

Cry for Deliverance

Let us turn to our text to Psalm 74. Once a month, I'll stop and go through a psalm. And so this has been the 74th time.

More than that, a couple of psalms. I've done multiple sermons on the same psalm, some long ones here. This is kind of long as well.

Let us listen attentively to the Word of God, Psalm 74. Oh God, why have you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture? Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old, the tribe of your inheritance, which you have redeemed, the Mount Zion where you have dwelt. Lift up your feet to the perpetual desolations.

The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary. Your enemies roar in the midst of your meeting place. They set up their banners for signs.

They seem like men who lift up axes among the thick trees, and now they break down its carved work all at once with axes and hammers. They have set fire to your sanctuary. They have defiled the dwelling place of your name to the ground.

They set in their hearts, let us destroy them all together. They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land. We do not see our signs.

There is no longer any prophet, nor is there any among us who knows how long. Oh God, how long will the adversary reproach? Will the enemy blaspheme your name forever? Why do you withdraw your hand, even your right hand? Take it out of your bosom and destroy them, for God is my King from of old. Working salvation in the midst of the earth.

You divided the sea by your strength. You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of the Leviathan in pieces and gave them as food to the people and have it in the wilderness.

You broke open the fountain in the flood. You dried up mighty rivers. The day is yours.

The night also is yours. You have prepared the light and the sun. You have set all the borders of the earth.

You have made summer and winter. Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O Lord, and that a foolish people has blasphemed your name. Oh, do not deliver the life of your turtle dove to the wild beast.

Do not forget the life of your poor forever. Have respect to the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty. But do not let the oppressed return ashamed.

Let the poor and needy praise your name. Arise, O God, plead your own cause. Remember how the foolish man reproaches you daily.

Do not forget the voice of your enemies. The tumult of those who rise up against you increases continually. Let us pray.

Here, God, as we come this evening to hear your word, we read of the cry of deliverance, seeking out for salvation, God, a prayer, certainly a psalm as well, a poetry that has much truth for us today. And as we go through it, Lord, may we think in ways in which we can be encouraged to know, as a psalmist does himself, he does not give up hope, but ever pleads his cause before you. Yes, even, Lord, in the name of the covenants.

Our Lord God, may you be with us and may you strengthen us accordingly, we pray. Amen. The psalm is a plea, obviously, for God to deliver, and not just the deliverance for the one bringing the prayer to God in the form of this poem, but for the sake of the entirety of God's people, the church.

Oh, God, why have you cast us off forever? Not just me. He thinks of all of them involved. Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture? That's the church of the Old Testament.

It's a difficult time, probably an invasion, something that's referring to the Babylonian invasion, in particular when the southern tribes were sent off into captivity for disobeying the Lord God's word, generation after generation. Whatever the case, as with other psalms, there's enough details here to bring your imagination to life, but vague enough, I think, in many cases, to be applicable beyond the psalmist's concerns at the time, and that's what we see in most of the psalms. They're not so detailed.

We're like, well, we have names, particular places all the time. We're like, oh, that's not really about me. But there's enough detail here, and we'll see, as we go through here, how it is still relevant for us today.

Cry for God's Deliverance

The first point, cry for God's deliverance, verses 1 through 11. His concern is, oh God, why have you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against us? The picture of a brimming fire, and he cries out that God would remember them, of course. The cast off forever is not him giving a theological treatise.

Right? The psalmist isn't like, well, this is how it really is. But it's how it feels to him at the time that God has given up on him. He is a man like us, with like passions.

We forget this sometimes. The Old Testament saints perhaps seem so very far away from us and different. But they are like us, and we, like them, have this feeling.

We pray of a grieving heart or hurt heart, and such hearts are rarely objective, very much emotional, and brought and lost into the moment. It's a common plea, because it's a common human situation. Specifically a Christian situation, of course, reflecting internal struggle between the truths of God.

He knows God is everywhere. He's omnipresent. That's why doctrine and teaching and instruction is important, as we saw this morning.

But also the truth of the hardship. How do I reconcile these two things? What we know, what we see around us. That's what the psalmist is struggling with here.

Reminding us again of how we too go through the same things in our own life. And so this cry here at the beginning, why have you cast us off? Why are you in anger against us that if things are so bad? And he recognizes again. What's he recognizing here? God's behind it.

It's not a random chance of act. Not like Satan's running around without a leash. He's on a short leash.

