

Daniel 06-01-22a

This is the 22nd of January 2006. We continue this morning our study in the book of Daniel. Let's take a moment as we approach our scripture reading that will hopefully give us a little bit of sideways illumination on our work in Daniel to clear our minds and prepare our hearts as we express our thanksgiving and make our requests known to God in prayer.

Shall we pray? Father, we come to you again on another occasion where we recognize the importance of spending time in fellowship in receiving the benefit of the spiritual gifts that you have distributed amongst us and to direct our attention to the truth of your word. We are thankful that we have this anchor in our soul, the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ that has been laid and upon which we hope to build in a way that is pleasing and glorifying to him and to you. We thank you that in times of turmoil, in a modern time where there are so many influences and so many distractions and so many directions in which we are pulled, that we have this constant, we have the living and abiding presence of your word and your spirit to hold us fast, to stabilize us and to point us in the right direction.

We thank you that we live in a nation where we have the freedom to pursue our spiritual lives without fear. We know that this is a privilege not enjoyed by many around the world. We pray for them in particular that you will be with them, that you will protect them and preserve them and bless them as only you can do, even in the midst of challenge and adversity and persecution.

We pray that you will be with the leaders of our government in all three branches, especially our president and his staff who are believers and who are seeking to honor you in the execution of their duties. In the realm of government, we pray for our senators and congressmen and for those judges who are also guided by your word and are dedicated to following its principles as they fulfill their posts. We pray for those who are serving in other ways in our government, those who are in the military, those who are in the civil services and the intelligence agencies.

We know that there are believers in all of these places who need our prayers, who are not always able to assemble and to feed their souls and we pray that you will remind them in a vivid and effective way of things that they have learned in the past, that these will be living truths that will be a source of comfort and strength and motivation to persevere and to have faith and patience until the very end. We look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for us and the consummation and fulfillment of your plan as we see it unfolding in the pages of your word. And we ask your blessing on us as we study together in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our scripture reading this morning is from Psalm 52. Psalm 52.

We're going to see this morning, and if you know where we are in Daniel, you know we're coming up on the abomination of desolation. We're coming up on the symbolic fulfillment, the

symbolic embodiment of the evil that has permeated human history down through the ages. We know that in the New Testament, we are told that the spirit of Antichrist is already at work.

Paul tells the Thessalonians, you know that the spirit of Antichrist is already at work, but he's held in abeyance. There is something that represses and suppresses that spirit until it is taken out of the way. And that is, in my view, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church.

And as long as he is here and we are here, the spirit of Antichrist cannot manifest itself in the overt way that it's going to once we're gone. So it is appropriate, I think, to take a look for our scripture reading this morning at Psalm 52. You can see in your New King James, this is subtitled, The End of the Wicked and the Peace of the Godly.

This is everybody's favorite subject. The End of the Wicked and the Peace of the Godly. At least it ought to be a favorite subject if you are exercising yourself toward godliness.

Then you want peace and you want everybody who is opposing you in that endeavor to end, to be gone. Now notice the superscription on this psalm. To the chief musician, a contemplation of David, when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul and said to him, David has gone to the house of Ahimelech.

This is the occasion that results in the slaughter of the priests at Nob. Eighty some odd priests are murdered when King Saul goes there and finds out that they gave aid to David in his flight. A number of things are at work there that we don't have time to delve into.

We've looked at it in detail in our study of the books of Samuel. But it does give us a context for these thoughts by David. He's thinking about Doeg.

He's thinking about the Edomite whose wickedness has resulted in not only egging on King Saul and furthering King Saul's evil intentions, but also in harm to those in the periphery. Psalm 52 says, Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God endures continually. Your tongue devises destruction like a sharp razor working deceitfully.

You love evil more than good, lying rather than speaking righteousness. Sila. That means that that's a little complete thought unit that you can take and meditate on all by itself.

Sila, we think, was a musical notation in the singing of these psalms that means, okay, now play the instrumental interlude. Play a little bridge here. The singers are going to stop singing.

