

**Victoria Ave/Emmanuel Baptist**

**Sunday, May 3, 2020**

**Psalm 139:19-22**

**The Dark Side of Praise?**

Have you ever reacted to a situation that you have heard about only to realize that you didn't have the full story.

In 2015, a story caused a bit of an uproar when it was reported that an 8-year-old boy was being sued by his aunt for being too exuberant. The aunt supposedly showed up at her nephew's party and received a joyful greeting...possibly too joyful. The nephew ran to her and launched himself into her arms. She caught him and subsequently was knocked to the ground and ended up with a broken wrist.

It was reported that she was suing her nephew for the injuries, losses and harm experienced. It was reported she said that an 8-year-old should know better!

The Internet went wild against this woman. Arm-chair juries became Internet executioners as they heard reports that the injured party had gone to a celebration and had difficulties holding her hors d'oeuvre plate!

Her lawyers stated that she "was never looking for money" and "had no choice" to sue because her insurance was only willing to pay \$1 towards her medical bills. She didn't want to do this anymore than anyone else would... but she was forced to by the insurance company!

It is all about CONTEXT!

Today we look at a hugely different section of Psalm 139. In verses 19-22, it seems that King David's exuberant joy takes a sudden dark turn. How are we to understand these words that seem to be filled with hate and curses? Aren't Christians supposed to be all about love?

**Psalm 139:19-22 (NLT)**

<sup>19</sup> O God, if only you would destroy the wicked!

Get out of my life, you murderers!

<sup>20</sup> They blaspheme you;

your enemies misuse your name.

<sup>21</sup> O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you?  
Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?

<sup>22</sup> Yes, I hate them with total hatred,  
for your enemies are my enemies.

David has been expressing his awe of how great God is...and suddenly we have a quite different type of prose. This section is actually a specific "genre" or type/classification of Psalm.

Verses 19-22 is what we call an IMPRECATORY psalm. An imprecatory psalm invokes judgement, calamity, or curses on your enemies or those seen as the enemies of God!

There are 6 (out of 150) Psalms that are classed as imprecatory. There are also verses within different Psalms (including ours today) that are considered imprecatory.

So how do we understand (some might even say "justify") David's words. "Destroy the wicked" "Get out of my life, murderers!"?

David's examination of the greatness, love and care of his Creator has led him to respond to those around him who are against God – who are openly rebelling against their Creator and David is defending God's honour.

David is not reacting against people who are "sinners." This isn't a self-righteous rant against people who do bad things! David is aware of how he disappoints God!

David's reaction is against those who systematically rebel against God because **they** have chosen to harden their hearts. They have hardened their hearts to the extent that they have made the conscious decision to be "God's enemy."

What about "loving your enemy?" In an article that John Piper wrote regarding these verses, he reminds us that there are many Psalms that express how the author has loved and pursued their enemies in the hopes of reconciliation over a long period of time, only to be rejected...even persecuted!

David expressed this in Ps.35:11-16:

<sup>11</sup> Malicious witnesses testify against me.  
They accuse me of crimes I know nothing about.  
<sup>12</sup> They repay me evil for good.  
I am sick with despair.  
<sup>13</sup> Yet when they were ill, I grieved for them.  
I denied myself by fasting for them,  
but my prayers returned unanswered.  
<sup>14</sup> I was sad, as though they were my friends or family,  
as if I were grieving for my own mother.  
<sup>15</sup> But they are glad now that I am in trouble;  
they gleefully join together against me.  
I am attacked by people I don't even know;  
they slander me constantly.  
<sup>16</sup> They mock me and call me names;  
they snarl at me.

It is only logical that there is a decisive moment when the time for redemption is gone and God's judgment prevails!

How can we use what David has expressed?

We CHOOSE to daily grow in our relationship with God. Through scripture, prayer, worship, and fellowship – we see God, we understand more and more WHO he is. He is the only one worthy of praise and honour and glory and power! We CHOOSE to hate sin and rebellion – especially as we fail Him, time and time again!

If we are honest, we will confess that as much as we want to love, serve, and be obedient to God...we fail! We fail hard and we fail often to the temptations of life. We justify our sin and bad behaviour and we seek out loopholes to participate in sin while calling ourselves Christ-followers.

Soul/Heart searching time! Ask yourself (and be honest in your answers), "When I sin...does it physically, mentally, and spiritually affect me? Does it break my heart and I truly and sincerely resolve to change/repent?"

May we respond to our sin with the same repentant heart that David had when he was confronted about his sin with Bathsheba by the prophet Nathan:

**Psalm 51:1-2; 10-12 (NLT)**

*<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
because of your unfailing love.*

*Because of your great compassion,  
blot out the stain of my sins.*

*<sup>2</sup> Wash me clean from my guilt.  
Purify me from my sin.*

*<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God.  
Renew a loyal spirit within me.*

*<sup>11</sup> Do not banish me from your presence,  
and don't take your Holy Spirit<sup>[a]</sup> from me.*

*<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and make me willing to obey you.*