

Dealing With Life's Hardships and Uncertainties (Part 6)

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- [0 : 00] You know, there's a lot of fear in this country right now. A lot of surveys that show that Americans are fearful about all kinds of things.
- Near the top of most people's list really is something to do with government. Government's ineffectiveness or just the lack of credibility.
- But also near the top is a fear of terrorism. Some people think about it all the time. They're fearful of something like 9-11 again.
- Radical Islamic terrorism. But there's a lot of people who are afraid of some individual crazy person doing like what took place last Sunday night in Las Vegas.
- Some people are right now in fear that we're on the brink of war with North Korea. And that we, here in this country, could experience a nuclear attack.
- [1 : 13] What are your fears? How do you deal with them? You know, we all have certain things that cause us to be a little bit anxious.
- There's some things that tempt us if we don't just give in to it and be all stressed out. Stay worried. Stay worried. What do you do to try to deal with your fears?
- Try to calm your fears. Try to deal with the uncertainties and the hard things that come up in your life. In Psalm 139, David describes how he found comfort, how he found help in knowing that God was always with him.
- And that God knew everything about him. That's what we've been looking at over the past three weeks. We've been looking in detail at Psalm 139 at the things that helped David.
- David found that God knew him. God was always with him. In fact, God knew him and was always with him because God made him.
- [2 : 36] That's how connected we are to God. We have tried to see in these studies that God will help us just like he helped David.
- God will calm our fears just like he did David. If we will trust him. If we'll believe that he is who he says he is.
- That he can do what he promises to do. God is able and willing to help us, his children, deal with whatever it is that causes us to fear.
- Whatever it is that's hard in our life. Whatever it is that is on the horizon. It's uncertain. We know there's something coming.
- But the only way that's ever going to happen. The only way we're really going to experience God's comfort, his help in these kinds of situations. Is if we have an accurate understanding of really who he is.
- [3 : 37] And how he works in our lives. I want us to review what we have looked at over the past three weeks. Very quickly. Noting three things about God.
- First, God's knowledge. God knows everything. That's the first six verses of Psalm 139. But throughout these studies, we are focusing on how David makes this personal.

And we're trying to emphasize, I need to make this personal. God knows me. Second, God's presence. God is everywhere. That's what he's talking about in verses 7 through 12.

And again, we want to make this personal. You think, God is always with me. Last week, we looked at God's power. How God can do anything.

Verses 13 through 18. But then again, you think more personally. God made me.

[4 : 36] He made you like you are. Because he has a purpose for your life. For you as you are. Not as maybe you think you ought to be.

Well, today we're going to look at the final section. The last six verses. Where we see a change. A noticeable change in how David addresses God. It begins with David asking God to destroy wicked people.

Who have set themselves up as enemies of God. And also, they're enemies of God's people. Now, David knows. As we're going to read this.

And I hope it's obvious to you. David knows he is praying a dangerous prayer. And so, he concludes in the last two verses. By asking God to search his own heart and mind.

He's asking God to check his motives. To make sure he is praying rightly. Rightly. Let's look at it.

[5 : 40] Psalm 139. Beginning in verse 19. Oh, that you would slay the wicked. Oh, God. Oh, men of blood.

Depart from me. They speak against you with malicious intent. Your enemies take your name in vain. Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?

And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred. I count them my enemies.

That's about as strong a prayer as anyone could pray, isn't it? And David understands that. So, look how he concludes.

Search me, O God. And know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any grievous way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting.

[6 : 48] David now is telling us about God's holiness. How God deals justly with everyone. And again, let's make it personal.

God deals justly with me. But before we get into that last section about how God deals justly with us, his people. We need to look at what David says about God dealing justly, severely even, with his enemies.

You know, we've looked at Psalm 139 over, this is the fourth week now. The first 18 verses. David's been encouraging us as God's people.

Praise God because of who he is. What he knows about us. How active he is involved in our lives. But the truth is, not everyone appreciates God's involvement in our lives.