And while this music is playing, it gives you the time to think about the lyric you have just heard. People didn't have hymnals. They didn't have the songs in written form.

And so they would hear these words. And people in those days had to pay really close attention to what was spoken because they couldn't follow along. As you know, I manage a website where there are a lot of recorded sermons, audio and video.

And we include the transcript with it so that as people are listening or watching, they can also

read along. And that's partly a concession to the fact that people don't pay near as good attention as they used to to the spoken word. It used to be the spoken word was all you had.

If you wanted to learn the word of God, if you wanted to go back, people didn't have the means to take notes. Most people were illiterate. To write things down was the province of scribes and those who had been specially trained.

The materials weren't available. People couldn't carry around soft clay and a stylus. They couldn't carry around parchment or shards and ink and pens and so on.

It just was not available. So people had to remember. They had to pay close attention and remember and meditate on what they heard.

Songs in Israel, the psalms, were one of the most effective ways of communicating the word of God because these songs were regularly sung. They were sung by the Levites who were detailed to do that singing. The sons of Korah and so on would do these choir pieces.

And just like songs on the radio. Until we got cranking on our memory verse efforts here, I think a lot of us probably had more song lyrics stored in our minds than we had memory verses. I can remember the words to dozens and dozens of songs by Paul Simon or by the Eagles or by big band artists.

I know the words to most of the tunes that were popular back in the 40s and 50s. On and on and on. You have all of these song lyrics stored up that we never sat down and said, I'm going to bend myself to learning this song.

It's just from repetition. It's just from hearing. If you listen to the oldies, you know the words to all kinds of songs that you don't even want to know.

Or you know the noises. I defy anybody to tell me what the words are to Louie Louie. Nobody knows what the words are to that song.

It's just some guy yelling, and that's way back before yelling was popular. So what's the point here? When you see *silā* in a psalm, it means what has just been sung, what has just been spoken, you need to spend some time thinking about it. We're going to do it right now.

Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? There are two kinds of mighty men. There are those who are mighty in the Lord, like Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, like Caleb the son of Jephunneh, like David the son of Jesse, like Joshua the son of Nun, like the roster that includes Uriah the Hittite and the other mighty men of David. These are mighty men of valor.

Men who fight the battles of the Lord, strengthened by the knowledge of His truth. And then there's another kind of mighty man. The man who makes flesh his strength.

The man whose heart departs from the Lord, the cursed man, who is like a shrub and doesn't recognize good even when it's right in front of his face. All of us come in contact with this sort

of person from time to time. It can be as a fellow student.

It can be as a member of our family. It can be as a client or a customer. It can be as a co-worker.

It can be as someone we come in contact with in the course of running through a day. You get your bumper bent or bend somebody else's bumper. You have someone come and do work at your house.

We come in contact with people all the time. And some of them are mighty men who boast in evil. Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God is continual.

Your tongue devises destruction like a sharp razor working deceitfully. And many of these people whose providence is evil, whose might is in the area of wickedness, use the tongue as their primary weapon. It's what they say.

It's what they threaten. It's the influence they have over others. I am going to smear you.

I am going to denigrate you. I am going to downgrade you. I am going to gossip and malign you verbally.

I am going to incite ill will and bad feeling toward you with my tongue. I am going to mock you. I am going to see if I can let air out of your reputation.

I am going to do my best to hurt your self-image and make you feel bad about yourself. Your tongue devises destruction like a sharp razor working deceitfully. The worst kinds of deceit are those that involve half-truths, that take facts and weave them together into lies.

This is as old as the first lie. Hath God not said that you may eat of every tree in the garden? It's a half-truth. God did speak.

God did talk about trees of the garden. And He did say you can eat from every tree in the garden except one. And that's the missing fact.

