

Psalm 69

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[0:00] Let me pray for us one more time. Our Lord and Heavenly Father, we do recognize you as the God who delivers from mighty waters, from miry depths, from foes and enemies, and you have delivered us from our sin.

We praise you for these things and pray that we would listen to your voice now as you speak to us from your word. Amen. Amen. A phrase I've heard quite a few times recently, I think it's very in vogue, it's very popular, is describing yourself as an evangelist for something.

Now, I'm not talking about when people describe themselves as an evangelist for the gospel, a Christian evangelist, but when people share the so-called good news about a product that they really like or a place that they've been to, ironically, it's often a really mundane thing.

Like, I'm an evangelist, I'm a walking advert for Apple. I've got the AirPods and I've got an Apple Watch and an iPhone. That's nothing against you if you have those things. People say, I'm an evangelist for such and such a TV show.

I heard the other Bennett sister is very popular right now. I even heard a minister from Leeds, in our own denomination, describe himself as an evangelist for Zait and Zatar, the Lebanese restaurant just down by West Ealing.

[1:26] And to his credit, every year at Catalyst, it is full of IPC ministers. Maybe you are an evangelist for something, consciously or subconsciously.

It's what you talk about. It's what's on your mind. It's what's on your lips. As we read Psalm 69, I think it's clear what it is that David would be an evangelist for.

He doesn't use the word in the passage. But what he would be an evangelist for is God's house. The tabernacle, which is intrinsically related to God's house, is God's glory.

God's house, the tabernacle in the Exodus, and then the temple in Jerusalem was God's dwelling place. It was where his glory settled. So when David is zealous for God's house, he is zealous for God's glory.

That is what David would be an evangelist for. That is the reputation that he would defend. That's the hill that he would die on. That's what he would talk about.

[2:29] It's what he'd tell people about. It's what he'd invite people to come and see. To come and see his God. To see his God's house. To see his God's glory. David says famously in verse 9, Zeal for your house has consumed me.

David has a zeal, a dedicated passion, a burning desire for God's house, for God's glory. It's consumed him.

It's eaten him up from the inside out. It's marked his whole being. And this psalm, Psalm 69, is also the first or the second most quoted psalm in the New Testament, depending on how you measure it.

If it's number of quotations or different verses quoted. It's one or two. And Jesus, very famously, is said to fulfill that verse. Verse 9, zeal for your house has consumed me.

You might remember the episode. It's where Jesus does something on the surface that seems quite un-Jesus-like. Jesus goes to the temple and he finds it full of money changers and profiteers.

[3:39] And so he makes a whip out of cords and he chases them and the beasts out of the temple. And his disciples are said to remember that it was written in Psalm 69, zeal for your house will consume me, or has consumed me.

That's all in John chapter 2. Now that event, I think to a lot of people, maybe the first time they read the Gospels, it seems very un-Jesus-like. You don't expect Jesus to do something like that.

Maybe parts of Psalm 69 seemed un-Jesus-like to you, as Andrew read it earlier. But this psalm, the whole Bible, concerns Jesus.

They are fulfilled in Jesus, these verses. They are about Jesus. Jesus would have sung this psalm at the synagogue. And the unifying theme, both through Psalm 69 and David's experience, but also in Jesus' earthly ministry, is a zeal for God's glory.

So we'll look at Psalm 69 this morning as it relates to David and his zeal, and then as it is fulfilled in Christ. And the first thing that we see in Psalm 69, right from the outset, is David's despair.

[4:57] That's in verses 1 to 12, David's despair. David paints a visceral picture of the situation that he's in.

He's got this overwhelming feeling of despair. He's up to his neck. His life is in danger. His eyes are growing dim. His throat is parched. The flood is sweeping over him.

He can't help himself. There's no foothold. He's out of his depth, literally. There is no way that he can regain control of the situation. Although I say literally, it's not real drowning that is going on here.

He's not literally drowning. But the danger that he's in is enemies. In verse 4, he says, More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause.