And if we're Christians, it should thrill us to know that God loves us. He cares about us. He knows us. He's involved according to his knowledge. According to his power.

[7 : 58] For our benefit. For his glory and our good. But some people just hate the very thought that God is involved in our lives.

Some people just hate God. And they fight against God and God's people. And people who willfully, intentionally do that, that makes them enemies of God.

And enemies of God's people. We need to understand this. Because sometimes we need to deal with God's enemies the way God does.

And the way David does in these first few verses. Let's look at it. Verses 19 through 22 first.

I want you to note. We may pray for God to deal with evil people around us. We may pray like David. For God to deal with evil people around us.

[9 : 09] We don't have to. We may. I want us to look at three things about this part of the prayer. Number one.

This is an imprecatory psalm or prayer. It's a prayer calling down God's judgment. A curse from God on evil people.

You see it. But what I want you to understand is. This is not an isolated statement. If you have read through the book of Psalms. You know. There's really a lot of verses like this.

There's at least 25 psalms. Where the psalmist. And it's usually David. Says such things.

About God's enemies. Two of the longest and strongest. In addition to what we've just read. Are Psalm 69. And Psalm 109.

[10 : 10] Psalm 69. And 109. I'll give you an example. Just to show you. This is not. Just an isolated verse. David was having a bad day.

And so he sort of vented. No. Look at Psalm 5 verse 10. He says. Make them bear their guilt. Oh God. Let them fall by their own counsels.

Because of the abundance of their transgressions. Cast them out. For they have rebelled against you. Now I'm going to think. There's some people in this room.

And you think. That's the Old Testament. That's how God. Works sometimes. In the Old Testament. God and his people.

They're just more harsh. In the Old Testament. Well that's not true. There are statements like this.

[11 : 08] From the New Testament. One. From the Apostle Paul. I want you to look at what he said. In Galatians chapter 1 verse 9.

Writing to a Christian church. He says. As we have said before. So I now say again. He just said it in the previous verse. If anyone is preaching to you a gospel.

Contrary to the one you received. Let him be accursed. Some translations say. Let him be eternally condemned. I want you to look at what Paul is saying. Paul is writing to a Christian church.

He went. He preached the gospel. People were saved. Church was formed. In a region. Galatia. Churches are formed. After Paul left. Some false teachers went in there.

And undermined his teaching. They went in there. And said things like. Yes. It's important. You need to believe in Jesus. You need to trust him. But in addition to trusting Jesus as your savior.

[12 : 08] That he died on the cross for your sins. You need to keep the law. In fact. It's not enough just to believe in Jesus. You've got to do what the law says. You've got to do this. Do that. In other words. They taught that salvation.

Is through faith in Jesus. Plus your own good works. And Paul. He was outraged. Not just because they came in.

And said that. And contradicted what he taught. Paul was outraged. Because they were undermining the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were undermining what Jesus taught.

They were undermining the word of God. The truth of God. And so he says. If anyone. I don't care who it is. If anybody. My prayer is. If anybody comes in here.

Or anywhere. And preaches a false gospel. Leads people astray. Let them be eternally damned. Is what he said. He was that strong. He was that serious.

[13 : 06] You don't oppose God. And God's word. And God's truth. And it's just okay. I want you to look at what Jesus said. To the hypocritical religious leaders.

That he encountered. People who should have known the truth. But they perverted the truth. And they led people astray. Look at what Jesus said. In Matthew chapter 23.

There's really a number of these woes. He pronounced on these people. But I want to just show you two. Jesus is teaching.

But woe to you. That's the word of condemnation. Woe to you. Scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites. For you shut the kingdom of heaven. In people's faces.

For you neither enter yourselves. Nor allow those who would enter. To go in. Excuse me. Woe to you. Scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites.

[14 : 03] For you travel across sea and land. To make a single proselyte. And when he becomes a proselyte. You make him twice. As much a child of hell.

