

Psalm 109:16–21

Praying for Justice As Objects of Mercy

Tuesday, January 16, 2024 ▫ Read Psalm 109:16–21

Questions from the Scripture text: What did the wicked not remember to show (v16a)? What did he do instead (v16b)? To whom? What else did he even do (v16c)? To whom? What did the wicked love (v17a)? What, then, should come to him? In what didn't the wicked delight (v17b)? What, then, should be far from him? With what did the wicked clothe himself (v18a)? What, then, should permeate his body and bones (v18b–c)? What else should cursing be like unto him (v19)? Who should give this reward to whom (v20)? But what reward does the psalmist hope to receive from him (v21)? For what two reasons?

What do we learn, as the Psalm turns from how the wicked have treated God's Messiah to how they have treated the needy and lowly? Psalm 109:16–21 prepares us for the opening portion of public worship on the Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God vindicates His own Name in both the justness of His wrath and the freedom of His mercy.**

The poor and needy are a providential assignment to test if we value God by valuing those made in His image, v16. The word "remember" is important. It indicates that there is something that we should do in response to the poor, needy, and broken-hearted: show mercy. The word here is kessed—covenant love. Love in which we are to image God in how we treat others who are made in that image. Failure to show mercy is to "forget" what we should do, to know what is right but not do it—which is sin (cf. Ja 4:17)!

So the first line of v16 is not saying that the wicked "was going to show kindness" but didn't remember; rather, it is identifying his not showing mercy as a rebellion against God. God commanded something, and he didn't remember it. (The idea of "remembering" is used in the same way in the fourth commandment; "forgetting" the Sabbath is not a mental lapse, but rebellion!)

We see this rebellion in the escalation from forgetfulness to "persecution" and finally "slaying." And his victims progress from those who are merely lowly in an outward sense ("poor and needy") to those who are broken even in heart. The attacker of the Lord and His anointed in vv1–4 is now further identified as a despiser of the needy, a disregarder of God by his uncaring devaluation of those made in God's image.

The wrath of God is exact in its justness, v17–20. The language in v17–19 highlights that the Spirit-inspired praying for wrath is asking only for exactly what is right and just. Let him have what he loved (cursing, v17a). Keep from him what he doesn't delight in (blessing, v17b). Let him be coated continually with what he wanted to be covered with (cursing, v18–19). We must be careful with how we relate to men who are made in the image of God.

And we must be careful even more with how we relate to God Himself. We will spend forever in His presence, either in His favor (cf. 1Th 4:17, 2Th 1:10) or in His fury (2Th 1:8–9). For if the justness in how we respond to those made in the image of His glory is exact, then what must be the greatness of His justice in how we respond to His glory itself?!

YHWH's reward in v20 is amplified by against-Whom are the accusations in this Psalm. Remember that David is speaking here as the Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ. This is a Psalm by which Christ Himself, as a human boy, grew in wisdom and understanding of Who He is. And He learned that attacks on God's image, attacks upon God, attacks upon God's reign, are attacks especially upon Christ Himself. v20 makes this point strongly: "My accusers" and even "My Person."

The mercy of God is divine in its greatness, v21. Just as God acts for His Name's sake, for His glory's sake, in His dealings with the wicked, so it is also in His dealings with the elect. It is not as if they have treated God's glory well enough to merit God's favor. But He, the Lord YHWH (v21a) will act for the sake of that Name! He will act for the sake of His mercy, grace, longsuffering, kessed, and emmet (cf. Ex 34:6)! This is how and why YHWH shows mercy to His elect, and why His Name on His Son must certainly be vindicated. Jesus was shown to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection (cf. Rom 1:4), and that same resurrection was on account of our justification (cf. Rom 4:25). These two lines of God's acting for His Name come together in Christ. He acts for Christ Who is the glory of His Name, and He acts for the mercy that is bound up in that Name! His mercy, His kessed, is so good (v21c) that He will surely deliver those upon whom He has set that love (v21c)! Here is something that every believer can plead in every trouble.

What poor and needy has the Lord placed in the path of your life? What should you "remember"? How should you feel about cursing? What evidence is there, in your life, of delighting in blessing? Yet, what must your hope be in, rather than in these evidences? What, in God's character, makes sure your hope in God's Name's sake? What, in Christ's identity, makes sure your hope in God's Name's sake?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for creating us in Your image to glorify and enjoy You! Grant that we would remember to show covenant love to those who are made in Your image. But now, O Lord, show covenant love to us. Declare and display Your glory and covenant love to us, especially in the person of Your Son, our Lord Jesus. Until You bring us at last into Your glory to worship You forever, be our reward in the worship of Your glory, we ask through Christ Himself, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP109A "God of My Praise" or TPH389 "Great God, What Do I See and Hear!"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 109 verses 16 through 21. These are God's words. Because he did not remember to show mercy. But persecuted the poor and the needy man. That he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come to him. As he did not delight in blessing, so let it be far from him.

As he clothed himself, with cursing, that's with garment

As he closed himself. As he clothed himself, with cursing, as, with the garment. So let it enter his body like water and like oil into his bones. Let it be to him like the government, which covers him and for a belt with which he girds himself continually Let this be always reward to my accusers.

And to those who speak evil against my person. But you owe y'all pay the lord. Deal with me for your names sake. Because your mercy is good. Deliver me. So far the reading of gods inspired and inherent word. Notice that when the lord gives people around us trouble, or Needs.

It makes them poor or needy or broken in heart and verse 16 is a providential assignment. To respond to the image of god in them and especially his believers to respond to their union. With christ. Verse 16 says because he did not remember. In other words, this is something that has been instituted by god, that he should have known.