God, Jesus Christ in particular, has bound a strong man. As he tells us in the New Testament. And so whatever we may feel or think, God is still in control.

And so we must come before him as the psalmist does. And plead. Remember your congregation.

Verse 2, right? He cries out to God. It feels like you've left me, Lord. Come back.

Don't leave me. Of course, not as though God ever forgot. But it feels that way again in the middle of troubles and hardships.

He's not really proclaiming it that way, but he's saying, Lord, please remember me. Please bring your mercy upon me. And your smile again.

It's more or less what he's saying in short, punctuated bursts here as we do even our own prayers at times when we cry. But we recognize, I think, that this is a certain kind of language. Like this morning, we have to learn the basics of reading the Bible.

Part of that is metaphorical language. This is what they call technically an anthropomorphic language. Anthropos, right? Anthropology.

Man. And morphic is form. This language is speaking as though God were a man.

The Lord understands this because we can't think beyond the physical very well. This is what we are. I mean, even when we talk about math, we've got to use pictures and graphs and whatnot.

Something tangible and physical, three-dimensional space. And we talk that way. I mean, we do it in the regular world anyways.

We treat animals like they're human. I mean, someone took care of another animal here for a while, and you treat them like they're another part of the family. You talk to them as though they were, what, humans.

We even do that with inanimate objects, especially kids. One of the kids is running around here talking with her doll. And we understand that they know it's not a real animal.

And they're kids. How much more for adults? That's the way we speak. Pretty much common.

And so the Bible, again, written by men. Two men with man's language. And that's one of the things that we do across all civilizations.

Verses 3 to 8. Verses 3 to 8, we have a list of woes and hardships. Then we have some details here describing what he's struggling with, what the problem is, and why he's crying out to God for mercy and for help. Verses 3 to 8, lift up your feet to the perpetual desolations.

The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary. They roar in the midst of the meeting place. They set up the banners.

They're like men with axes, tearing everything down and cutting it down. They even set fire to the sanctuary. Verse 7, defiling all things and crying out in their heart that we wish to destroy everything around us.

This is a picture of an enemy coming upon him. A physical enemy. And if it is the Babylonian Empire, it probably is.

Real men with swords, axes, spears, shields, and torches. You can imagine how terrifying that is, if it were to come into our town. This is a list of real world problems.

Physical warfare and destruction and heartache. Lift up your feet, verse 3, the perpetual desolation, probably crying out to God that he would move forth quickly to deliver them as though God had feet. We also know the language of having an arm.

The feet is the idea of movement, of swiftness, of going somewhere, whereas an arm or a hand is about power and striking and defending. Damaged sanctuary there. The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary.

That would be likely the temple, parts of the temple. The ancient Near East armies would often destroy the temples or the holy places and the high places to show their might over the losing empire, the losing kingdom. In particular, their might over that kingdom's God.

Our God's better than your God because we won the war. That's how they thought. So tearing it all down would be just more evidence of how mighty and powerful the Babylonian Army and Empire is before them and the Babylonian gods.

And that would be quite embarrassing for the Jews to be sure. The roar with victory, I think, is going on here, verse 4. Your enemies roar in the midst of your meeting places. Roar with war, certainly.

There are a lot of adrenalines going on there and anger and whatnot as they're fighting, but also probably victory and because in verse 8 we read of their arrogance. Let us destroy them all together. They're obviously winning.

They're destroying these things. They're tearing things up. The sounds of war, energetic perhaps, and even pumping themselves up to fight.

All of this, whatever is involved here in combat, and thankfully I've never seen combat. I was in the military, as you know, in the Air Force for a few years, what they used to call the chair force. Although I was moving a lot on the flight line.

It would be horrifying. You'd want to go to this psalm and cry out to God for help if you had such things in our lives. They set up a banner of conquest, the latter half of verse 4. They set up the banners for signs.

The sign of what? Sign of victory? Of a won battle perhaps? Certainly signs that they would identify one another in the midst of chaos of war because it is very chaotic. That's why you had the banner so they could see where to go. Where's the commander? Who's in charge? Who has the colors? Are those my colors? Is that my flag? Is that where my guys are? I can run over there and get protection? That's the idea of why they would do that back then and even today to some extent.

But I think part of it is they would lift it up to demoralize the enemy. We have won. And we planted this flag right on the heap of destruction.