That changes the complexion of the whole problem. When you're standing in front of the forbidden tree, looking at the forbidden fruit, hath God not said? Like a sharp razor. What does a sharp razor do? Whenever I think of the sharp razor, in a biblical context, I can't help but think of Elijah on Mount Carmel, where the priests of Baal are dancing around, trying to get his attention, getting ever and ever more fervent with no results.

And they finally start slashing themselves, cutting themselves with razors, as though their dedication and their fervency will somehow bring about the result that they desire. It is not your level of emotional commitment to a thing that brings it about. It is not the fervency of your faith.

There are people that are so intensely committed to science, or intensely committed to philosophy, or intensely committed to some solution to a problem. There are people who are

intensely committed to mood-altering drugs. There are people who are intensely committed to group therapy, whether it's of the secular variety, or discipleship groups.

I'm going to get up and mentor, or be mentored, and there's safety in numbers, and we'll have accountability to each other. The people are very deeply and intensely committed. They believe with all their heart and soul that this is the answer.

And, of course, you have all your cults and false religions and false philosophies, where people are deeply and intensely committed. You have Tom Cruise jumping up and down on Oprah's couch talking about one thing and another. He has besmirched his own golden boy reputation by talking about Scientology too much because he's so intensely committed to it.

And he's actually hurt his own career by presenting himself as the nutcase that he actually is in the area of Scientology. But over-commitment and zeal, it doesn't matter what the object of it is, the merit is not in the zeal. Paul says in Romans, my brethren in Israel, I bear them witness, they have a zeal for God.

But it's ignorant. It's an ignorant zeal. It's not according to knowledge.

There are people who are looking to heaven with tears streaming down their face, waving their hands in the air, praying to God for stuff that God can never grant. You can watch them on TV any day of the week. Those people, there's no lack of zeal.

And there's no lack of faith. But it's an unreasonable faith. As we talked about with our memory verses this morning, in looking at the verse talking about trusting the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding.

We have to have understanding. But that's not what we lean on. We have to have understanding, but it's not apart from faith.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Don't lean on your own understanding with all your heart is the idea. We have to have both faith and understanding.

Like a sharp razor working deceitfully. What's the point here? A razor lets blood. Life of the flesh is in the blood.

And this is deeply wounding. You damage someone's life with your sharp tongue. You love evil more than good.

You love lying rather than speaking righteousness. There are people, and I've known them, and you've probably known them. There are people who, even when there's no reason to not tell the truth, will lie.

There's no gain in it. There's no benefit to it. There's nothing on the line.

It's just either habit or predilection or amusement. It just appeals. They'll tell a lie for no good

reason.

They'll say they've read something they haven't read. They'll say they've done something they haven't done. Nothing to gain.

No benefit whatsoever. They just lie because it appeals. That's who's being spoken of here.

Lying rather than speaking righteousness. That's what you love. You love evil more than good.

We meditate on that why. What is the one bright spot in these first three verses? The goodness of God is continual. The goodness of God is continual.

This literally means, in Hebrew, it says, It says, The Chesed of God. Chesed, loyal love, faithfulness, compassion, mercy. The Chesed, the grace of God, all the day.

All the day. This is the singular, by the way. It doesn't say all the days.

It says all day long. The Chesed of God is all day long. There's not a part of the day where the grace of God departs.

It's always there. Then the next section. You love all devouring words, O deceitful tongue.

You wonder why that's not up above the Sila? Because it's of a piece. You know, it harmonizes with it. But this begins the next section here.

You love all devouring words, but you are going to be devoured, essentially. That's the inclusio here at the beginning and ending of the second section that's marked off by the Silas. So, if you look at this, Psalm 52 is actually broken into three parts.

It's divided by these two Silas, and we have three sections. We've already looked at the first section, the second section, and verse four. You love all devouring words, O deceitful tongue.

God shall likewise destroy you forever. This reminds us of the last half of Romans chapter one, where it says the things that men choose instead of the truth, God turns them over to it. Well, here, you love all devouring words, O deceitful tongue.

