

## Seek Justice in the Midst of Oppression:

Psalm 57 and Psalm 142 / I Samuel 24:1-22

November 9, 2019

- **When oppressors seek to abuse the innocent,**

When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told,

“Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.”

Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself.

- **Do not seek your own justice of the oppressor. If so,**

Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. And the men of David said to him,

“Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’”

Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

- **Repent of your self-serving justice, and**

And afterward **David's heart struck him**, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. He said to his men,

“The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed.”

So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

- **Declare God's grace and God's justice to the guilty, yet**

Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, “My lord the king!”

And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. And David said to Saul,

1. “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Behold, David seeks your harm’?”
2. Behold, this day your eyes have seen **how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave.**
3. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, ‘I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.’
4. See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. **I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it.**
5. **May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you**, but my hand shall not be against you. As the proverb of the ancients says, ‘Out of the wicked comes wickedness.’ But my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea!
6. **May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you**, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.”

- **Prepare for the false repentance of the oppressor.**

As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?”

And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David,

1. “You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good,
2. whereas I have repaid you evil.
3. And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe?
4. So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day.
5. And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.
6. Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house.”

And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

### Seeking Justice in the Midst of Oppression: Psalm 57

*To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David, when he fled from Saul, in the cave.*

#### I cry out to God for deliverance, and

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, / for in you my soul takes **refuge**;  
in the shadow of your wings I will take **refuge**, / till the storms of destruction pass by.  
I cry out to God Most High, / to God who fulfills his purpose for me. (57:1-2)

**I will trust God to deliver me even though**

He will send from heaven and save me; / he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah  
 God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness! (57:3)

**I am oppressed by evil predators, yet**

My soul is in the midst of lions; / I lie down amid fiery beasts—  
 the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, / whose tongues are sharp swords. (57:4)

**I will exalt and glorify God as**

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! / Let your glory be over all the earth! (57:5)

**I watch my oppressors fall, so**

They set a net for my steps; / my soul was bowed down.  
 They dug a pit in my way, / but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah (57:6)

**I will praise and give thanks to God, and**

My heart is steadfast, O God, / my heart is steadfast!  
 I will sing and make melody! / Awake, my glory!  
 Awake, O harp and lyre! / I will awake the dawn!  
 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; / I will sing praises to you among the nations.  
 For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, / your faithfulness to the clouds. (57:7-10)

**I will let God be exalted and glorified.**

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! / Let your glory be over all the earth! (57:11)

**Jesus Calms the Storm: Trusting God in the Midst of Injustice**

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but <b>he was asleep.</b>	On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."  And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.	One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake."  So they set out, and as they sailed <b>he fell asleep.</b>
And they went and woke him, saying, " <b>Save us, Lord; we are perishing.</b> "	And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. <b>But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.</b>	And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.
And he said to them, " <b>Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?</b> "	And they woke him and said to him, " <b>Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?</b> "	And they went and woke him, saying, " <b>Master, Master, we are perishing!</b> "
Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.	And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.	And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.
And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" (8:24-27)	He said to them, " <b>Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?</b> "  And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (4:35-41)	He said to them, " <b>Where is your faith?</b> "  And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?" (8:22-25)

## Depression and Despair in the Midst of Injustice: Psalm 142

*A Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.*

### I will cry out to the Lord in the midst of oppression

With my voice I cry out to the LORD; / with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD.  
I pour out my complaint before him; / I tell my trouble before him. (142:1-2)

### Because I am alone and depressed, yet

When my spirit faints within me, / you know my way!  
In the path where I walk / they have hidden a trap for me.  
Look to the right and see: / there is none who takes notice of me;  
no refuge remains to me; / no one cares for my soul. (142:3-4)

### I will cry out to the Lord for deliverance; therefore,

I cry to you, O LORD; / I say, “You are my refuge, / my portion in the land of the living.”  
Attend to my cry, / for I am brought very low!  
Deliver me from my persecutors, / for they are too strong for me! (142:5-6)

### I will give thanks for God’s protection.

Bring me out of prison, / that I may give thanks to your name!  
The righteous will surround me, / for you will deal bountifully with me. (142:7)

### Despair and Depression of Injustice

Depression of Injustice	God’s Justice
<p><b>JOB:</b> After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. And Job said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Let the day perish on which I was born, / and the night that said, / ‘A man is conceived.’</b></li> <li>• Let that day be darkness! / May God above not seek it, / nor light shine upon it.</li> <li>• Let gloom and deep darkness claim it. / Let clouds dwell upon it; / let the blackness of the day terrify it.</li> <li>• That night—let thick darkness seize it! / Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; / let it not come into the number of the months.</li> <li>• Behold, let that night be barren; / let no joyful cry enter it.</li> <li>• Let those curse it who curse the day, / who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.</li> <li>• Let the stars of its dawn be dark; / let it hope for light, but have none, / nor see the eyelids of the morning,</li> <li>• because it did not shut the doors of my mother’s womb, / nor hide trouble from my eyes.</li> <li>• <b>“Why did I not die at birth, / come out from the womb and expire?</b></li> <li>• Why did the knees receive me? / Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?</li> <li>• <b>For then I would have lain down and been quiet; / I would have slept; then I would have been at rest, (Job 3:1-26)</b></li> </ul>	<p>Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. (Job 38:1-4 / 38:5-41:34)</p>

<p><b>MOSES:</b> Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,’ to the land that you swore to give their fathers? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. <b>If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.</b>” (Numbers 11:10-14)</p>	<p>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. (Numbers 11:16-17)</p>
<p><b>ELIJAH:</b> Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. <b>And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.”</b> And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. (I Kings 19:1-5a)</p>	<p>And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.” And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. (I Kings 19:5-8)</p>
<p><b>JONAH:</b> But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O Lord, <b>please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.</b>” And the Lord said, “Do you do well to be angry?” Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. (Jonah 4:1-5)</p>	<p>But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” And the LORD said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?” (Jonah 4:9-11)</p>
<p><b>JESUS:</b> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “<b>My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.</b>” (Matthew 26:36-45)</p>	<p>And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39)</p>
<p><b>PAUL:</b> For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, <b>we felt that we had received the sentence of death.</b></p>	<p>But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)</p>