

Sermon 4/9/17

Psalm 62: Trusting Our Sovereign God

-Intro: We'll be in Psalm 62 if you want to turn there.

-Control: we all want it, none of us ultimately has it, but we spend a lot of time and money deluding ourselves that we do. And, in so doing, we often attempt to wrest control away from God, the only one who truly has it.

-Psalm 62 deals with our desire to have control, and our discomfort when we feel that we've lost it, and then concludes by reminding us of the reality that God is in absolute control.

-That can be an uncomfortable idea for us sometimes: that we are completely at the mercy of God, but I hope to show us why it is the best news in the world.

-Let's pray, and then we'll look at it.

-This Psalm can be broken into three sections: vv. 1-4, vv. 5-8, and vv. 9-12. We will look at each section and then look at the Psalm as a whole.

-First, vv.1-4. Let me read them.

-vv.1-2: These verses are the central message of the psalm. David wants his readers to know this going in: God is our salvation. These lines will be repeated almost word for word a little later on.

-vv.3-4: These verses present a picture of a certain type of person. What are they like?

-v. 3: They are opportunistic predators.

-They attack, but only vulnerable targets.

-That's what the picture of the leaning wall and tottering fence are getting at.

-Who are these targets?

-v. 4a: Men in high position.

-David may very well be drawing from his own experience.

-So this type of person desires to be in high position, and so they target those who occupy higher positions than their own, but who are vulnerable. And how do they attack them?

-v.4b: With flattering lies.

-They love falsehood.

-They bless outwardly, but curse inwardly.

-They flatter their targets to their face, and slander them behind their backs.

- This is the first person David wants to speak to: the corrupt politician.
 - Perhaps it's just me, but this sounds a lot like some American politicians.
 - It's amazing to me that during campaigns, candidates will say the most slanderous, damaging things about each other, but when they come face to face, it's all handshakes, smiles, and false respect.

- And what does David want to say to them?
 - You trust in your ability to control the world through power and lies.
 - I trust in God's control of things, which is the true foundation.
 - The reality that this type of person is often blind to, is that one day they may be toppling the leaning wall, but the next they will be the tottering fence.
 - Whereas, those who trust in God can barely be moved.
 - In other words, your control is an illusion, so trust in God's control instead.

- Let's move on to the second person David has in mind in vv. 5-8. Let me read them.
 - vv.5-6: As I said before, these verses are almost identical to verses 1-2, except for three minor differences:
 - 1) Here David is preaching to himself, instead of simply describing himself waiting for God. He's struggling to trust God.
 - 2) Hope is the focus, instead of salvation. In the first section David needed salvation from his enemies, in this second section he needs hope from God to make it through his crisis of faith.
 - 3) In the first section David concedes the possibility that his enemies will succeed. May be shaken in that way. Here he is declaring that God will not abandon those who wait for Him to despair. Will not be shaken at all in this way.
 - In these verses, David is encouraging his soul to not succumb to hopelessness, but to instead wait on the God who will save.
 - vv.7-8: Here David declares two things: God is his personal refuge, and God is a refuge for anyone who puts their trust in Him.
 - He bears witness to God's trustworthiness in his own life.
 - Then urges his audience to lean on God for everything.
 - The language is all-encompassing ("at all times").
 - The language is passionate ("pour out your heart").

- David is speaking to the oppressed person in a crisis of faith.
 - What does he have to say?
 - Trust God, He is a refuge even in the middle of the storm.

- Finally, in the third section, he compares man to God.
 - v.9: Man is nothing.
 - Doesn't matter if a person is high or low on the totem pole.
 - Put together, they are lighter than air.
 - v.10: Money is an illusion.

