

Psalms 18-09-06

This is Thursday, September the 6th, 2018. We continue our study in the Hymnal of Israel, the Book of Psalms, resuming our study of Psalm 12. Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, ask His blessing and His necessary assistance through the ministry of the Holy Spirit so that we can figure out what's being said and why we should pay attention.

Shall we pray? Father, it is such an enduring comfort for us to remember that we don't subsist and we don't rely on our own strength and our own talent and our own wisdom to make a success of this life or to gainfully employ our time and our efforts. It is Your Spirit and Your Word that enable us and empower us and enlighten us to redeem the time. Even though the days are evil, we can partake of eternity.

We can invest in eternity. We can prepare ourselves for what remains in this life and what is coming to us in the next. We thank You for the Lord Jesus and our unique special place in Him, the privilege and the opportunity to represent Him on this earth, to learn obedience by the things that we suffer, even as He did, and to grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior so that we can continue to be in His presence and to come before You and Your presence on that day when so many of us will be presented before Your throne.

We thank You for this portion of Scripture that is before us. We thank You for the truth that it communicates across the span of years and centuries in such a meaningful and vital way. It is undiminished.

It's like Moses after his career was complete. Its natural force is undiminished as it speaks to our hearts and helps to equip us for every good work. We pray that in both the presentation and in the reception this evening that the Lord Jesus will be honored and glorified, that we will be better able to serve and to vindicate the redemption and the salvation that You have granted to us in Your grace.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, you'll remember last time we had sort of a bizarre combination of things to look at.

We looked at ancient guitars. We looked at the structure of this psalm and the label that would have commended it to the attention of the Lord Jesus on the most important night of His life, the night prior to the crucifixion. We saw something of the overall content.

We saw its relationship to Psalm 6, which is also, and uniquely, these two psalms are labeled as upon Shemonith. And we also were looking forward to looking at the content of it tonight. As I said, the psalms seem to come in pairs.

They certainly are memorable and easy to study when you look at them in pairs, 1 and 2, 3 and 4, all the way up to this pair in 11 and 12. And so I want to just take a quick look at the end of Psalm 11. You can heave a sigh of relief.

I'm not going to review all of Psalm 11, just the last part, because time is short and precious. But we see that the Lord is in His holy temple. He is testing men in verse 4. This is the answer to the plea that David makes.

He is trusting the Lord. These who say, flee like a bird, like a partridge to your mountain. He says, nonsense.

I put my trust in the Lord. The Lord is in His temple. The Lord's throne is in heaven.

His eyes are watching. His eyes are beholding. Keep that thought in mind.

David in Psalm 11 is answering critics and answering those who would counsel him to flee in the face of his troubles that he's not going to because God is present even though he's in heaven. His eyes behold and His eyelids are testing the sons of men. The Lord tests the righteous.

And God has allowed these things through the wall of protection for a reason. And David understands this and he says, this is a test for the righteous. Now when you look at the text of Psalm 11, verse 5 there, the word that is translated righteous is tzaddik, tzedek.

Well, you see that we have a reference to the godly and the faithful in Psalm 12, verse 1. And those are different words. He is testing the tzaddik, tzedek. This is part of Melchizedek, you'll remember, king of righteousness.

And this is righteousness in the sense of what is true and right and proper as opposed to what is evil, bad, and destructive, right? It's the quality of goodness, the quality of what is right in the absolute moral sense. When you get to our psalm, Psalm 12, and it says, help Lord for the godly man ceases, this word doesn't mean godly in the way the English might suggest. This is the word chasid, which comes from chesed.

And you may recognize chesed as the Hebrew word for loyal love. It means faithful or faithfulness. Chesed is a dedicated, committed, loyal attitude toward the object of it.

God is faithful to us, we seek to be faithful to God. So it is the faithful man. Godly sort of reminds us of righteous.

Godliness we think is righteousness. But this is faithfulness, and there is a difference. Let me explain it in 15 seconds.

If we were righteous all the time, we would pretty much never sin, right? We wouldn't have maybe pattern sins, chain sins, clusters of sins. If we were righteous, we would have unstained garments and we would have that quality reflected in all of our thoughts and actions pretty much all the time. To be declared righteous would be a wonderful thing.

However, we all fail. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God as believers, which oddly enough is what Paul was talking about in Romans chapter 3 verse 23 when he said all have

sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. He's talking about believers.

And the Roman road notwithstanding, those of us who went through Romans together remember this. But in spite of our failures, if we are faithful, if we are committed to God, you think about the career of David. He's an example of someone who is not unstained by sin and failure.

He flees from Saul. He goes to Nob and manages to get all those priests killed. He lies.