Mighty are those who would destroy me, who attack me with lies. There are more enemies than he could possibly count, more than the hairs on his head. These are people that would attack David.

[6:01] They're people that would destroy him. Now, it's not clear from this psalm. There's no explicit reference. There's no superscription as to which enemies it could be.

But when you look at David's life, there's plenty of people that could be his enemies seeking to destroy him. Although, as we're going to see, it's probably not the enemies that we'd think it would be.

David had many famous enemies. He had Goliath and all of the Philistines. He had the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Arameans. All of these surrounding nations that engaged with war with David, and David engaged with war against them.

But David's enemies here hate him without cause. And all of them had reason to hate him. They were his enemies. Those who hate him here hate him without cause.

And verse 8 seems to imply that they are from his own people. Verse 12 seems to imply they're from his own city, those who sit at the gate. And on top of his external enemies, David had lots of internal enemies in his life.

[7:07] People who hated him. He had King Saul, the king before David, jealous of David, pursued him, sought to destroy him for years. Saul's clan, the Benjaminites, after Saul had died, continued to fight against David again and again.

David had other enemies among his own people. Doeg, the Edomites, the Ziphites, his own son, Absalom, all sought to destroy him at various points. Could be any of them he's talking about.

Because again and again in David's life, the very people that should be on his side, the very people that should recognize him as God's anointed king, were the ones who attacked him.

They attacked him with lies. They physically sought to destroy him and kill him. Those among his own people, even, verse 8, his own brothers.

He's an alien to his mother's sons. Now David says that they hate him without cause. He's not claiming sinlessness.

[8:10] In verse 5, he admits his folly, his sinful foolishness. But the hatred his enemies feel for him here is without cause or without good cause.

Because David does actually give us the cause. They have no good reason to hate him, but they have a reason. And the reason, the cause of this hatred, is David's zeal.

It is his uprightness, his godly living. It's David's love for his God and for his God's glory. Verse 7, it is for your sake, God, that I have borne reproach.

Verse 10, when I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach. Verse 11, when I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them.

David's honest repentance, his humility is the cause of this reproach. He's the talk of the town. From those who sit in the gates to the drunkards, everyone is reproaching him.

[9:12] And why? Because of his true worship. Because of his zeal for God and his house and his glory. That is why David can say, zeal for your house has consumed me.

Sinful people have a gut reaction to genuine godliness, to holiness. We have a reaction to false piety, to hypocrisy, to a holier-than-thou attitude.

But we have a gut reaction against genuine godliness as well. Like bugs under a rock, you lift up the rock and they scurry away and they dig and get themselves out of the light because they hate it and they want to get away from it.

So people, when they're exposed to genuine holiness, have a gut reaction. The sad reality and the obvious truth, though, is that people are bigger than bugs and they do worse things when they're faced with the light.

They attack. They attack first with words. They lie. They slander. They manipulate. That's what David says here.

[10 : 22] They have attacked him with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore. In verse 5. Verse 4, even. And when words don't work, then people will move on to bigger and mightier means of destruction than words.

This is why the persecution that David's facing has brought him to such despair. The injustice, the betrayal is from those who should have known better.

It is like drowning in a mire, like being engulfed. He says in verse 20, the reproaches have broken his heart. You don't get a broken heart from your enemies reproaching you.

You get a broken heart from your friends reproaching you. And this is all because of his uprightness of character, his godly living, his zeal for God's house and God's glory.

Now David's zeal for God's glory, this wasn't a one-off occasion. He wasn't having a slightly fanatical week. The very first time we meet David as he fights Goliath, he says, I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

[11 : 41] From day one, David has been consumed with zeal. He puts himself in danger, trusting in God to champion God's glory against the Philistines, against Goliath.

David was a sinful man, but he was also described again and again as a man after God's heart. He was one who was concerned all through his life with God's glory.