He sees this. The psalmist is crying out for mercy because he sees his whole world fall apart. Again, it'd be like Denver being invaded.

America being invaded and we're losing and everything's burning. It feels like God has given up on us. Taking the axe even.

They seem like men who lift up axes in the thick trees and they break down as carved woods all at once with axes and hammers. Of course today you wouldn't expect that too much. We have a lot of concrete buildings in the city and churches would be made out of something more hearty than what an axe can handle.

But back then it was made out of a lot of wood, right? The wood of Lebanon. The trees, the cedars of Lebanon in particular and the Solomon's Temple. But they came along and tore everything down, especially of course military towers, which they had.

We know they had. We've dug them up so they can never be used again. But here, his bigger concern is with all the Jews, is they're attacking the temple and the sanctuary.

The holy place of God. And tearing it all down or a lot of it. And how do they tear it down here? Well, verse 7 and 8. Not just with axes and pulling it down as best they can.

They have set fire to your sanctuary. They have defiled the dwelling place of your name to the ground, verse 7. Fire works a little quicker. You don't have to sit there and watch it either.

It takes a lot more work to get an axe out and hammers and tear down the structure of a building. And this terrifying loss for them he has in this list. You can see all the more why they would think, Lord, you've cast us out.

If you were living overseas in a war-torn situation and the churches were wiped out, you would have no church to go to. What would you think then? I've got nowhere to go to. Where's my church? Where's my friends? Where's my pastor? But interestingly, if perhaps you've not been aware, the last several years, both in Canada and in Europe, there have been a lot of church fires, cathedral fires.

They don't want to talk a lot about it. There's a lot of indication that it's other people than Westerners doing it. So it's not far-fetched.

And then verse 8. They said in their hearts, let us destroy them all together. That's the final conclusion here. That's clearly what they're doing by their actions.

You can read many people's hearts by their actions, at least broadly speaking. Is it good? Is it bad? Here, clearly, they're enjoying this. And they're, hey, look how great we are.

We wish to destroy even more. Let's destroy them all together. It wasn't enough to use an axe.

Let's burn it all down. Because they're arrogant. It's an evil heart that is fighting against them.

It's not as though Israel started the war. From an earthly perspective, Babylon was the instigator. They weren't happy with where they were, and they wanted to expand their empire.

Egypt tried it. Babylon's trying it. Medes and the Persian, then Alexandria.

And the Grecians will do it next, if you remember your history. So expand their empire and their kingdom, because they're greedy. It's never enough.

It had to be bigger, more, more. Sin is always more and more. It's never satisfied with what God has given them in the here and now.

And hopelessness, verses 9 through 11. We did not see our signs, nor there is no longer any prophet, nor is there any among us who knows how long. And so clearly, verse 9 is set off from verse 8, which talks about their heart and how they burned up the meeting places.

In verse 10, where he starts a new idea, oh God, how long will the adversaries reproach? Although it may be, it is associated with 9. I'm saying this to give you an idea of where I'm

going. What's he talking about when he says, we do not see our signs? Well, I think part of the answer is the other half of the verse. There is no longer any prophet.

Not money, but men who speak from God, right? The voice of God. Because the voice of God, the prophets of old, would explain to them what's going on. Because he says, there is none among us who knows how long.

How long what? How long, oh Lord, will the adversary reproach? How long is this going to go on? Will it eventually end? We hear nothing. We know nothing. We're in the dark, is what he's saying.

There are no signs, signs of the prophets. And so he feels hopeless, you can imagine. If you lost all the Bibles, all you would have is whatever you memorized in your head.

And you know your head can be slippery sometimes, in your mind. Especially over time and in the midst of stress. And it's the same idea back then, although they didn't have the written word as easily accessible.

They had scrolls. They didn't have mass production. You had to go to the temple more than likely to read it.

But they had prophets, men who would speak of God, to them about God. And what they needed to hear and the like. And so there's no outward sign of God's favor for them.

To clarify, in the midst of confusion and chaos. Because surely war is full of such mayhem. And so today the equivalent would be ministers.

If taken away, the light of God's truth is a little more dimmed. You can have the Bible, but we know God gave us pastors to explicate the Bible for us. Because God ordained it that way.

And in fact, it was apostles who were preaching first, before any Bible was ever propagated anywhere in the New Testament era. We forget that sometimes, because the Bible is so easily accessible for us today. The plea to God again, of course.