God will destroy you likewise. In the same way that you destroy things with your tongue, God is going to destroy you. The judgment that you try to mete out to others is going to be meted out to you.

The result you try to inflict on others is going to be inflicted on you. He shall take you away and pluck you out of your dwelling place. Now, think about this situation in Psalm 52.

We've seen from the superscription here that this is the occasion of Doeg the Edomite and his treachery. If you go back and read the account, David talks about the fact that he knew at the time that Doeg would go tell Saul. He saw Doeg and he knew the kind of man Doeg was by reputation.

David had spent time in the palace and amongst the people who worked for Saul and he knew what kind of man Doeg was. He says later, I knew at the time. This is when Ahimelech's son, the one survivor of the Nob massacre, makes it back to David.

He says, abide with me and be my priest. He says, I am responsible for the death of your father and all his house. I knew at the time that Doeg would go back and tell Saul.

You love all devouring words, O deceitful tongue. This is the kind of man that Doeg is. God shall likewise destroy you forever.

He shall take you away and pluck you out of your dwelling place. This is the contemplation. No justice comes to Doeg.

We don't see Doeg punished or destroyed. He's responsible. In fact, he personally does it.

Saul commands the troops that are accompanying him to slaughter the priests and the troops will not raise a hand against the Lord's anointed priests. They will not do it. And Saul says, somebody kill these priests and Doeg does it with his own hand.

That's the kind of man he is. And nothing happens to Doeg. Doeg goes on.

Eighty some odd dead priests. Doeg's alive. So, how does David cope with that? How does David deal with this injustice? Well, he addresses this song to him.

Why do you boast in your evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God is all the day. All day long. The goodness of God is going to outlast you.

As much evil as you can pack into a day, the goodness of God, there's more of it in a day than what you can counter. Your tongue devises destruction like a sharp razor working deceitfully. Notice, it was the tongue that first brought Saul over to Nod to give the command to slay the priests.

It's this speaking. It's this, well, you know what happened when David left. You know where David went.

You know who helped him. Whispering into the ear of Saul, who's got the real power. God shall destroy you forever.

He shall take you away and pluck you out of your dwelling place and uproot you from the land of the living. David does not make it his mission to go slit Doeg's throat, although he could justify it on 84 different grounds. He is guilty of murder 84 times over.

But David says, God will take you away. God will pluck you out of your dwelling place. God will uproot you from the land of the living.

And then David puts in another Selah, another instrumental break. We first of all meditate on

the great evil of this person and the function of their tongue in producing destruction. We meditated on that.

Now in this second section, we meditate on God's outflanking, outlasting in a day, the evil of this person. The first verse of this little song details the evil. The second verse details God's judgment of that evil.

God shall destroy you forever. He shall take you away. He shall pluck you out of your dwelling place.

He will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah. Now, what's the third verse going to concentrate on? The righteous also shall see and fear and shall laugh at him, saying, Here is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

The righteous shall see and fear. Now, what kind of fear is this? This is not quaking, raising your hand over your brow to fend off a blow of judgment. This is the respect, the worship of God that is his due.

We recognize the magnitude of God far greater than any mighty man, far longer in a day than anyone's wickedness. God's chesed, God's grace is all the day. No one's wickedness, however wicked they are, they can't be wicked every minute of the day.

They're sporadic. Well, God's chesed is constant. It's unwavering.

It is never switched off. It's all the day. The righteous will see this judgment.

This is one of the benefits of our studies of God's actions in the past and God's actions in the near future, in the 70th week, in the last seven years of the age of Israel. Those judgments comfort us. We see those judgments, and it motivates us.