As yourselves. That's strong language. Pronouncing. Woe. Gloom.

Judgment. Upon these people by Jesus. Now. Here's where we need to be real. Clear. These are not.

Statements or prayers. That come from their. Uncontrolled. Outbursts of anger. Or desire for personal vengeance.

Paul and Jesus and David. In writing the things they did. They didn't just. Lose it. Like we do sometimes. They didn't just let people have it.

[15 : 03] Because they felt personally offended. And it made them mad. No. They made. Deliberate. Intentional.

Strong statements. Of judgment. Of condemnation. Against evil people. Who dishonored God.

And his truth. And were leading his people. Astray. They're. Praying against. People who are guilty.

Of very serious sin. Against God. And God's people. When we read this. Psalm.

When we read what Paul said. What Jesus said. We sort of. Wonder. Is that okay. We're sort of.

[15 : 58] Hesitant to. Approve it maybe. Several commentators. Pointed out. That the reason why. David. Paul. And Jesus. Why they were not. Bothered.

By such prayers. And we are. Is because. They were. Deeply sensitive. To sin. Against God. And we're not.

When they found people. Rising up. Opposing God. And his truth. That brought out. Anger. Righteous.

Indignation. Type of anger. Because. God. Was being dishonored. We should do. Likewise. Second thing.

I want us to note. About this prayer. Is that. This is a prayer. Asking God. Asking God. To judge evil people. David is not. Declaring his intent. To destroy the wicked.

[16 : 56] Look at verse 19 again. Oh that you. You God. Would slay the wicked. Oh God. David's not. Saying.

He's going to do it. He's asking God. To. Judge people. Kill people. Who have chosen. To defy him.

God. Kill these. Who have. Shaken their fist. In your face. Who has. Who have. Blasphemed. You. Your name.

And your honor. These are people. Who have. Intentionally. Not by accident. They have intentionally. Set themselves up. As enemies of God. Look at how they're described. In verse. The last part of verse 19.

They're men of blood. Some translations say. Blood thirsty. They're murderous. Type people. Verse 20. They speak against God. With malicious intent. They take God's name.

[17 : 52] In vain. Look at how. Chuck Swindoll. Describes. These kind of people. He says. They're not. Moderate. Passive. Foes. Of the Lord. They were. Unashamed. Hateful.

Open. And blatant. Despisers. Of God. And God's people. And make no mistake. Look at verse 21. David hates them.

Because they hate God. David counts them as his enemies. Because they have made themselves. God's enemies. Charles Spurgeon wrote.

Godless men are not the stuff. Out of which. True friends. Can ever be made. Let's just pause here for a moment. Who are your friends?

Who is it that you like to associate with? Who is it that you do things with? And by your association with them. They influence you.

[18 : 52] Are you close to people. Who despise God. And show it by some of the things they say.

And do. Don't misunderstand. David is not telling us here. We shouldn't have anything to do with sinful people.

All people are sinful. Including us. And David fully knew. About his own sin. He knew. He knew. That's why he prays it in.

Search me oh God. We need to be in this world as Christians. Relating to sinful people. And we can do that very easily.

Because we're sinful people ourselves. But. The average. Person who's not a Christian in Pickens. The average person who's not a believer.

[19 : 49] Period. Anywhere. They're not like the kind of person. David describes in this psalm. Most unbelievers. Don't just hate God.

And intentionally. Show contempt. For the things of God. The truth of God. Most. Unbelievers.

We need to be involved in their lives. Building relationships with them. Living. The Christian life in front of them. And sharing the gospel with them. That's what Jesus did. That's what we're supposed to do. We need to seek the good of such people.

But there are some people in this world. For example. Like the dictator of North Korea. America. Like terrorists. They're evil.

To the core. They have no regard for God. They have no regard for human life. A lot of them. They have no regard for their own family members.