That's why David brings the ark back to Jerusalem. That's why David prepares for the building of the temple, the dwelling place of God's glory. But David is in despair because it's not enemy armies who are scorning him.

It's his own people. That is why he feels at the point of death, sinking in the mire with no foothold.

Maybe you felt David's despair when you yourselves have been zealous for God's glory, and it's led to disparaging remarks from your friends, from Christian friends, from family.

Let's look at what David does next with his despair to find an answer to that pain. Because David doesn't stop at verse 12. He continues in verses 13 to 28.

[12 : 57] We have David's desire, David's despair, and then his desire. David doesn't wallow in a mire of self-pity as well as his mire of despair.

He continues this psalm. He cries out to his God for deliverance and for justice. And as he cries out, you'll probably notice that his language completely changes.

The obvious one that you might have seen as we read through that is that he stops calling God, God, Elohim, or Lord, Adonai, but Lord in capital letters, Yahweh, God's covenantal name.

The name by which God revealed himself to Moses and made known his character. And David describes God's character in these verses. In verse 13, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me in your saving faithfulness.

Steadfast love, saving faithfulness. Verse 16, answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good. According to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

[14 : 11] These might seem like bold requests, but they're not insolent. They're not impertinent or impolite or rude. David can boldly say to God, answer me, O Lord, because he's asking God to act in line with God's own promises and his character.

That is why he's using this covenantal language of Yahweh, of saving faithfulness and abundant mercy, because this is how God has revealed himself to Moses as Yahweh, the great I am, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of their descendants.

This God promised to bring his people into his rest. He promised that they would be his people and he would be their God. And so David calls upon the Lord.

He says, God, fulfill those promises right now. Now, David's reason for deliverance is God's own promises. It's God's own character. It's his own name, his own love, his own mercy and faithfulness. And he's asking also, not just for his own deliverance, but for the deliverance of God's king. It's a vindication of God's name and God's glory when God's king is delivered.

[15 : 28] And on top of that, David expresses in verse 6, if God's anointed is afflicted, who's it going to affect most? It's God's people. It's those who hope in him.

They will also be put to shame. David wants the best for his people, not because they're his people, but because they're God's people. They bear God's name.

If they're put to shame, then God's name is put to shame. But David wants the best for God's name. He wants the best for God's people. He is zealous for God's glory.

So David desires deliverance. And he also desires justice. David recounts the bitterness, the hatred of those who reproached him.

They don't offer pity. They don't offer comfort. They offer gall, a horrible, bitter poison that would squeeze up your insides.

[16 : 29] They offer sour wine. There's a real venom to the hatred that they had for David. And so it is that David calls for justice. He calls for their actions to fall on them, for them to be faced with a snare instead of a table, for them to be faced with a trap instead of peace.

Now again, for a psalm that is fulfilled in Jesus, for a psalm that Jesus would have sung, this feels very un-Jesus-like, doesn't it? Didn't Jesus on the cross pray, Father, forgive them?

Yes, he did. But he continued that prayer saying, for they do not know what they are doing. The Romans who nailed Jesus to the cross did so out of ignorance.

And Jesus said to Pilate that, he who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin. The Jewish leaders who had got Jesus killed, Judas, who betrayed Jesus, they had the scriptures.

They had Psalm 69. They knew that this Messiah, this anointed one was coming, and they willfully turned their back on him and handed him over to be crucified.

[17 : 49] So it is that Paul can take Psalm 69 and apply it to unbelieving Jews in Romans chapter 11. Paul says, may their table become a snare and a trap.

May their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see. And Peter takes Psalm 69 and applies it to unbelieving Judas in Acts chapter 1. He says, may his camp be made a desolation.

Those who are given much, much is expected from. And so it is that David can pray this prayer of judgment upon his enemies because they are judgment, it is judgment on those who reject God's anointed one.

While this Psalm, while these quotes might seem very un-Jesus like, they're really no different from the other most quoted Psalm in the New Testament.