How long will the adversaries reproach and mock and attack and assault? And of course blaspheme your name, God. Will the enemy blaspheme your name forever? Are they going to keep getting away with it? They're attacking a temple. They're bragging about it.

They think their God is better than your God. Our God, better than our God. You, Lord.

Why have you withdrawn your hand? There it is again. This picture of as though God had left us and abandoned us. Verse 11.

Even your right hand. And I had already mentioned this earlier. The idea of right hand is the idea of power and might.

Just like we think of it today. We have sometimes pictures and sporting men and events have these pictures of arms and swords and things like that in an arm. Because that's what it represents even today in some circles of strength and power.

And that's what it is there with respect to God. God, I want your power. I want you to bring it to us.

Why are you withholding your might to protect us and take out those who blaspheme your name? Take it out of your bosom. A picture as though it's just withheld here out of indifference perhaps. Again, he speaks as a man.

I don't think he's sitting here and speaking this language, although he may be sitting in his heart by thinking God really has abandoned him. Sometimes we do that, a lack of faith. But it's the emotion here.

I want to drive home that he feels abandoned. That's why it's a plea of deliverance. Don't hold back, God.

We need you. When the situation warrants it, brothers and sisters, especially when it's doubly bad for us, a family has abandoned us. You've lost home and work.

Don't ever hold back. Plead to the Lord as the psalmist does. Don't stop praying.

Confidence in God's Power

Don't give up. Because, verse 12-17, second point, God has power. He is your king, for God is my king.

From of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. So here from 12-17, he gives a description of what God is doing and therefore can do for him and his people. Going back to understanding who the almighty, omnipotent creator of heaven and earth can and will and has done, brothers and sisters.

Going back to basic teaching and doctrine. Makes a difference in the Christian life to meditate upon this truth and realize and draw strength and courage from this fact that God is in control. That's what we're reading here.

And the first point, or sub-point, is God is my king. A beautiful title, of course, for those in need. You know, in America, we don't like kings.

We like to hear that we need a king, but historically, they loved to hear and loved to have their kings because a king had power. Our president doesn't have the kind of power the kings of the ancient Near East had. Not a whit.

They used to be called tyrants. And they didn't mean that in the way we think of it today. They just meant someone with lots and lots of power.

And if you want to be protected, you need a strong man. Again, I think we forget that because we have so much prosperity and that we have a lot of equalizers like guns. The weak among us can use a gun.

Back then, I mean, it was a strong man with a sword. If he's bigger and stronger than you, you're going to probably die. That's all there is to it.

And so that makes it all the more real to them and more stark how much they need God. And God is a king, one of might and power. That's the picture of a king.

Kings were tied, therefore, to deliverance. When you think of, I want salvation and protection, of course, of the body, of material aid and need, of warfare and the like, you want someone who's strong and powerful, a king. And today, in our Christianized West, we often think, when I want deliverance, I want a priest.

I want Christ my Savior, my priest. But Christ is also our king. He's prophet, priest, and king.

And it says king, it highlights his power to do something about sin and death, to deliver you from Satan and his kingdom. That's what it points to. He's working salvation in the midst of the earth.

What a beautiful picture. In the midst of the land in which he saw, he knows God has done these things as the king of the earth, ruler of all things, and he recognizes God indeed works salvation. And I think he means here immediately, in the immediate context, he does physical deliverance, deliverance of the body from enemies who wish to literally stab me with a spear or a sword.

But beyond this, of course, is the greater idea that God indeed works salvation amongst the people of the world to the extent that they repent and submit to him as Lord and Master. He does bring deliverance even today. If it's true for the earthly enemies, it's all the more true for the spiritual enemies.

Jesus, our king, works salvation across the world, working salvation in the midst of the earth, even here and to this very day in the hearts of those whom he overcomes by the power of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of the power he lists there, as I mentioned a little earlier, verses 13 to 17. Verses 13 to 17, in particular, he divided the sea by his strength, he broke the heads of the serpents, he broke the heads of Leviathan and gave them as food to the inhabitants of the wilderness, he broke open the fountains of the flood, he dried up the mighty rivers.

What's this sea? What are these floods and rivers? What's the main theme that you always hear in the Psalms, he goes back to over and over again? God delivered us from Egypt, the Red Sea. And then perhaps verse 15, he dried up the mighty rivers there, the Jordan River. We have a little mini Red Sea, as it were, when they're going into the land of promise.