It ought to create in us respect for God. We don't sit like many do and shake our fist in God's direction and say, how can you let this happen? There are a lot of people who consider themselves to be good and ethical and moral who are unhappy with the whole idea of a loving God because they see evil in the world around us and say, where is God? How could God let the tsunami happen? How could God let the hurricanes happen? How could God let famine and hunger happen? How can God let child abuse happen? How can God let all of these awful things around the world happen? Where is God? And they decide they're going to disbelieve in God or badmouth God or blaspheme him and otherwise use their tongue like a sharp razor to try to dissuade other people from having any respect for God or any faith in God because they'll argue very strongly, how can there be a God? What kind of a person are you that could believe in such a God? The righteous see the judgment of God. And remember, David has not seen any judgment on Doeg as of the time that he writes this psalm.

But he says, God shall destroy you forever. God shall take you away. God shall pluck you out of

your dwelling place.

God shall uproot you out of the land of the living. David recognizes the certainty of the judgment of God on all wickedness by faith. Faith takes the unseen and makes it real.

That judgment is unseen, it's future. But David says, it's real enough to me as a righteous man that I fear. I respect the righteousness and the justice of God.

Remember our memory verse in Jeremiah 9, 23 and 24? Let not the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches. Why? If you're going to glory, glory in this, that you understand and know the Lord.

The Lord who exercises loving kindness and judgment and righteousness in the earth. If you're going to glory in something, if you're going to boast, it shouldn't be in your wisdom, in your might, or in your riches. It ought to be that you know the Lord.

It's the Lord who has righteousness. It's the Lord who has chesed, loving kindness. It's the Lord that has tzedek, righteousness.

And it's the Lord that exercises judgment. The righteous man will see and fear and shall laugh at him. Now this seems kind of mean-spirited, doesn't it? Here's this wicked person doing all these horrible things, slashing up with his tongue.

And when we see by faith the certainty of God's judgment on such things, the righteous man is respectful of God and laughs at the wicked. Now, most of us don't really feel like this is an occasion for humor. It's really sad.

This is someone that Jesus Christ died to deliver from sin, that has not availed themselves of that deliverance either at all or in the living sense. If they're a believer and they're not living for God, coming under this kind of judgment, what does it mean to laugh? We have God laughing as well in Psalm 2, when the kings of the earth gather together, God shall laugh at them in derision, those who assemble themselves against the Lord and His anointed. It's either Psalm 2 or Psalm 8. I always get those two confused.

What does it mean that the righteous man shall laugh at him and say, here is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and strengthened himself in his wickedness? In the ancient Near East, these actions like love and hate and fear and laughing had a different quality. We have to try to get ourselves back into those times. We laugh now because there's a laugh track and a comedy on the TV or somebody tells a funny joke.

Or if we laugh at someone, it's because we are mocking and deriding and belittling them in some way. Laughing in the ancient world meant to treat something lightly. You think about everything you know about God and then think about God laughing at the kings of the earth who assemble themselves against the Lord and against His anointed.

Is God up there slapping His knee and going, ha, ha, ha? No. To laugh at something means... Really, comedy and entertainment up until very recently was a light thing. Entertainers were the lowest class of people.

The court jester, the king's fool, the traveling troubadours and so on. They were the fugitives and the vagabonds. It's only been in the last hundred years with the advent of film that entertainers have been lifted up to become stars.

Nobody called them stars. Stars are above the rest of us. They're in the firmament of heaven and they're a light that shines to guide us.

So you have Harry Belafonte mocking and abusing our president and saying he's the biggest terrorist that's ever lived. He's a star. Well, I like the original view of entertainers.

If you can entertain, great. Otherwise, shut up. But to laugh at something means to treat it lightly.

What does Samuel say to Saul? I honor those who honor me, and those who don't are lightly esteemed. To lightly esteem something is to laugh at it. We say, oh, you know, he had an injury, but he just laughed it off.

He had a problem, but he just laughed it off. It doesn't mean he was actually sitting there going, ha, ha, ha, ha. But it was treated as insignificant, and that's what it means.

Now, you think about David and you think about the murder of 84 priests and you think about Doeg the Edomite going on and living in the court of Saul, still a man of power, still a man of influence, having endeared himself to Saul, being willing to do something nobody else would do. He's an Edomite, for crying out loud, in the court of the king of Israel, which is itself a condemnation. And David says, the righteous man who sees the coming judgment of God, not the fulfilled judgment, the promised judgment, will fear God and will treat lightly this evil man.

