacob. Knowing what Ahimelech had done for David, Doeg immediately went to king Saul and told of the events that had transpired. Making his way to Nob, Saul ordered the slaughter of the priests. The servants of Saul, apparently fearing the Lord, refused to kill the priests. In an effort to gain Saul's favor, Doeg slew eighty-five of the priests in Nob.

Inspired by the Spirit, David penned these words that reveal God's justice and judgment of the wicked. They may enjoy a season of prosperity, but eventually they will answer to God for their wickedness. As we examine the [details](#) of this occasion, I want to consider the thought: [The Righteous shall Prevail](#).

I. The Defilement of the Wicked (1-4) – In the opening verses, David recounts the wickedness of Doeg, revealed through his behavior. Consider:

A. Doeg's Arrogance (1) – [Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually](#). Hearing a first-hand account of what happened in Nob by Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, David knew the arrogance of Doeg. He was a coward who had mercilessly killed the Lord's priests, and yet there was no remorse. In fact, Doeg had relished in killing these innocent men in order to gain the favor of Saul. David sarcastically referred to Doeg as a mighty man, one who would bring harm to defenseless priests, seeking to serve the Lord. He may have boasted in his evil deeds, but God was not unaware. Wickedness would not prevail over righteousness! (Many today relish in their evil deeds, but God is keeping a record. He will reward the righteous and judge the wicked.)

B. Doeg's Abuse (2) – [Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully](#). David knew Doeg had been deceitful in his account of the events to Saul. He purposely neglected to tell the king that David had told Ahimelech that he was on a secret mission for Saul. Ahimelech and the priests meant no harm to the king. In fact, they believed they were helping advance the plans

of the king. Doeg made it appear that Ahimelech and the priests had conspired with David in an attempt to defeat king Saul. Doeg purposed to tell blatant lies to advance his agenda. (Those who are determined to have their way, often will stop at nothing to achieve their goals, even if that means lying or hurting innocent people in the process.)

C. Doeg's Apathy (3-4) – *Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.* ^[4] *Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.* David knew the wickedness of Doeg's heart, and his commitment to evil. He loved evil more than good, and he would rather tell a lie than to speak the truth. He was a man known for deceit and lies, having the ability to destroy men's lies with his wicked tongue. Doeg would make up any lie and swear by its truth, regardless of the consequence to innocent lives. *James 3:6-8 – And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.* ^[7] *For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:* ^[8] *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

II. The Judgment of the Wicked (5-7) – Doeg may have lied and pleased Saul with his wicked behavior, but God was not impressed. God was aware of his evil deeds and would deal with him accordingly. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Consider:

A. The Severity (5) – *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.* David warned that God would return the wickedness of Doeg upon him. He would pluck him out of his dwelling place and remove him from the land of the living. It appears that God would take Doeg's life for the wickedness he had done. There is no mention of Doeg after the account in [1 Samuel 22](#). We have every reason to believe that God kept His word, dealing with the wickedness of Doeg. (Today men mock God and refuse to believe they are accountable to anyone. God is merciful and gracious, providing the means of salvation and reconciliation; but for those who deny grace, judgment is all that remains!)

B. The Visibility (6) – *The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him.* Wickedness against innocent men had been committed publicly by Doeg, and God's righteous judgment would be carried out before the eyes of men. The righteous would see how God judged Doeg, and it would create fear in their hearts. The legacy of Doeg would forever be marred by his rebellion against God. His name would bear reproach throughout the generations. Sin may be carried out publicly or in private, but God will eventually bring it to light as He judges unrepentant sin.

C. The Audacity (7) – *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.* Granted, Doeg was an Edomite, of the lineage of Esau, but he dwelt among the Jews. He was a servant of Saul, the king anointed by God. He stood at the Tabernacle, witnessing David’s conversation with the high priest. He had encountered the true and living God, yet he chose to rely upon himself and the abundance of his riches. He did not seek the Lord, but rested in his own ability and resources. David understood the foolishness of such endeavors and the eventual demise such wickedness brings. (Our world is filled with those who have made a conscious decision to reject the Lord and His grace. They choose to rely upon themselves, but will one stand before the Sovereign and give account of their lives to Him in judgment.)

III. The Advancement of the Righteous (8-9) – Doeg may have enjoyed the temporary benefit of a life of wickedness, but it would not last. Also, it may have appeared that the righteous had been defeated, but David knew God would preserve and advance His people. Consider:

A. The Prosperity (8a) – *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.* Bear in mind that David is on the run, seeking to prevent Saul from killing him. Doeg’s actions had gained the favor the king, but David knew he was in a much better position than Doeg or Saul. He was like a green olive tree that flourished in the house of God. They may have enjoyed prominence and authority, but David enjoyed the favor of God. He may have been forced to hide out in caves in the wilderness, but he enjoyed the presence of God. These were blessings that money could not buy and wicked men could not steal. *Psalm 84:10 – For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

B. The Provision (8b) – *I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* Having heard of the brutal acts of Doeg and Saul, David was not dismayed. He knew God had called him, anointing him to be king over Israel. His trust was not in man, and he did not fear what men would do to him. He rested in the mercy of God, knowing the Lord would preserve his life. David trusted in the unfailing love of God, rather than the riches of this life. He was settled and secure in the Lord.

▪ *David compared the righteous to an olive tree, a symbol of endurance and permanence. Olive trees live for hundreds of years, thriving in the worst of conditions. The most fruitful trees are the product of bare and rocky ground ... The terraced hills of Palestine, where the earth lies never many inches above the limestone rocks, the long rainless summer of unbroken sunshine, and the heavy “dews” of the autumn afford conditions which are extraordinarily favorable to at least the indigenous olive. Amazingly, some olive trees thriving in Israel today are over 3,000 years old!*ⁱ

While we will not live forever in this body, the saved by grace are promised eternity in heaven with our Lord and Savior! I have put my faith and trust in the unfailing love and finished work of Christ!

C. The Praise (9a) – *I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it.* The praise of the righteous is much different than that of the wicked. Doeg, in arrogance praised himself, while enjoying the fleeting praise of his peers. David reserved his praise for God alone, knowing the Lord had provided all he enjoyed and none else were worthy of his praise. Doeg had meant to bring evil upon David, but the Lord had kept him. David praised the Lord for His loving favor.

- Would we all not have to admit that God has been gracious in our lives? Has He not blessed us beyond measure? Who else has provided the means of salvation, forgiving our sin, and promising eternal life? The Lord has provided all of these blessings. He alone has done it! He is worthy of our praise and worship!

D. The Patience (9b) – *and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.* David was on the run, not yet enjoying the promises of God, and yet he was content to wait. The lure of the world could not compare to the promises of God. He was willing to wait as long as it took, content to serve the Lord and walk each day by faith.

- Impatience when serving the Lord often comes at a cost. The enemy likes to present counterfeits, seeking to lure us away from what God has planned. Like David, we must be willing to endure the adversity, patiently waiting on the Lord. We must walk each day by faith, one step at a time, knowing God is in control and that He will provide!

Conclusion: This has been an interesting passage that reveals the great contrast between the wicked and the righteous. It may appear that the world has gained the upper hand, but God remains in control. He continues to guide our lives and is well able to provide for our needs. We must trust Him in the difficult times, knowing we are secure in Him. All will stand before Him in judgment one day. I am thankful to be justified through the finished work of my Lord!

ⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Psalms II.