He remembers the history of the Church, of the Old Testament. One reason why history is important, specifically sacred history, to show us and remind us God has indeed done these things and can do them again and protect his people, even today. And so he hearkens to this

Red Sea deliverance, the great event of the Old Testament that formed the Jewish nation as we know it then.

God set them aside and apart. And the breaking of the serpent here, I remember reading this as a kid, I'm like, well, I don't understand this. What head of the sea of the serpent did he break? Well, one clue of what's going on here is, first of all, this is poetry.

Remember, this is Hebraic poetry. The Psalms are poetry. And like poetry in English, you have lots of, how do we put it in English class? Poetic license to mix around metaphors and use interesting ways of putting things together.

What? To get your attention, to bring forth the truth in another perspective and light. And so the clue here, of course, is dividing the sea. Red Sea.

Leviathan then, from that context, would be the leader of Egypt. He killed Pharaoh and his armies and broke them all up into pieces. And their demise was victory as though it were food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

That's the idea here. And then verses 16 and following, we have a picture of God owning, exercising, and controlling creation. All that is around us that we see and do not see.

The day is His, the night as well. You have prepared the light and the sun. We see their time, day and night, and the light and the sun go hand in hand, representing all that.

And the earth, the borders of the earth, and the summer and the winter are, again, seasons of the earth. And they go hand in hand. And so through these fourfold distinctions, He's saying, all the world is under His power and His might, and so I can call Him King.

I know He's ruler and master, and I can go to Him for protection and confidence. And this is what builds up His confidence, going to the truth of the matter, not following His emotions when the situation is so hard upon Him. But going back to basic doctrine, God is in control.

Covenant Plea for God's Salvation

And I can have confidence and do what I know I need to do as a Christian. And thus He calls out to God in verse 18 and following, a covenant plea for God's salvation. Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, the foolish people are blasphemed.

Do not deliver the life of your total dove, and have respect, verse 20, to the covenant. Remember again, or recall, of course, this metaphor of, it seems like you've forgotten God, please come back and protect us. Then the enemy has continued to hate us.

And so He pleads, not only by implication over here, the enemy has come along here and destroyed everything and burned things down and tore things up. Please stop them is the implication here. He never actually says stop them, but we know what He wants, right? But here He pleads, in particular, Lord, they're blaspheming you.

They're mocking you. They're belittling you. Don't you want to defend your honor and your name is the implication here.

And I think we can do the same thing today. God, they're mocking the churches. They belittle us here, especially overseas.

Maybe the Muslims or whoever else. People like to pick on the Muslims. The Jews do the same thing.

They go after Christians in Israel. People aren't aware of this. They really clamp down on tourists.

They don't want missionaries there. They quarantine them off in certain areas. And when they're blaspheming God, anybody, whoever it is, unbelievers of all stripes, we can cry out to God, Lord, they're reproaching you.

The foolish people are blaspheming your name. And how long will you let them do it? The implication is that you would shut their mouth. Here, of course, it's more pressing because they're literally being attacked by the same people.

We're not, by God's grace in the West, being attacked openly that way. In the Passionate Play, verse 19, do not deliver the life of your turtle dove to the wild beasts. Do not forget the life of your poor forever.

Turtle dove or a dove, one of the more helpless birds is the idea here, being chased, of course, by evildoers. He calls them beasts. The church under persecution, brothers and sisters.

This is the church. The Old Testament people of God is the same as us today. They are God's people.

Whoever of the Jews trusted in the Messiah and repented of their sins, there are brothers in the Lord, even though they're in the Old Testament form of Jewishness. Let us not forget it's one church because there's one Savior and one salvation. And they were under persecution whenever they were attacked by the Assyrians first and then the Babylonians.

That's persecution. And we have it today. There are brothers and sisters, as we know, in faraway places across the world who are being physically attacked, not just spiritually.

That's bad as well. That's especially bad, of course, lies and heresies and false teachers and wolves. But their body's being assaulted as well and thrown to prison.

Church is being destroyed. It's a sad, sad thing and it's hard and we ought to pray for them and not forget them. And plead before God that they are like turtledoves being attacked by a wild beast.

And the covenant plea here is quite interesting because often, as we've gone through 74 psalms, so we're about halfway through 150 of them, he doesn't actually explicitly say, have

respect to the covenant. But I would argue it's implicitly there. That is, he knows he's in a covenant relationship with God Almighty.