He grabs the sword of Goliath, which is a symbol of human strength. It's not until later that he starts consulting God and going to the priest and saying, where's the ephod? Where are the orim and thumim? Let's find out what God wants. He has failure over and over again.

He's got spit running down his beard amongst the Philistines. He is full of wrath and anger and almost wipes out a household if it had not been for Abigail. He would have murdered Naboth.

He does kill Uriah. He does commit adultery with Yeshiva. There's a lot of places where he fails.

And you would say, well, is David a righteous man? David is righteous because he is faithful. And he is faithful to recover from his failures. Righteousness comes to us by faith.

We are not righteous. And we so often fail to be righteous. Yet, we can be assigned God's righteousness by faith.

And if I had to choose, if God said, I've got righteousness in this hand and I've got faithfulness in this hand, which one do you want? I would choose faithfulness because it is through faithfulness that we get righteousness. Have you ever thought about that? It isn't that we have erred and fallen short again and again. The guy in the arena that Theodore Roosevelt talked about gets back up.

How do we get back up? It is trusting the promises of God that he is faithful and he is just to cleanse us when we are faithful to acknowledge our failures and we keep returning to him. Keeping on in the returning, keeping on in the recovering, keeping on in the claiming of God's promises is faithfulness. We can get very discouraged if we look at our lives and say, I've got a failure here.

I've got a shortcoming here. I've got a weakness here. God's got better people than me all over the place.

We have give-up-itis. We can get depressed. We can be discouraged.

We can delay and mangle in getting on with our Christian life because we look at our pattern of sin and failure and we say, I'm not righteous enough to be part of God's plan and purpose here. I better just go bench myself and let him work with the righteous people. Well, it's the wrong answer.

Faithfulness is what God is looking for. God will take care of our righteousness. We'll get to Psalm 51, eventually, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. God does the purging. God does the washing to the person who faithfully comes to Him and asks for those things and seeks it out by faith.

Faith is the key to righteousness. So, as you look at the end of Psalm 11, the Lord is righteous and the Lord loves righteousness. The Lord is tzaddik.

The Lord loves tzedkot, which is a plural. He loves righteousnesses. You ought to add an es to the end of that.

He loves righteousnesses. The upright, it says his countenance beholds the upright and if you've got a text note down at the bottom that says, or the upright behold his countenance, that's, I think, the superior translation. What are the upright? The upright is yashar, y-a-s-h-a-r.

Yashar, behold his face. And to be upright, to be correct, to be vertical, to get back up on your feet, to the ones who stand, standing, getting back up on your feet, standing up straight, these are the ones who behold his face. It isn't that you haven't fallen, but you stand back up.

The ones who stand, the ones who are upright, the ones who, this has the idea of true. You know, we talk about true as something partaking of truth, but true and truth actually mean straight. When you buy lumber, you put the boards on their axis so that you can sight down them and see if they're warped or if they're true.

If your aim is true, it's straight, right? Well, that's in the vertical sense. This is what the word yashar means. It means to be upright in the sense of getting back plumb and square.

And this is something we can do. We can be upright. God will make us righteous.

Abraham believed God. God credited Abraham with righteousness. So when you see this first line in Psalm 12, help Lord for the faithful man ceases.

It isn't that we don't have enough really righteous people walking around being and doing righteousness. It is the cessation of those who are faithful, the faithful, the qesed, the loyally loving, those who love God and love one another and are committed to doing and being what God wants us to do and to be. Despite failures, despite shortcomings, despite discouragements, you keep standing back up and being upright.

God loves the upright. But the faithful man, the qesed ceases. There aren't enough around.

And then it says the faithful disappear from the sons of men. And you say, well, it seems like we just already had faithful. If qesed means faithful, what's translated faithful? Well, this is a different word.

This is emunah, E-M-U-N-A-H. And this word qesed is sometimes translated grace, but it

basically means loyal love. Emunah means trust.

You see the difference. They overlap, but there's a difference. The trusting man, the committed man has established his goals and values and priorities in the direction of God and the things of God.

That's an attitude of commitment. The committed man, committed to the things of God. The emunah man is the one who leans on the Lord, who depends on the Lord, who trusts in the Lord.

And this is being, remember there's a hymn, true hearted, whole hearted. Well, the true hearted part of this is the idea here in emunah. So being trustworthy, you are trusting and you are trustworthy.

You can be relied upon to be this kind of person. And it says he disappears from among the sons of men. And this is just the b'nai Adam.

Now, Adam is man in the sense of he's made of dirt. You have other words that like gibbor, talking about the mighty men. You have Anoshim with the idea of man and his nobility.