Not let him get under your skin. Not let him cause you to stumble. Not let him distract you.

Not let him push you off of the way. Something trying to get you away from your faith in God, your focus on God, your living your life for God. You just laugh it off.

You just brush it aside. It's a flyspeck on a windshield. It's insignificant.

It's a light and insubstantial thing. And how do you do that? It's not always easy. How does David look at Doeg? Here are these men who graciously helped him, and they got murdered for their trouble.

How does David keep that from weighing on him and keep it from bogging him down and making him ineffective and unable to function? What does he tell himself? How do you laugh this off, so to speak? Here is a man who did not make God his strength. What is the problem with people who hurt other people? They are not functioning in the strength of God, whether

believer or unbeliever. When we hurt one another with our tongue or with our attitudes or with our either sins of commission or sins of omission, are we functioning in the strength of God? We're not.

That's our flesh. That's our humanity. You know, all of these heinous things, and they say, oh, that's so inhuman.

That's human. That's man's humanity to man. That's what we do.

That's what we are. We are conceived in iniquity, born in sin. We are altogether corrupt.

Without God, there is none that doeth righteousness, no, not one. And our righteousnesses are like filthy rags. And we hurt one another.

I heard a sermon this morning. I generally track what's going on down at First Baptist for obvious reasons. And Mack Brunson down there, one of the points of his sermon this morning, he had 18 points on the wicked man.

And then he had a bonus point, point 19. And you know what his 19th point was? I thought it was really good. He said, remember that people who hurt others are hurting people.

They themselves are in some kind of distress, and that's what makes them lash out at others. There is a deficiency. If you have the peace of God, and you have the strength of God, and you're operating in the strength of God, you're not needy, and you're not unfulfilled.

And you are flexible, and you are gracious, and you are patient, and you are kind. Remember the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, assassination with the tongue. Oh no, whoops, that one's not in there, is it? Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, impatience, rudeness and harshness.

None of that's a part of the fruit of the Spirit, is it? If we walk by faith, if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, the desires of the flesh. And the flesh, which is corrupt, and the flesh, which has damage and has pain, wants to inflict damage and pain on others.

That's why people do it. If you're satisfied and you're happy, there's not a reason in the world to go hurt somebody. But if you yourself, you know, misery loves company.

If you're miserable, you want everybody else to be miserable. Here is the man who did not make God his strength. The only way to not be a miserable person, the only way to not be a deficient, defective and hurting person is to reside in the strength of God.

There is no other way. There is no human antidote to human corruption. None.

Never has been. People have been looking for 6,000 years, from Cain on down. I'll be the best salad maker in the world.

I'll be the best vegetarian crop grower in the world. And Cain was miserable. And Cain made his parents miserable and slew his brother.

Why? He wasn't acting in the strength of God. He rejected the strength of God. Here is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in what? It's just like Jeremiah 9, 23 and 24.

Cursed is the man who makes his might, his wisdom or his riches his foundation. This is what he's banking on. This is what he's going forward with.

Hey, I'm smart. Hey, I've got resources. It doesn't have to be monetary riches, by the way.

You can be trusting in your cleverness. You can be trusting in your good looks. You can be trusting in your personality.

You can be trusting in your personal charisma. Personal charisma, and I can say this as somebody that has virtually none, is a curse. It is a curse.

Because if you have personal charisma, people are going to be drawn to you for all the wrong reasons. It's not because you have integrity. It's not because you have character.

It's not because you're steady. It's not because you have genuine love. It's not because you're patient.

It's not because you have the fruit of the Spirit. It's because you're dazzling. It's because when you walk into a room, people can't take their eyes off you.