Psalm 110, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. We confessed earlier, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

[19 : 00] David calls on judgment for those who reject God's king and he calls on God to maintain his holiness, his glory, his justice.

Again, this all comes from a deep-seated desire for God's name to be glorified. David's zeal is for God, not for revenge. We can see that because what David doesn't do, what he doesn't ask God for, is an opportunity for him to enact revenge on his enemies.

He doesn't say, God, give me a chance to do this to them. God doesn't, David doesn't want human, imperfect justice, but God's perfect justice.

Think of the old hymn, do your friends despise, forsake thee? What do we do? Do we take it upon ourselves to enact justice?

No, take it to the Lord in prayer, which is exactly what David did in Psalm 69. He entrusted the situation to God, knowing that those who reject, those who resist God's king, will face his judgment.

[20 : 11] So if you have felt David's despair in your desire to live for the Lord, to glorify him, then you can follow David's example and make your desires known to God.

You can pray for deliverance, you can pray for God's justice, and you can remember God's character, his steadfast love, his abundant mercy that he's shown to us, and we can pray that he would extend that to others, that he would grant them repentance like he did to us.

David's despair, David's desire. Thirdly, we have David's declaration in verses 29 to the end. David's declaration.

In the common pattern of many Psalms, David, he lays out his situation, and then he reflects and meditates on God's character, and he cries out for deliverance, and then he promises and declares his intention to praise God in the future.

Verse 30, I will praise the name of God with a song. I will magnify him with thanksgiving. You see the certainty in his language.

[21 : 19] I will, I will, not I might, not I hope to, I will. David knows from his own experience God's delivering hand, and he trusts that he will see it again, and he will praise him.

David will, will praise God in a, in a louder chorus with more certainty, with more confidence, sadly, than England fans singing football's coming home.

David will praise the name of the Lord with a song. And this is David's zeal come all the way back round. He's gone full circle. He wants to glorify, magnify, thank the Lord.

And it's not only David that is going to do that. it'll be the humble, the needy, the prisoners, those who seek God.

They will be glad. They will rejoice. They will be heard. The Lord does not despise his own people. The Lord hears the needy.

[22 : 20] He answers those who seek him. Like David, they will rejoice. They will magnify and praise and glorify God. They will be filled with that same holy zeal and love for God and for his glory.

There are those who will face justice, God's justice, for rejecting his king. But those who seek him will rejoice. So all who would not face his justice, they should think, now is the day of salvation. Seek the Lord while he may be found. because those that seek him on that final day will not face judgment, but they will rejoice with God's people, with David.

They will be glad and dwell with him forever. And not only people. In verse 34, even the heavens and the earth, creation itself, just as the seraphim cry in Isaiah 6, as holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty.

All the earth is filled with his glory. No longer just the tabernacle, the temple, but the whole earth will have this holy zeal for God's glory. God will save Zion, his holy city, his people.

[23 : 34] Those who love his name and their offspring shall inherit the earth. David wants the whole earth to know this God, to glorify this God, to have the same zeal.

He is an evangelist for God's glory. He cannot help but talk and share and tell and invite others to see it. So we have David's despair, David's desire, David's declaration.

Lastly and shortly, David's descendant. David's descendant. Because Christ was the true and better David from the line of David who was filled with zeal for his father's house.

It consumed him as he chased the robbers and the profiteers from the temple. At a human level, that was the cause of his death. That was the cause of lies and slander spread about him.

more than the reaction of bugs to light, more than the reaction of people to David, was the reaction of people to Jesus and Jesus' zeal for God's glory.

[24 : 49] From the earliest days of his ministry in his hometown in Nazareth, as he reveals himself and declares himself to be the anointed one, what do they do in Luke 4? They take him up a cliff to throw him off it.

Jesus came to his own and his own did not receive him. Jesus was hated without reason. He says himself in John 15, he was a stranger to his brothers and mothers, his mother, who said he was out of his mind.