But Adam is the current generation that's going to turn to dust. I've had a great idea for an animated parable that relies on this idea. You've got a little sea of specks down at the bottom and they rise up and strut and they just collapse back down into the dust.

They rise up and they think they're doing something important, but they just collapse back down. It's an Ecclesiastes idea. How can you break free from the moment and from the temporary and the temporal and the ephemeral and the passing to do something that matters beyond your own moment? The godly ceases, the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.

They, the sons of men. So he's looking at the earth and all of the people on it. And you look for those 10 or 20 or 50 or 100 in Sodom who make the city worth preserving.

And they're dwindling. They're vanishing. David says, they, and that's a reference to the B'nai Adam, the sons of men, speak idly, everyone with his neighbor.

And this is a real interesting phrase in Hebrew because it's, uh, they, uh, they speak, uh, man with, with man is, is what it actually says here. Uh, the, uh, it just means another, everyone with another, and it almost doesn't matter who it is. Neighbor sounds like somebody, you know, well, it's just a man will talk to another man.

Uh, and it's, it's idle speech. And this is, uh, speaking falsely, deceitfully, uh, destructively. Uh, this word Shav, S-H-A-V, idle doesn't catch it.

This is malignant speech. It is deception for the purpose of destruction. It is deception for the purpose of harm.

They are speaking harmfully. They are speaking wrongly. They are seeking to destroy with their talking one with another.

And it's not just their neighbor. It's anybody they can find who will listen to them. Then it says with flattering lips and a double heart.

And of course, I told you last time, this flattering, uh, actually means, uh, smooth. It's, it goes down easy. It's something that, that sounds right, but it's actually not, not.

And then when it says a double heart, this is, uh, with, with smooth lips and heart and heart. The word heart occurs twice. Heart is lev, L-E-B or L-E-V.

And it says lev while lev, heart with heart. And so they say this is a double heart. Heart and heart makes two hearts.

It would be interesting if it was, you know, face with face, be double faced or tongue with tongue, double tongued, but this is a double heart. So they're representing their heart to be one way or their attitude, but it's really something else. Now, it goes on.

David says, may the Lord cut off all flattering lips. And this is, uh, often translated, uh, to destroy. Uh, it's, it's karat.

You, you karat a barit. You cut a covenant. You, so sometimes this is to make, you can make a covenant and it's to cut a covenant.

You're incising it into stone is the idea or into a clay tablet. So may he, uh, it doesn't so much say cut off as may he cut or, uh, remove, destroy. Hugh, it's, it's translated Hugh in the King James every once in a while, you know, cut, cut a tree.

So you get the idea that these lips, and of course this is a metonymy of the part for the whole. It means the entire person that's flapping these lips, uh, should be destroyed. May the Lord cut off, uh, all smooth lips and the tongue that speaks proud things.

And, and this is actually big things. This is gadol. Gadol just means great or big.

So it's big talk. It's just the tongue that, that talks a big fight. Now we're going somewhere with this, who have said these people who have said, notice, may the Lord cut off the lips and the tongue who have said, but this, as I say, he's really talking about the people who are wielding these lips and tongues.

Uh, these people have said with our tongue, we will prevail. With our tongue, we will be gabar. This is where you get the word gibor, which means a mighty man, a mighty warrior.

Uh, the giborim are the mighty men. Well, with our tongue, we will be mighty in the warfare overcoming sense. We will prevail.

We will overcome. Uh, we will be strong. We will be great.

We will be mighty. And this, uh, is, uh, company by a statement about our lips, uh, are our own. In other words, nobody can stop us from talking.

We have complete autonomy. Who is Lord over us? I reject any authority that says I can't engage in this activity. Now this week, if you have been paying attention, uh, the president's nominee to the vacancy on the Supreme court has been getting the, uh, confirmation hearing treatment, but almost uniquely, I mean, I thought it was bad when, uh, justice Thomas, uh, of course that dates me.

I was old enough to be paying attention when Clarence Thomas went through his confirmation hearing and it was just ugly, ugly, ugly. But this one reminds me, it was so odd because I actually did the work on this section of Psalm 12, um, last week, early last week before this ever came up. But as I watched a little bit of it, uh, yesterday and today, you realize that, uh, they have, the proceedings have been interrupted and there's a Senator there keeping score over 200 times, over 200 times protesters have stood up and yelled and had to be hauled out by the Capitol police.

Uh, nobody can understand what they're saying there, but they are seeking to prevail and push their point across with their tongue. And they're going to be very proud of themselves. This is like people who were proud of getting arrested in a protest march or something, you know, it's a badge of honor that, well, I got jailed because I was, you know, marching with Dr. King or whatever.