[20 : 54] They have no regard. For their fellow countrymen. I'm talking about people who hate God. They hate God. As he has revealed himself in the Bible. And in Jesus.

You know. A lot of these people. Terrorists. A lot of them. Claim to be doing what they're doing. In the name of Allah. Their God. Their God is no God. There's one God.

Who created all things. There's one God. Who rules and reigns over this universe. And he has made himself known. In the Bible. In the Bible. Through his people. Israel.

And most clearly. In his son. Jesus. He alone is God. People who reject him. They're rejecting God.

No matter what their religious language says. So anyone. Who aligns with another God. Or no God. They're setting themselves up.

[21 : 52] As opponents. Of the true God. What I'm talking about. Make this clear. We're talking about people who hate God. We're talking about people who. Who live a life that demonstrates that.

Evil. Bloodthirsty people. And we need to ask God. We need to ask God. To stop them. Any way possible.

There are some people. There's some situations. We ought to pray. A prayer like David prayed. About such people. Just to take one example. We can all understand. Last Sunday night.

If we could have been. You or me. If we could have been. On the ground. And somehow or another. We looked up.

And we saw. That crazed guy. Setting up his rifles. In that hotel room. He'd broken out the window. He was setting it up. If somehow or another. We could have seen that. And understand what was going on.

[22 : 49] Before it happened. We should pray. Lord. Let me shoot that guy. Lord. Let the police get to him. And kill him. Before he kills anybody.

That would be a good prayer. That would be a right prayer. That in the moment. That is an evil person. Intent on doing evil to humanity. To people creating God's image.

That person should die. And if we can be a part of it. Praying or acting to kill. Such an evil person. We need to do that.

Theologian John Frame. Makes an important point. About why it's right. For us to hate. And oppose evil in this world. Frame's one of the most respected.

Christian writers on ethics. In this country. Look at what he says. Strange as it may sound. We do have a responsibility. To cultivate the hatred.

[23 : 48] Of evil. In an age that takes. The vilest behavior for granted. We are called to hate. What God hates. And to love. What God loves. Holy hatred.

Holy love. Are inseparable. We need to learn. To hate. What God hates.

Because what God hates. Ought to be hated. When God hates. It is right. But let's be real clear now. David is not telling us.

To hate our personal enemies. David is not saying. That it's okay. If anybody offends you. You just get mad. And you pray down. God's judgment on them.

No. There is no place in this. About personal vendettas. Personal vengeance. He is telling us. He is telling us. To hate God's enemies.

[24 : 44] Wicked people. Who have said. And done things. To oppose God. And God's people. People that it's obvious. They set themselves up. To oppose God. Evil people.

Understand. They hate God. They blaspheme him. They murder people. Created in his image. I want you to be clear. This is not. In any shape. Form or fashion. A license.

To unleash. Our. Anger. Frustration. Hostilities. On people. Who just rub us. The wrong way. Who just. Hurt us. Personally.

Or someone. We love. Let's look at one more. Statement about David's prayer. This is a prayer. That we should pray. Only pray. Cautiously. And.

Rarely. This is not. We can't pray prayers like this. Just because somebody's going slow. In front of us.

[25 : 44] Especially in the left lane. Of a four lane highway. I want to get a bumper. I saw a bumper sticker. I got to tell you this. It said.

If I passed you. On your right. You are an idiot. That might not be the best witness.

I'm not going to get one. But in my heart. I want that bumper sticker. Now. In looking at a message like this. We need to take a little break.

Sort of calm down a little bit. Look at the screen. This is a prayer. That we should only pray. Cautiously. And rarely.

It is a prayer. Reserved for the worst. Of the worst. It is a prayer. Against truly. Evil. People. Not just they hate you.

[26 : 47] We are talking about people. Who hate God. And if they hate you. The reason they hate you. Is because you are a Christian. We are talking about people. Who will do anything. To oppose God.