When you speak, people can't help but listen. And you have this sort of snake charmer ability that draws people to you, and you don't know how long that's going to last, or when they're going to co-opt their relationship with you for their own gain. You live in a world of superficialities.

You live in a world that's not based on reality and on genuine, long-lasting trust. It's just not there. Charisma does not generate trust.

It generates fascination. Jesus Christ fascinated a lot of people. He had no form or comeliness that people would desire Him.

But you go around healing people, and that's charisma. That will draw a crowd. But that charisma didn't do Him any good when He was arrested and sent to the cross.

Here is the man who did not make God his strength. Here is the man who trusted in the abundance of his assets. What he had going for him.

His riches. That's what he trusted in. I don't need a relationship with God.

I don't need to trust God. I don't need to spend time in the Word of God. I don't need the divine viewpoint.

Look, I can get by. I can get over. I can bend people to my will.

I can draw a crowd. I can do whatever. And strengthen himself in his wickedness.

Everybody makes a choice. We start going down a wicked path, you make a choice. Am I going to continue in this? Am I going to strengthen myself in it? Is this going to be my policy? Is this going to be the climate of my life? Or is this just going to be a spell of bad weather that I need to make pass and get back into the life of humility and obedience and faith? This man strengthens himself in wickedness.

How does David cope with this? David can't just go chop off Doeg's head like he did Goliath. He could wish, well, if I went back there with that sword of Goliath that I got from the priest at Nod, I could see how many... They talk about this thing where you take a piece of paper and you fold it in half, then fold it in half, and they say, how many times can you fold a piece of paper in half before you can't fold it anymore? And it's surprisingly small. I think you can't do it more than eight times and you physically can't fold the paper anymore.

Well, David could go back with that sword and see how many pieces he could chop Doeg into when you reach the point where you just can't chop the pieces any smaller. He can't do that. He doesn't have that option.

Well, you know, maybe one piece for every priest that was murdered. I'll chop him in half, and then quarters, and then eighths, and then sixteenths, and then thirty-seconds, and then sixty-fourths, and then I'll see if there's any big enough pieces I can chop again and make 84 separate pieces, one for each priest that was murdered. David says, I will disregard him.

I will treat him as a light thing. I will laugh at him in the sense that I'm not going to let this get under my skin. Now, this is a big thing to not be deflected by.

I mean, can you imagine the load of guilt? I brought death to 84 people by my stupidity. I did a stupid thing, and 84 people are dead. How can you continue? I've often wondered about these women who have their child in the backseat of the car, and they get out, and they go into work, or do something, and they forget, and the child bakes to death.

I can't conceive how you would go forward in your life. What day could you live where that wouldn't haunt you? Well, you think about David. 84 people are dead because of his careless flight, without faith, without consulting God.

So, how does he deal with it? I will treat him as a light thing. I will tell myself. I will remind myself.

This is a man. The problem with this man is that he doesn't make God his strength. That's his problem.

God's going to deal with him. He strengthened himself in weakness. I am like a green olive tree

in the house of God.

I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. What do I learn from this? I have got to keep myself plugged in to the source of my strength. I can't be the leaf that withers, separated from its source.

Jesus tells the disciples, I am the vine. You are the branches. Abide in me so that you can bear much fruit.

Rather than be crippled and be sidelined and be rendered neutralized and ineffective by the actions of evil people, it ought to motivate us, like it does David here, to abide in God's strength. I am like a green olive tree. The green olive tree is full of olive oil, isn't it? That's the spirit.

I dwell in the house of God. I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. Olam, Olam.

Forever and ever. I will praise you forever because you have done it. And in the presence of your sanctified ones, I will wait on your name, for it is good.

David says, I know this judgment is coming and I know its future. And in the presence, in the company of fellow believers, I will wait. I will wait for God to balance the scales, to execute judgment.

And in the meantime, I'm going to have to treat this wickedness as a light thing. Be like the olive tree, abiding in the house of God. Well, that's our scripture reading in Psalm 52.

We'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll resume in Daniel chapter 9.