And so these people think it is a victory. They are great because they are willing to stand up and shout and get hauled out of the chambers where this proceeding is trying to go forward. You also have senators who have no other agenda except to try to get this guy not, uh, affirmed, not confirmed, not because he's a bad judge, but because, uh, somebody of the opposite party appointed him.

Therefore he must be somebody that's going to push the agenda of the other party. Therefore he must be blocked. He must be destroyed.

Uh, and so it's all a battle of words. It is, uh, lips that are smooth and are trying to make a case and they twist things. I heard senators today taking simple, straightforward things and twisting them and trying to make the nominee look bad.

He patiently explained that they have misconstrued, they have misrepresented, they have not taken into account the, I watched the gal, the senator from Hawaii this afternoon, manifestly twist and outright falsify opinions that this judge has written in the basis upon which he wrote them. And she would say, wasn't it thus and so? And he would say, no, it wasn't. And she'd say, yes it was, but it's time to move on.

And then same thing over and over and over again, where she had the last word saying, you

know, that this had nothing to do with, with what you say it had to do with, but moving on. And this is an example. Now you will be a victim of this kind of misrepresentation, whether you know it or not.

Jesus said, they hated me. They're going to hate you. Uh, the more you circulate in the world, there will be those who want to destroy you just because you make them uncomfortable because your presence or your words or your observations or your work exposes failings or shortcomings or a lack of integrity.

If you do a job that somebody else failed to do, it makes them look bad. They should have done it. They will hate you for that.

Um, if you stand for something that is right and somebody has failed to stand or sought to cheat or sought to cut a corner and it comes to light and you're anywhere in the vicinity, you will be blamed. You will be hated because you are faithful to principles of integrity and righteousness because you are representing the Lord Jesus on this earth and there is no guile in your mouth. You're going to be hated.

You're, you may not ever hear it. It will be done in your absence with the smooth lips and the tongue that talks a big fight, but it's a tongue fight and because you don't stoop to that level because you don't engage in character assassination and backbiting and gossip and maligning and backbiting and judging because you keep your own counsel. If you find that something does not comport, uh, the tools of the world are taken away from you and at a worldly level, you are often going to get the bad end of such a conflict.

It has happened. It is happening and it is going to happen. It happened to David and that's what he's talking about.

The Lord Jesus got crucified on false charges on twisted words. Well, this man said he would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. He never said that.

He said, you destroy it and I'll rebuild it in three days and he was talking about the temple of his body, but he never said he would destroy the temple. He didn't have to destroy it. They destroyed his body and sure enough, three days later he came back.

The Romans destroyed that temple eventually and Jesus predicted it. But, uh, these who say with our tongue we will prevail who is Lord over us. This brings a contrast.

You look at the end of Psalm 11. The Lord is righteous. The Lord loves righteousness.

His countenance is beheld by or the upright look upon his face. What is the nature of righteousness? A lot of people in the fight will say, thank you Lord. We'll say, praise Jesus.

We will say that we're spreading the gospel. We'll say that we're doing this and that and the other. What is it that constitutes genuine accomplishment, genuine service to the Lord in this

life? Are you a talk warrior or are you a faith warrior? Do you talk a big fight or do you trust that God will win the fight? There's a big difference and this difference has been lost in much of modern Christianity.

Turn with me to Proverbs chapter 21 verse 3 because ultimately as we do this study, we can figure out exactly what David was saying, why he's saying it and all the rest of it, but what should happen after we look? Sometimes it pains me when I listen. I've been listening back through some 25-year-old Bible classes and I am pleased at getting at what the text says, but sometimes I am disappointed that I didn't necessarily bring us to a place answering the question, well, so what? That's what it says and we've straightened that out and isn't that great, but how should we then live? What should we then do? Well, look at Proverbs chapter 21 verse 3 because what David is exemplifying and what David is in effect and under the presence and power of the Holy Spirit calling us to is found here. Proverbs chapter 21 verse 3. As you look at the introductory course, Proverbs originally didn't have these helpful divisions, but look at verse 2. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.

We're always thinking that we're right. Well, of course I'm right. I wouldn't do what I knew to be wrong and we vindicate ourselves and we justify ourselves because we say, my heart told me this was right.

I'm sure I'm right about this. I'm trusting that compass. I've got an internal compass and it didn't say, here's what's right, but you know what? I'm just going to sneakily go over here and do what's wrong.

Our mistake for most of us is not going against our conscience and doing things that we know better than to do. Our mistake is trusting our internal compass when it tells us that what we're doing is right. This tirade that I'm launching, this tantrum that I'm throwing, this commitment that I'm making, this effort that I'm undertaking is right.