And God's ways. And God's people. But we know. Most of the time. Our anger. Our hatred. Are not provoked.

Because someone has said. Or done things. Done something against God. We get all up in arms. We let our emotions. Get away from us.

When people say. Or do things against us. And they personally insult us. That's why. We need to continue on.

In this psalm. And pray. For God. To examine us. Like David did. We need for God. To help us. To understand. Our emotions. And our motives.

[27 : 45] When we're angry. So that we can deal. With them. Appropriately. That's what David did. In the last two verses. Here's the second point. This morning. We must pray.

For God. To reveal the evil. Within us. That's verses. 23. And 24. We may. A few times. A few times. In our life. Pray for God.

To deal so severely. With certain people. Around us. We pray that they die. We pray that God. Kill them. Pray that God. Take them out. We may. We may not.

But if we do. It would only be a few times. A rare thing. To pray such a prayer. But we must always. Pray. For God. To reveal the evil.

That is in us. What David says. In verse 23. Is a great way. For us to start every day. Look at it. Search me. Oh God. Know my heart. Try me.

[28 : 40] And know my thoughts. God. David wanted God. To know his heart. Which God did. He's already talked about it. Back in verse 1. But he's wanting God. To make known.

What is in him. To him. David wants God. To search him. And convict him. Or comfort him. Whatever it needs to be. He wants God.

To test and purify. His heart. Like a refiner. Would test and purify. Metal. Let's think about it. Do you want to pray. Such a prayer every day.

Look at it. Verse 23. Search me. Oh God. Know my heart. Try me. And know my thoughts. Does that appeal to you? Is that something you would want to pray?

Because you want God to show you your sin. So that you can confess it. So you can turn from it. So you can be forgiven for it. Do you want God to work in your life.

[29 : 37] To enable you. To be morally pure. To be holy. In your relationships. With people in your home.

Or at school. Or at work. Or wherever. What David says in verse 23. Is a great prayer for us to start every day with. But look at verse 24. What he says here. Is a great way for us to live every day.

And see if there's any grievous way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. We should want to know. We should want to know. If there's anything in our life that grieves God.

Or offends God. So that we can eliminate it. I mean just think. If he is our heavenly father. If we truly love him. We should desire to live in close fellowship with him.

And just live a life that pleases him. Do you? Is that your desire?

[30 : 37] You know this morning we're ending our series on dealing with life's hardships and uncertainties. Our goal has been to learn to trust God. Not worry. As we face our difficulties and fears.

What David tells us in these last two verses. Can really help us stay close to God. And on a daily basis experience his comfort and courage.

Because we have a right relationship with him. Because we trust him. Because we seek to live life his way. So this morning I want us to close.

Read it and keep your eyes open. But I want us to close. And together. You pray it silently. I'll pray out loud. But let's just read verses 23 and 24 together. Let this be our prayer to God.

And I want to encourage you to let it be a prayer every day. Look at it. Search me oh God. And know my heart. Try me. And know my thoughts.

[31 : 43] And see if there be any grievous way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. Let's all bow together.

In an attitude of prayer. I want you to listen to the Lord. I want you to respond to him as he has spoken to you today.

Maybe the Lord has shown you that you don't take sin as seriously as you should. Maybe God has made it clear to you. What offends you doesn't offend me like it should.

So confess that to God. Ask him to help you to love what he loves and hate what he hates. Ask him to give you wisdom and know how to pray in these questionable situations about questionable people.

But most importantly. Admit to God that you can't trust yourself. None of us can trust ourselves. So we need God to search us.

[32 : 52] To convict us or to comfort us. Ask God. To show you what needs to be done this morning.

So that you can leave here close to him. Trusting him. And better equipped to face life's hardships and uncertainties. God show us how we should respond.

Help us to do it. And in an attitude of prayer. Do what God tells you to do. I'd be happy to pray with you here at the front. If you'd like for me to during this time. You just do what God.

Is calling you to do right now.