

LESSON 32

DIVINE JUSTICE FOR HUMAN INJUSTICE

Psalm 109

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- ¹Be not silent, O God of my praise!
²For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me,
speaking against me with lying tongues.
³They encircle me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause.
⁴In return for my love they accuse me,
but I give myself to prayer.
⁵So they reward me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

WELCOME: *Fixing Our Focus*

Cite an instance in the Bible where God demonstrated his justice. Discuss with the group how you feel about God's justice in that particular instance (e.g. Is God being too strict or too lax?).

WORSHIP: *Adoring Our God*

Suggested songs:

The Lord is My Salvation by Ketih & Kristyn Getty, Jonas Myrin,
and Nathan Nockels
Victor's Crown by Darlene Zschech, Israel Houghton & Kari Jobe

WORD: *Understanding the Word*

Lesson Aim: Members will look to God to bring to justice those from whom they have received injustice and not take matters into their own hands.

Introduction

Have you been a victim of injustice? Do you have a bully in school who, just because they are bigger and stronger than you, beat you up for no reason at all? Do you have a boss who mistreats you because of your Christian principles? Have you had problems dealing with government agents who make things difficult for you because you refuse to give in to their extortion? Out of your frustration you cry out to God and ask for deliverance. This is the same sentiment of the psalmist. He turns to the only God who can keep his life in tune in midst of the injustice he's receiving.

Leader: Lead in reading Psalm 109:1-5 aloud together. Then read the paragraph on the "Key Verse."

Key Verse: Though people may do injustice against others, God can turn the tables against them. God can use their acts of injustice for his purpose. Those who are afflicted will eventually receive glory. This is found in verse 28, "Let them curse, but you will bless! They arise and are put to shame, but your servant will be glad!"

Psalm 109:1-5. Theme: _____

1. What is the urgent cry of the psalmist at the beginning of the psalm (*v. 1*)? Why do you think the psalmist cried out to God this way?

2. The psalmist described his oppressors using body parts (*v. 2*). Underline them together with their adjectives. Underline how they are oppressing the psalmist (*vv. 3-5*). How would you summarize what's being done to the psalmist? Have you experienced something similar to what the psalmist described?

3. Encircle how the psalmist reacted towards the actions of his oppressors. If you have experienced something similar to what the psalmist had described, how did you react towards your oppressors?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 1-5.

Psalm 103:6-20. Theme: _____

Read verses 6-20 together.

- ⁶Appoint a wicked man against him;
let an accuser stand at his right hand.
⁷When he is tried, let him come forth guilty;
let his prayer be counted as sin!
⁸May his days be few;
may another take his office!
⁹May his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow!
¹⁰May his children wander about and beg,
seeking food far from the ruins they inhabit!
¹¹May the creditor seize all that he has;
may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil!
¹²Let there be none to extend kindness to him,
nor any to pity his fatherless children!
¹³May his posterity be cut off;
may his name be blotted out in the second generation!
¹⁴May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord,
and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out!
¹⁵Let them be before the Lord continually,
that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth!
¹⁶For he did not remember to show kindness,
but pursued the poor and needy
and the brokenhearted, to put them to death.
¹⁷He loved to curse; let curses come upon him!
He did not delight in blessing; may it be far from him!
¹⁸He clothed himself with cursing as his coat;
may it soak into his body like water,
like oil into his bones!
¹⁹May it be like a garment that he wraps around him,
like a belt that he puts on every day!

²⁰May this be the reward of my accusers from the Lord,
of those who speak evil against my life!

4. How does the psalmist want God to deal with his oppressors in the following verses:
 - a. 6 and 7: _____
 - b. 8 and 9: _____
 - c. 10-12: _____
 - d. 13-15: _____

5. What is the reason why psalmist sought divine judgment against his oppressors (*v. 16*)? Was it because they were oppressing him?

6. Underline the word curse and its different variations. Put in a box all words that pertain to clothing. How did the psalmist describe his oppressors? How did the psalmist ask God to treat his oppressors (*v. 17-20*)?

7. What do you think about praying to God about such things?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 6-20.

Psalm 109:21-31. Theme: _____

Read verses 21-31 together.

- ²¹But you, O God my Lord,
deal on my behalf for your name's sake;
because your steadfast love is good, deliver me!
- ²²For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is stricken within me.
- ²³I am gone like a shadow at evening;
I am shaken off like a locust.

²⁴My knees are weak through fasting;
my body has become gaunt, with no fat.

²⁵I am an object of scorn to my accusers;
when they see me, they wag their heads.

²⁶Help me, O Lord my God!
Save me according to your steadfast love!

²⁷Let them know that this is your hand;
you, O Lord, have done it!

²⁸Let them curse, but you will bless!
They arise and are put to shame, but your servant will be glad!

²⁹May my accusers be clothed with dishonor;
may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a cloak!

³⁰With my mouth I will give great thanks to the Lord;
I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

³¹For he stands at the right hand of the needy one,
to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.

8. What are the reasons cited by the psalmist for God to deliver him (*v.* 21, 26)? What are the principles we use when we pray to God? Are the similar to those of the psalmist?
9. How did the psalmist describe himself (*vv.* 22-25)? How is his description of himself contrast with his description of his oppressors?
10. In verse 29, put a box on the words pertaining to clothing and underline the words directly related to those articles of clothing. What did the psalmist pray to God for (*vv.* 27-29)? How is God portrayed by the psalmist?
11. What does the psalmist vow to do in the future (*v.* 30)? What makes the psalmist confident that God will answer his prayer (*v.* 31)? Do you have the same confidence that God will answer you when you pray to him?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 21-31.

WALK: *Applying the Word*

Questions for Adults

1. What are some forms of injustices you are currently experiencing? If none, what forms of injustice have you witnessed?
2. How did you react to the injustice you experienced or saw? Did you turn to God? What was the outcome?
3. As a group, come up with a set of guidelines or principles on how you can pray to God regarding people who have done you injustice.
4. Individually and as a group, pray back this psalm to God. You could start by saying something like:

Father, you know that I'm the victim of injustice. I acknowledge that I'm powerless, but you, O Lord, are almighty. I ask for your justice...

5. Pray for GCF (Prayer requests supplied by the Leader).

Questions for the Youth

1. What are some forms of injustice that you see happening in our society? Have you experienced becoming a victim of injustice?
2. How do you cope with the presence of injustice in our society? What are some of the emotions that you notice arise when you recognize the injustice done upon you and others?
3. As a group, pray to God that his justice would be made manifest in our society, even in the midst of injustice.

Questions for Children

1. The psalmist prayed to God because of wicked people who say mean things to him and lie to others about him. Have you experienced the same things as the psalmist did? Share this with the group.
2. Instead of taking revenge on the wicked people, the psalmist prayed that God would be the one take revenge on them. What is your normal reaction whenever somebody does something wrong against you? How can prayer become your natural reaction?
3. Is God a God of justice? If so, do you think he will allow wicked people to get away with their sin? How should this affect how you feel towards these people?