I believe it to be right. And we don't spend enough time analyzing what it is we're doing, why we're doing it, how we're doing it, and what God might think about it. We trust that inner compass to be pointing us to north and we don't take time to say, am I near anything that might be skewing my compass? Is there something, if I got a magnet in my pocket, am I next to a big steel building here? And by not stopping and analyzing my motives, analyzing my thought process, and taking time to be sure I'm really on solid ground here.

I was thinking about this looking at the judicial nominee. These guys have to be so careful. One email, one careless word in an opinion or a decision or a speech or a paper or an article can be picked up decades later like a big baseball bat and people can swing it at your head.

And in order to successfully navigate all of the rocks and shoals and hazards and attacks of the opposition, you really have to be so careful. Wouldn't it be great if we were all that careful before we speak and before we act and before we decide and before we commit to say now, will this stand up to scrutiny, not from people, but from the Lord at the judgment? Will this

really stand up? Am I being merciful? Am I being gracious? Am I exhibiting love? Am I being patient? Am I trusting God? Am I looking to Him for strength? Am I looking to Him? Look at 21.3, right after he says, every way of a man is right in his own eyes, the Lord weighs the hearts. This is a call to objectivity.

Subjectively, we always think we're right. Have you ever been in a debate? I won't say argument. Have you ever been in a lively debate where you begin to suspect that the other person has a point, but you can't cave? You can't just stop and say, you know, I think you may have a point there.

We had to be right. Our inner compass told us we were right when we said or did whatever it was we said or did or didn't say or didn't do whatever we didn't say or didn't do. And so we're casting around for justifications to continue to be as right as we thought we were when we initially launched in, right? It's right in our eyes.

But this proverb, and you know a lot of these proverbs came to Solomon from David, he says, the Lord weighs the hearts. What does it look like when God weighs our heart? Remember the lave with lave, the double-hearted man? That's the one that talks smooth, has a lot of rationalizations, a lot of arguments, a lot of persuasive verbiage. But there's one heart and then there's another heart.

Well, the Lord weighs the hearts. To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Think about that.

People thought there can't be anything that impresses God more than me taking of the best, the fat of the lambs, the best of the flock, the best of the bringing it down before the Lord and sacrificing it, losing it to myself, committing it to Him. Can't be anything better than that. This is well before some of the prophets will speak out on this.

Malachi comes to mind. You're bringing these poor sacrifices. That's a whole different question.

Even if the sacrifices were good, God is weighing the heart. Remember what Samuel told Saul when he said, well, I got to get this sacrifice done before I lose all of my army? What did Samuel tell him? To obey is better than sacrifice. To be faithful is better than the fat of lambs.

Right? Same thing here. To do righteousness and justice. Do here is the verb asah.

You may remember in Genesis, there's a difference between what God creates, bara. God created man in His own image and after His own likeness. God created the heavens and the earth, bara.

They used to say something out of nothing, which is a little bit of a stretch, but it gets at the idea that creating is making something new. You don't have any precedent or any preexisting thing. Asah means to manufacture.

And when God takes something out of Adam's side, He asahs the woman. He creates her. He manufactures her.

And we don't create righteousness. We take material that God gives us and we do righteousness. We make righteousness.

So that's the verb here. To asah righteousness. And this is tzedakah.

It's the same word we saw at the end of Psalm 11. This is what God loves. And to do what God loves.

This is righteousness and justice. Justice is mishpat. And you say to do justice, to manufacture justice.

What does that really mean? Well, shafat is the Hebrew word for judge. You put an M in front of it. That's how you turn a Hebrew verb into a noun in a lot of cases.

So you have M, which means from. From shafat. Mishpat.

And that's the word for judge or justice. To do a right judgment. This is what the judge would say is right.

And of course, God is judge and He has committed all judgment to the Son. So to do righteousness. To make or to do tzedakah and mishpat.

Fairness. The judge figures out what is fair. It's not fair to be selfish.

It's not fair to accept grace from God and then be ungracious to one another. It is not fair to let God forgive us and not to forgive our fellow believer. You remember the parable of the unjust servant.

He owes a great debt. He is forgiven. There's an underservant to him who owes a small debt and he won't forgive him.

And when the master finds out, he says, guess what? You are unforgiven. Clint Eastwood made a movie by that name. Not the first one, by the way.

There's another unforgiven before that. But unforgiven, you can be, you can lose your forgiveness. You can't lose your salvation, but you can lose your forgiveness.

Look at that parable. The master says, remember that debt I forgave? Well, it's unforgiven. I revoke the forgiveness and the guy goes to debtor's prison until he pays every penny.