Jesus was attacked with lies by the Jewish rulers as they reacted to his righteousness, to his zeal for God's house. They lashed out with words first.

They sought to entrap him with questions. They gave false testimony against him before the Jewish council and before Pilate. They stirred up the crowd to cry out, crucify him.

Jesus was reproached by those that saw him upon the cross. He was offered no comforts, no pity, only gall and sour wine. But just as verse 26 says and Isaiah 53 says, while it was men who persecuted him, it was God the Father who struck him down.

[26 : 07] It was God the Father who instead of pouring his indignation upon sinful people, poured it upon Christ. He did so so that he would not blot their names out from the book of the living.

Jesus is the perfect demonstration of those covenant characteristics of God, that saving faithfulness, that steadfast love, the abundant mercy. While we were still enemies of God in his zeal for God and God's glory, he didn't despise us as his people but died for us.

And so it is that in verse 29 we can say that Jesus was set on high. Jesus was set on high to the highest place given the name above every other name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord for what reason?

For the glory of God the Father. The root of Jesus' zeal. Zeal for God's house consumed Jesus. It defined his life. So we'll finish with a simple application. Do we have that same zeal? Do we have anything approaching it?

[27:29] Jesus bore our punishment on the cross and was hated by the world for our sake. Are we afraid to be hated for his sake? We should marvel at this zeal.

We should thank God for this zeal. But we should also see this zeal as our highest calling, as our chief end, a zeal to glorify God.

Jesus himself said in John 15, as he claimed fulfillment of this psalm, he said, they hated me without cause, how much more will they hate you? If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

A servant is not greater than his master. Jesus at no point in his life shrunk from identifying with his people so that he could even confess their sins.

Are we afraid to identify with him? Zeal for God's glory is costly. It might mean reproach.

[28:36] It might mean lies and slander. It might mean physical acts of persecution. but if there is anything in this life that we should be evangelists for, that we should be zealous for, it is that which is most glorious, God's own glory.

We should be zealous to be here in God's house singing his praises every Lord's day. We should be zealous to honor him in how we live, listening to his voice as he tells us how to live a good and godly life.

we should put sin to death and put on righteousness each and every day. Now of course, like I said, this zeal is costly.

Like David experienced, like Jesus experienced, it's most costly when it comes from those that should know better, from those that should be on our side. If other churches and other denominations call us puritanical or bigoted for holding to biblical teaching, whether it's gender or sexuality or godly living or anything else, it hurts.

It is a real pain. We can feel that despair that David felt. But our zeal for God's good law, our zeal for God's glory should far outweigh anything that man can do to us.

[30:01] We also need to be careful. There's a false zeal, a false piety that we should beware of. Jesus says his people will be persecuted, but they shouldn't go out looking for persecution.

There are, maybe particularly in more reformed circles, there are people who are so unapologetically Christian that they're unapologetic people. There's a zeal for tribalism in the church, for our own tribes, a zeal that says, haven't we done well, we got it right, and they didn't do quite so well as us.

A zeal that finds it all too easy to brush off legitimate criticism and correction and rebuke from other believers. A zeal which can ignore our own consciences.

It's why a tender conscience is a blessing. We should listen to it. We should be careful of this false piety, this false zeal, because that's not Jesus' zeal. Jesus' zeal was for God's house, not his own house.

Well, Jesus' house was God's house, but sorry. It was a zeal for God's own glory. It was a zeal that didn't delight in confrontation, but found it when necessary to glorify God.

[31:21] That's another good check for us. Do we enjoy what the confrontation is about, i.e., do we enjoy God and his glory, or do we enjoy just the whole confrontation business?

That is not Jesus' zeal. Zeal that we should have, that we should want to have, the zeal that we should pray to have, is a zeal for God's glory. It should consume us.

Our chief end is to glorify and to enjoy God, to glorify and to enjoy that which is worth glorifying, that is most glorious.

we should be zealous for this, we should be evangelists for this. Let me pray for us. Thank you.