He should have recognize, and should have responded to in the right way. Just like the fourth commandment begins, remember this apathy to keep a holy recognizes that god has instituted. Something that we are to be mindful of recognize when it appears and respond to in the right way? So, the poor and needy are a providential assignment to us.

To test and show that we value god by valuing those made in his image. And then when it's believers, especially, by the way, we value those who are united to christ, And the second place, notice the perfect justness. Of the just tests. Of god. He loved cursing, he let him have it.

He didn't delight and blessing. Let it be far from him. This is very similar to what we referenced from. Uh, the end of matthew 18 and the lord's day morning, sermon The the man who wanted to be forgiven but when it came time to forgive was not interested in forgiving, Well, it is a truth.

It is a reality that those whom god saves only by what christ has done. He always begins to make them and will complete making them be and do as christ has done. And so, we pray in the lord's prayer. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, we're not saying, oh, lord, due to us according to how wonderfully we're doing to others.

We're saying due to us, according to what christ is like, And according to what you have begun making us like as you make us to be like christ. And we'll see that. Uh, again. Uh, when we come to verse 21, Um, but his justice If you loved cursing, let him have it.

If he doesn't delight and blessing, don't give it to them. He liked to clothe himself with cursing. Let it saturate his entire being. Make it enter his body, like water and Um, his bones like oil, just make him feel and the fullness of the curse of the wrath of god forever.

Um, This is. A dreadful thing, it reminds us. Of that burning, that will come from the presence of the lord. And from his glory, second Thessalonians, chapter 1, although on all those Uh, who do not worth? No god or Uh, obey the gospel. It reminds us that we deserved exactly this.

That this is what we have been saved for. And it reminds us of what is coming to our enemy. So that we have no need. To be vengeful upon our enemy. If we just pray and sing in union with christ, the doctrine of the bible, We realize that god is infinitely vengeful and wrathful.

Upon those whom he is upon whom he is bringing. His wrath and that actually frees us to love our enemy. And to pray all the more fervently also with jesus. Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Let no one sing psalm 109 about their enemies in union with christ, unless they are ready to pray in union with christ.

What he prays from? The cross. For the conversion of them. And so, Bestness. Is bound up, especially. In the union with christ. Let this be always rewards to my accusers. Who's the my here? Again, from the superscript, it's david who is a type of the lord jesus christ, it is the lord's anointed.

And the, the reason That someone Would hate people who are made. And the image of god, Hate people who belong to the people of god is because they have received, they have received their opposition to god and his christ. From the devil. Who hates god. And who hates those made in god's image and who hates, especially the woman, the church, and who hates most of all the christ.

The child of the woman who defeats him and is caught up into heaven. And so, he's just been talking about. What the this man did to the poor. But notice how closely that's connected. Uh, to the lord jesus himself. Let this be always rewards to my accusers to those who speak evil against my Person.

And so let us take comfort. If we are attacked that, the lord jesus has receiving it as an attack upon his person, but let us also take warning. Let us uh let us give the benefit of the doubt in our heart. Let us Believe all things. Hope all things endure.

All things. Last we be found. To make attack on believers. In our heart to be hostile or bitter, or even with our mouth gossip or slander, Or in any other way, lest our attacks also be Against the person. Of the lord jesus christ. As paul's were But let us remember.

That the lord jesus has taken upon himself. The curse that we deserve. And that we are not asking god to treat us. In accordance with how well we have done by contrast to the wicked. But for the sake of his own name and you see that in verse 21, but you oh, yahweh.

So he names the name, the lord So he identifies him as master. Right? But you owe, you always the lord. The one who has taken me. Uh, from being your enemy lord. Uh, you have taken me to be your servant but you, oh, you always the lord. Deal with me for your names sake.

Because your mercy is good. Not because i'm good. Or mike has, it is good. But because your god's cousin is good. Your steadfast covenant love is good. Deliver me. And so, this is neither. Uh, something to be sung from the vindictiveness of our heart and certainly not from any self-righteousness of our heart.

But rather amazement that for us who deserved the very wrath, That we pray with such soberness and solemnity and sing with such soberness and solemnity in this. Psalm for we for us who deserved that. Upon us whom the lord whom upon us who deserve that the lord has poured his love.

And he's delivered us in his love. Than most amazing of all, he has set his own name. Upon us. So that because of what the lord has done for us and his putting his name upon us. We may pray to have a different outcome. Than as being prayed and sung against the reprobate.

Against the wicked. Uh, here. Uh, so let us remember what our sins deserve and what christ had to pay. So that we will be at least as hostile to our own sense as we are to anyone else's To let us, especially remember. The great love of god. The great deliverance and salvation of god.

And how he has even identified himself with us by putting his name. Upon us. And let us plead these things in prayer. And respond to these things in our life. Amen, let's pray. Our grace is god. How we thank you. Even for, A curse psalm such as this. To remind us.

Of him who took our curse whom you gave in love. That he might endure it all. And in that love saved us through christ. And then that salvation put your name upon us in christ. So that you have even baptized us into the name, father, son, and holy spirit.

And grant to us. So to love you. We would hate our sin. And grant to us. So to be amazed, At the, Perfection of your wrath. That we would not feel any need to be vindictive or bitter. Or vengeful in our own heart. But that we might even pray in union.

With the same. Uh, savior who prays and sings this. Give us. Oh, lord. To take your wrath more and more. Seriously. And o lord, do give the reprobate. At last according to your perfect justice. But save your elect. Who have deserved the same wrath? For, we ask it in.

Your name, the name, jesus. Amen.