Do you really want to have to lose forgiveness and be responsible for the penalty for your sins? Just try holding a grudge. Just try bearing ill will to a fellow believer because of some real or imagined crime. You can lose.

Forgiveness is the basis for everything. You can't be righteous if you are unforgiven. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Your iniquities separate between you and your God. And if your iniquity is not forgiven, it's not gone. It has come back from wherever the distance is from the east to the west and is hung back around your neck like a big dead chicken.

Because of what you, aren't there so many chicken analogies? Patty and I've been musing on this now that we got a couple dozen chickens. I mean, everything from hen pecked and crowing about a thing. And there's just so many, we've lost a lot of our visible language contributions from chickens.

But to do righteousness, you have to first undo sin. And we can't undo our sin. Only God can do that.

But we can put ourselves in a position where He will not forgive and He will not hear and He will not overlook our failures and our shortcomings. So this is important. This is daily grist for the mill here.

When we wake up in the morning, when we stop in the middle of the day, when we review what we've done in the evening, and as I've said many times, this is what the Bible suggests over and over and over again. Whether it's Daniel, whether it is Psalm 55, 17, at least three times a day we need to call a halt. Where am I with regard to the iniquity that I pick up like road dust on my feet? And Jesus said, I wash your feet, you need to wash each other's feet.

The night before He was crucified, the Shemineth night, the Gethsemane night. What did He say? What's the most important lesson He left His disciples the night before He was crucified? This crucifixion in less than 24 hours is all about resolving the sin question. I'm doing it for you, you need to do it for each other.

And if you don't, forget about being upright, forget about making or doing righteousness and justice. You can't if you don't crawl out of your skull and stop thinking that every way you engage in is right, because the Lord is weighing the heart. We need to have the humility to look at ourselves objectively and say, what does God think about what I'm doing? What does God think about what I'm thinking? What does God think about what I am pursuing? What is in my heart? What occupies me? What drives me? What satisfies me? What gratifies me? What makes me tick? What winds me up and makes me go? How does God see that? If you care about God, i.e. if you love the Lord God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength, you will do this because you do not want to disappoint Him.

You don't want to be displeasing, and you don't want to lose His gracious favor in removing our sins, in standing us back up on our feet. To do righteousness and justice more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. More acceptable.

This is an interesting word, acceptable. It's from the Hebrew verb bachar, B-A-C-H-A-R, which

doesn't mean to accept, or to be acceptable, or to find pleasing, or just, or vindicated, or anything else. This is a nifal.

Let me give you a 10-second Hebrew lesson here. The cal is sort of the, what you would call, active. So bachar in the cal would mean to choose.

Bachar means to choose. Nifal is the passive. You can go into all of the, hithpael is the reflexive, and the piel is the intensive, and all the rest of it.

But you start out, all your Hebrew verbs, you start out with the cal. That's the vocabulary form, bachar. It's just the simple, it's almost like infinitive in English.

To swim, to go, to walk, to be, or not to be. Well here, bachar means to choose. Well, this is not the cal, this is the nifal, which is the next one you study.

That's the passive. So, rather than being acceptable, this means to be chosen. To be chosen.

To do righteousness and justice is to be chosen to the Lord. This puts such a gigantic, titanic, and I use that adjective on purpose, hole below the waterline in the Reformed Calvinist theological ship, you can't believe it. Do you want to be chosen by God? You do righteousness, you do justice.

Righteousness and justice are chosen by God. It's not in His inscrutable, mystical, unknowable sovereignty. Those who do righteousness and do justice, who seek it and search for it as for hid treasures, understand the fear of the Lord, find the knowledge of God, are chosen.

They are chosen to the Lord. To do justice and righteousness is to be chosen to the Lord from sacrifice. And you have that name again, that m, that means from Zabak.

And Zabak is offerings. Sacrifice. This is in the singular, so this is the act of sacrifice.

This is not sacrifices. God would rather see you manufacture, perform, make, do righteousness and justice, than to see you sacrifice. If one person is sacrificing and another one is choosing righteousness and justice, God is choosing the righteousness and justice.

So my point here, related to Psalm 12, is this. You can't talk a big fight. Whether it is on the side of evil, with smooth lips and a tongue that talks big things, but you can't talk righteousness.

You can't speak yourself into goodness. Not by prayer, not by fellowship, not by claiming to be for a lot of wonderful things. It is what you do, not what you say, that gets us chosen.

Doing righteousness, doing faithfulness, doing justice. Remember, what does the Lord require of you, oh man? Remember that one? What does the Lord require of you, oh man? To love mercy and to walk humbly with your God, but what? To asah justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God, right? That's Micah 6.8, which I had to look up. I always remember the text and can't ever remember the address.

