

DSC Community Group
Sermon Summary, 10/09/2011

Title: "Praying Against what is Against God"
Series: "Pour Out Your Heart to Him: A Study in the Psalms" (Ps. 62:8)

Text: Psalm 3-7, 9-10
Preacher: Ryan Kelly

Psalm 3:7; 4:2-4; 5:4-6, 9-10; 6:8-10; 7:1-16 (Imprecatory/Imprecation = Judgment, Curse)

1. **Are these really a "holy" part of the Holy Bible?**
 - What Scripture says about itself: 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21.
2. **Who is the enemy in these Psalms?**
 - We aren't always sure who these people are.
 - Descriptions of the evil/wicked/enemies: Psalm 5:9; 7:14; 10:2-11
3. **Doesn't the New Testament give us a different ethic?**
 - NT verses which seem to contradict this: Matthew 5:44-45; Romans 12:14, 17-21
 - NT Imprecatory: Matthew 21; Galatians 1:8; 1 Corinthians 16:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7; Luke 18:7-8; Revelation 6:9-11
 - Is there no difference between OT and NT? It's not a shift from wrath to mercy, but an intensification of both mercy and judgment. OT judgment was primarily temporary, while NT judgment is eternal. We think the OT is worse because we are not sufficiently eternally minded.
4. **Don't these Psalms imply that God is cruel and capricious?**
 - This is the right question: What is God like? 5:4-5 // 6:9 // 7:10-11 // 9:4 // 9:18 // 10:17-18
 - We all want justice for some things at some times: Children understand fairness. Militant atheists still decry the evil of 9/11. Imprecatory Psalms simply acknowledges this in light of all of reality.
5. **Why would any decent person pray like this?**
 - David knows that he is a sinner: Psalm 6:1-2; 32:1, 5; 38; 51. He even shows self self-suspicion in 7:3-5.
 - The difference between the godly and the wicked is not that one is perfect and the other is not. The godly are forgiven, treated as holy, know God, being conformed to God.
 - The psalmists aren't just thirsty for justice, but they lament sin (119:136), hope that the wicked will turn (7:12; 83:15-16), acknowledging the inevitable destructive consequences of sin (5:10; 9:15-20), desire for the protection of the good (10:8-10; 3:7), entrust God with the judgment.
6. **How do Jesus and the cross fit into all of this?**
 - Galatians 3:13 (3:10); Romans 5:10.
7. **What do these prayers mean for us?**
 - They help us love our enemies (Romans 12:19-21); Remind us of the fallenness of this world and the reckoning to come; Help us think about the darker events in history (Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot); Remind us about the persecuted among God's people in other places; Help us to pray against what God is against.
 - Can we pray them today? Yes, but with all of the qualifications gathered from the same psalms. We're to be angry without sin (Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:26); The most clearly appropriate place for them is in praying against those who persecute the church.

Sample Questions: (In addition to the questions that make up this sermon's outline)

- What are some questions that these psalms raise in your mind?
- On first glance, these psalms seem *merely* bloodthirsty. Is this true? Does the writer see himself as perfect? Does he wish only ill on his enemies?
- How do these psalms relate to the teaching of the New Testament? What do they tell us about God?
- How do these psalms clarify what God has done for us in Christ? How can we pray these today?
- How would you explain these psalms to an unbeliever in one minute?