And whenever he cries out for mercy and help and protection and long-suffering and deliverance, it's in the context of God having a special relationship with David and the Christians and the Old Testament saints. And that special relationship is known as a covenant. That God, of course, initiated, not us.

And that God fulfills, not us. It's a covenant of grace. And so this covenant plea, have respect to the covenant, I think over and over again, when he says, remember your people, Lord, and he uses the word Lord, all caps, L-O-R-D, Jehovah, that's his covenant-keeping name as well, so that's a plea to the covenant.

And so this covenant relationship here is explicitly now mentioned in verse 20. Not that relationship that the Creator God has with all things, because he is king even over the unbeliever, and they don't like to hear that, but the unique covenant relationship with the church. This is what he's drawing upon, and we should do the same thing in despair.

Call upon God and cry out to him. Not as an equal, that's not the idea. Typically we think of covenant today, we think of perhaps a contract, or we're equal, or we're superior, like in the American scene.

We the people, right, we made the contract with the government, we're better than the government. Oh no, God's better than us, we plead before him, it's a plea of humility, but nevertheless, there ought to be some boldness, because God has covered you by the blood of Jesus Christ, and we are told in Hebrew to come into the Holy of Holies with boldness, pleading in the mercies of Jesus, the mercies of the covenants, this promise that God has given us through Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer, so we can have the confidence. He was confident, we ought to be confident.

Oppressed. For the dark places of the earth are full of haunts of cruelty. Everything seems terrible, everything's falling apart.

Do not let the oppressed return ashamed. Let the poor and the needy praise your name. Verse 21.

This is a clear example where poor and needy is with respect to literal poor and needy of a wartime situation, but also of those hated by their enemies for being godly people, the Jews of the Old Testament. And they are described as oppressed here in a wartime situation that's clearly the place. And I know that word oppressed is often misused, but we run across, I think today in my opinion, it's been misused a lot, used for all kinds of things in society, some appropriate, some clearly not appropriate, and other times clearly used to manipulate people, but the word oppressed is not wrong, it's a fine translation, it's used elsewhere in the Bible, the catch is it's just a broad word.

What's it referring to? We need some details here to know what the oppression is. And we have a good idea here, they've taken access to the building, they're burning things down,

that's pretty oppressive. And he says here at the end, Arise, O God, please plead your own cause.

So there it is more explicitly. The enemy is mocking you, they're blaspheming you, God, are you going to stop on the implication? Now he makes it more clear. The cause of the church is God's cause.

God's cause should be the cause of the church. That's the idea. At least wholly and perfectly, we still sin and have wrong causes sometimes to be sure.

But here, in which they are innocent of being assaulted by the Babylonians, our fellow Christians across the world being assaulted by their governments in wartime situations, they are innocents. And God's cause is their cause, and their cause is God's cause, and they can cry out to God, Plead, Lord, plead your own cause, and by implication defend and protect us, and stop the mouth and the work of the enemies upon us. Arise, a human way of speaking again, God, get up, get your feet moving, and come and protect us, please.

And do not forget, what? The voice of your enemies, the tumult of those who rise up against you increases continually, implying, leaving, hanging off there the voice of your enemies, and therefore they are bad, they are unjust, they are wicked, you need to stop them. That's an act of justice, the flip side of what they're doing, which is clearly unjust. Don't forget justice is another way of describing this.

And these enemies, the voice of your enemies, like when they roar in the midst of verse four, as we read, let us destroy them altogether, they said. And God, and the prophet, excuse me, the psalmist here cries out to God, saying, don't let them destroy us. Don't forget their voice, what they're claiming, and their arrogance towards us and you, by implication, because often, those who hate the church are hating God.

Sometimes it's because we've done stupid things, I grant that. But more often than not, I would submit, it's they simply hate God, and they can't get to them, they're gonna get to him, they're gonna get to us. Brothers and sisters, when the times are rough and the situation is difficult, bring your pleas and prayers to the Lord for help.

He will hear. Yes, even plead the covenant promises and confidence, and he will not forget the voice of the enemies. Let us pray.

Father God, be with our brothers and sisters in faraway places, that you would vindicate them, for they are innocent. God almighty, may your spirit be upon them and protect them, body and soul, we ask. And be with us as well, that we would not give up hope, but ever cling to Jesus Christ, our deliverer.

We ask this in your name alone, amen.