It's Micah 6.8. What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly. That's what God requires. There's no sacrifice there.

There's no fat of lambs. He has shown you, oh man, what is good. Micah.

Well, back to our psalm, because this is really the contrast and it's one of the things that ties Psalm 11 and Psalm 12 together. Do you talk or do you do? Well, the faithful, those who do, those who commit, those who manufacture righteousness and justice and who stand up rightly, are disappearing from among the sons of men. Instead, everybody's talking a big fight.

It's yammering, it's chatter, it's yelling out in the confirmation hearings. Look at me, I'm a hero. I actually heard somebody saying something about heroes, one of the shrill screaming girls they dragged out.

I don't know if they hired these girls to go off about every five to ten minutes. It didn't matter what was going on. They weren't listening.

But I think they're like shills that got paid 50 bucks a piece. You know, wait till 245, then scream your head off and get dragged out. Who knows what they're saying? Who knows why they're saying it? They interrupted the Democrats who were trying to score points off the nominee.

They yelled in the middle of that. I mean, it's just mindless. And by the way, when we had a Democratic president and we had Democratic nominees to the court, did you notice that there was an absence? I'm not saying that the Republican Party is lily white.

They engage in a lot of the same underhanded waste of time tactics as the Democrats. But one thing they did not do is try to win by chaos and win by deconstructing the process. They'll use all of the political tricks of the trade.

They will stall. They'll filibuster. They'll do a lot of underhanded, sneaky things.

But they don't throw a bomb into the room and blow up the whole process. Conservative people don't think that way, generally. So what does David say in verse 5? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, I will arise, says the Lord, I will set him in the safety for which he yearns.

This verse 5 of Psalm 12 is a confident claim about what God is going to do. He will arise. And this is, as I mentioned, I think, last time, this is the verb kum, k-u-m, which means to establish.

I will establish. God's not talking about what he's going to do. God doesn't have to get up off of his throne to make this happen.

He says, I will establish, I will emplace. Both of these are verbs for the poor and the needy. For there are two problems with the poor and needy.

They are oppressed and they are suffering. They're sighing. They're being pushed down.

And by the way, the oppression there, the affliction, is an interesting word. It means to be devastated, to be ruined. It speaks of havoc and violence, violence and havoc as a social sin, which is what we're just seeing, the violence that is being done to our allegedly representative democracy.

And people who don't deserve it are being victimized by this mindless kind of opposition. God says, I will emplace him, I will set him, I will establish him. And this second verb, I will set, it's translated, this means to fix, to station, to put like a post in the ground.

It's immovable. You know, we had that gospel song, I shall not be moved. God says, I will establish and I will permanently fix the salvation.

And this is Yashah, where you get Yeshua. Remember, the very first word in this psalm was save Lord. It's from Yashah.

Same thing here. I will give him the Yashah for which he yearns. And this, again, is a very pregnant Hebrew verb.

It literally means to breathe or to blow. It's the verb puach. You remember ruach is breath or wind or spirit.

Well, this is puach and it's a near relative. It's a cousin of ruach, which is a moving force. Well, here, the one that is uttering or blowing or breathing, it's translated as puff, blow, exhale, to excite or inflame, to puff or pant, to blow or to blast.

But see how hymn is in italics? God says, for the oppression of the poor, the sighing of the needy, I will set, I will emplace the salvation for which he is expelling breath. He's, you know how they tell women in labor, just breathe. You know, when they do that huffing and puffing and it's hard breathing, you're having to endure, you're bearing a heavy load and you're breathing hard.

Seems to be the idea here. Then we go on the words of the Lord. And these are the sayings of the Lord.

These are, this is the commandments of the Lord, the speech of the Lord. This is from the verb amar, which means to speak or to say. So the sayings of the Lord are pure, pure sayings.

And this means to be clean, uh, to be pure, like a ceremonially clean animals. They are unpolluted. They are unstained.

They are unsullied. They are sanctified, uh, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, a furnace of the arets, purified seven times. This is a different word for purification here.

This is zakak, Z-A-Q-A-Q. And it means to, uh, distill or strain or refine as if by fire. But it means, uh, the, the first pure means it is the, it's the product.

It's the result. This is the process purified seven times. And you could imagine silver that had been heated up and had the dross, uh, rise to the surface and scooped off.

Do that seven times. How pure is that silver going to be? You shall keep them, O Lord, he says in verse seven. Uh, you shall preserve them from this generation forever.

You shall preserve them. And, uh, preserve has the idea of those who are, uh, watched over. The watchman on the wall has the, the idea that comes from this word.

So what's the upshot of all of this? David is looking around and he's, there's no personal appeal anywhere in this Psalm. He's not saying, Lord, I'm in trouble. Help me.