- Interesting that money is specifically mentioned. This should speak to its powerful and often misleading allure.
- Money is perhaps the most sought after tool in the world for gaining control. And it leads everyone astray.
 - Those who have it, like corrupt politicians, are tempted to abuse it.
 - Those who don't have it, like the oppressed, are tempted to seek it thinking it will give them the stability that they lack in life.
- David warns both audiences against the folly of setting their heart on riches, whether gained honestly or dishonestly.
- v.11-12: God is powerful and loving, and in the end He will give man what he deserves according to his works.
 - Here we are presented with the ultimate power of God. He is in absolute control in the end.
 - Reminder for all to live in light of His power and love.
- This ending reminder serves a dual purpose: one of warning, and encouragement.
 - It warns the first type of person David addressed, that God will judge them by their works, so they better give up their attempts to control things by oppressing others lest they suffer His judgment.
 - However, this also encourages the second person, the struggling person. It urges them to continue to press into God even if it seems unbearable. It reminds them of the folly of thinking that man or money can give them control, while also reminding them that the God who is in control is loving and merciful.
- This psalm digs at that reality that we want to control our lives and the world around us. But it reminds us of the reality that God is in control, and that there are basically two responses to that reality:
 - Fight it, and be judged by God in all His awful power, or...
 - Trust it, and be rewarded by God in all His steadfast love.
- It's a beautiful reorientation of creation around its center.
- I think it's easy with this psalm to put ourselves in David's shoes, or the shoes of the oppressed. Easy to distance ourselves from the oppressors destined to suffer God's powerful judgment.
- But I'd like to take a few minutes to disavow us of this view.
- In Romans 2:6 Paul writes, "He [that is God] will render to each one according to his works..." Sound familiar? Listen to the next two verses...
 - v.7: Sounds kind of like the oppressed in Psalm 62 doesn't it?
 - v.8: And this sounds a bit like the oppressors.

-The vv.9-11 say that those who do evil will receive tribulation and distress, and those who do good will receive glory, honor, and peace.

-And who is it that does evil? Who is it that does good? Paul spends the next chapter and a half proving that everyone has done evil, no one has done good. Here are some highlights.

-2:15-16: will your secrets accuse or excuse you? Consider that Christ Jesus appears to be the standard here.

-2:21: Tim Keller's illustration. Do you dishonor God by breaking the law you boast in?

-To top it off 3:9-20: Not much more I can add to that. We are all destined to suffer the fate of the oppressors from Psalm 62.

-In fact, we are just 3 verses short of the most popular proof text for the sinfulness of all men. Romans 3:23, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."

-According to God through Paul, we have all sought control.

-We have all decided we know how the world works more than God.

-We have all neglected to trust Him, and instead chosen to trust ourselves.

-While we may be able to relate to the oppressed in Psalm 62, we must also accept that at times we have acted a lot like the oppressors.

-The good news is that there is one remedy for both the oppressed and the oppressor. Trust in God. Give up your attempts to control the world, and trust in God.

-But what does this look like? We find the ultimate answer in the next section of Romans 3.

-Read 3:20-26. Can you believe what we just read?

-On the heels of being told we are all sinful and therefore deserving of God's most terrible judgment, we are told this...

-...the law which we all have failed to uphold, that was the basis for our condemnation, is now no longer the only the standard of righteousness...

-...now the standard of righteousness is a person, Jesus...

-...however, unlike the first standard of righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus is attainable...

-...but we are not given this righteousness as a reward on the basis of our works, but as a gift on the basis of our faith...

-...Jesus was our propitiation, He absorbed the wrath we deserved according to our works. This showed the righteousness of God, because our sin was punished...

-...God's righteousness is also revealed in us being welcomed in to His family as righteous, because when Jesus took our sin, we received His righteousness...

-...God is therefore just (He judged sin rightly), and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

-And so now we see why we should trust God.

-In the words of Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?"

-Translation: if God the Father was willing to send God the Son to die for you, there is nothing He won't do for you to secure your ultimate good.

-I want to note some interesting wording in vv.1-2, and then I'll close.

-"From Him comes my salvation..."

-"He alone is my rock and my salvation..."

-How can salvation come from God, when God Himself is that salvation?

-Answer: Jesus who is God, came from God, and is our salvation.

-Will you trust Him? Will you trust the one who used His control to secure your salvation at great cost to Himself? I hope you will.

-In closing, I want to turn our attention to the season we're in currently.

-Today is Palm Sunday. The celebration of Jesus entering Jerusalem, and being received as the king He is.

-Yet He does not go on to exert His kingly power and control. Instead He gives it up.

-Remember His struggle in the garden? He gives control to God in the way the Psalm calls for.

-He trusts God, but gets forsaken.

-Why? So that we who have stolen control can be accepted.

-You see, "For our sake [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

-If you're thinking that doesn't sound fair, you're right. It's not fair, it's the Gospel of grace made available by the blood of Jesus shed on your behalf.

-The choice is yours: cling to the illusion of control we are all so prone to, or trust the God who is in control and gave everything to save you.

-He alone is our rock and our salvation.

-Let's pray.