He says, save Lord, because our society is disintegrating. Those who are salt and light are disappearing. And this blowing of speech, this pontificating and saying great things and smooth liping around is causing the poor and the needy to, uh, suffer.

God says, I will take the poor and the needy and I'm going to fix them in a place where they are immovable and unassailable. And those words, specifically those words, those promises of help and support and sustenance and assurance for the needy are, they're, there's no impurity in them anywhere. They are pure.

The wicked are prowling on every side because vileness is exalted among the sons of men. Vileness is exalted among the sons of men. What a discouragement it is to us.

And once again, this bene adam that you had at the beginning, the faithful are disappearing and in its place, there's nothing but violence among the sons of men. It is discouraging to watch the news. This is why I almost never do it.

Righteousness is disappearing. Those who are righteous are disappearing. They're character assassinated.

You know, they used to say, don't get in an argument with those who will drag you down to their level and then beat you with experience. If you don't use the tools of character assassination and foul play, it's hard to prevail in the world because people are so low and so debauched and so selfish and dishonest and outright cruel. So the righteous disappear.

Well, when we get to the next pair of psalms, 13 and 14, we're going to see the despair that this can generate. And David expresses it to the Lord. How long, oh Lord, are you going to let this go on? How long? How long? Look at the beginning of Psalm 13 just real quick.

How long, oh Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul with sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? He starts with the general picture and he moves to the specific himself. He is the poor and the needy. He is the one that is afflicted.

So that's where we're going with this. How do we respond, whether it is individual or societal

oppression? David always goes to the Lord. He's committed a lot of errors.

They like to say unforced errors. You know, sometimes you do things and it wasn't even a result of a temptation or you don't have a legitimate excuse. You just messed up for really no good reason.

And we say, well, maybe I deserve. No, you don't. If you're faithful, it isn't your level of personal righteousness, although that should follow.

But it is a result. It is an outgrowth of something that we should pursue and cultivate and strain to get. Jesus said, strive to enter by the narrow gate.

Work at it. Put some effort into it. Strive, work to get through that.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Put some effort into it. But don't work at being righteous.

Look at this Psalm. Work at being faithful. When you do mess up, get over yourself.

Get over the failure. Claim God's cleansing grace and be faithful. Be like David.

He knows what he's talking about here. And be in a place where God can fix us and set us and sustain us and ultimately make us partakers of the victory that Christ achieved on the cross. We can join in that.

We can be among those brethren of whom he is the firstborn. It isn't measuring our righteousness. It is measuring our faithfulness.

Righteousness comes by faith. Faith doesn't come by righteousness. Don't get them mixed up.

Three times a day, let's commit to stopping and taking stock. Am I trusting? Am I relying? Am I looking to God and his grace to make this day redeemed, brought out of the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of light? We have the ability to do that by the grace and the power that God has conferred to us with his Holy Spirit, with his word, the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, and the overarching plan and purpose of God the Father. The whole Trinity is rooting for us.

The unfallen angels are rooting for us. It's just a matter of understanding how it works and pursuing the things that will achieve success. And that is faith.

Faith first. Righteous will live by his faith. We walk by faith and not by sight.

Right? That's what these psalms communicate to us. So when you think back on Psalm 12 and you see, help Lord, we don't just fall back and wait for the stretcher bearers to come and carry us off to the ambulance. Save, Lord, is what it says.

Deliver. Vindicate. Who's he going to save and deliver and vindicate? Who are the saved? How

did you get saved? For by grace you are saved through faith.

As you have received Christ, so walk. How did you receive Christ? By faith. How are you going to walk? By faith and not by sight.

It doesn't even say walk by righteousness. It says walk by faith. Faith, faith, faith.

Psalm 12 is a faith psalm. Get your faith going is what David tells us. It's the example he leaves for us.

And it is the example that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to follow after Gethsemane and on the cross. So we'll see the continuation of this when we take up Psalm 13 next time, but let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the way out that you have provided us.

Our faith would be worthless and useless if it did not have as its object your character, your promises, your grace, your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The merit of our faith is in the object and we have an unparalleled, incalculably valuable and great object for our faith. We thank you for your love for us, your grace toward us that makes our faith viable and operable and rewards our faith with salvation, with righteousness, with opportunity, with all of those things that the Lord Jesus came to this earth to give us, sacrificed himself to make available to us and is now, even as we speak, at your right hand, interceding on our behalf, arguing for our growth and our vindication as those who have placed our faith in you through him.

We pray that these things will live and breathe in our souls in the coming days, that we can reflect everything as the body of Christ that the Lord Jesus did when he was here in his earthly ministry. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.