Psalm 109 • A prayer when someone is spreading lies about you

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Chapter 109, this is a Psalm again of David. It was written during a time when he was being viciously attacked and maligned by someone. We don't know who; there were several people who attacked David verbally throughout the course of his life. It could have been Saul, it could have been even his son. But there was a great deal of hurt associated with this.

And I don't know if you've ever been attacked verbally, where someone has actually spread lies about you—I mean, absolute lies. It's one thing if they spread truths that are nasty; that's bad enough, and that even hurts. But when you really aren't deserving of what is being said, and someone does that, it's very hurtful.

And as we read through this Psalm, you're going to see that David was deeply wounded by whoever was doing this. So he took his hurt and the injustice of it all to the Lord in prayer, rather than taking vengeance. Because what does the Bible say? Vengeance is mine, right? Says the Lord, it is mine to avenge (Romans 12:19).

David cries out for God's justice to take hold of the situation. He says in verse 1,

"Be not silent, O God of my praise!

[2] For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues.

[3] They encircle me with words of hate (and here's what he says before the Lord)*, and* (they) *attack me without cause." (ESV)*

In fact, it's not just that. This is what's really hurtful: in verse 4, he say *"In return for my love, they accused me* (in return for my love)..."

That's the part that really has to just wound the most deeply, when you feel like you have responded to someone in real, genuine love, and their response back to

you was to verbally assassinate you or verbally attack you in the hearing of others. That's just, oh, that's tremendously painful.

And so, he says at the end of verse 4, so I'm going to get my bow and my arrow and my sword, and I'm going to attack them and kill them. You're going, wait a minute, what Bible are you reading from there? He doesn't say that, does he? That's what we — that's what our flesh — if David was a man of the flesh, that's what he probably would have said. But what he says here at the end of that verse is, *"...but I give myself to prayer..."*

So what is the answer? When you are being verbally attacked, defend yourself? I'm going to get the biggest soapbox I can get on, and I'm going to stand up, and I'm going to make sure everybody hears when I say, that's a lie, that person is lying about me. That's what I want to do, right? But David says, instead, *"...I give myself to prayer…"* I heard somebody say, say much to God and little to man. I think that's a good thing to live by: say much to God and little to man.

He says in verse 5*, "So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love."*

Now, in the next verses, 6 through, well, 20, David is going to respond according to the way life presented itself to them. I mean, David lived in a time when the rule was an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and he's going to pray to the Lord on that basis. You and I have been given a higher road to walk. Jesus gave it to us about people who speak abusively against us and so forth. But this is the day in which David was living, and here we go.

Verse 6. *"Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser stand at his right hand."*

Same thing that, in other words, David is saying: meet him with the same thing that I've been getting. They've been accusing me, so let an accuser stand and accuse him, he says,

"[7] When he is tried, let him come forth guilty; let his prayer be counted as sin!

[8] May his days be few; may another take his office!"

You'll remember that Peter quoted that portion of the verse when he decided to get together a committee and vote on a successor for Judas by the casting of lots, which I don't think very much of. I don't think that was necessarily the Lord's will, to be completely honest with you. Casting lots was an Old Testament form of determining the will of the Lord, and frankly, we never hear of casting lots after that time.

But anyway, verse 9:

"May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow! (Basically means let him die.)

[10] May his children wander about and beg, seeking food far from the ruins they inhabit!

[11] May the creditor seize all that he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil!

[12] Let there be none to extend kindness to him, nor any to pity his fatherless children!

[13] May his posterity be cut off; may his name be blotted out in the second generation!

[14] May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out!

[15] Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth! (And then, he gives the reason why.)

[16] For he did not remember to show kindness, but pursued the poor and needy and the brokenhearted, to put them to death."

And that is, that's a pretty serious charge to lay at anybody's doorstep, isn't it? It says he actually pursued poor and needy people and thought that he was going to, and brokenhearted people and thought that he was going to abuse them and even put them to death.

Verse 17: *"He loved to curse* (he says)*; so let curses come upon him!* (If that's what he sowed. So let him reap that same thing.) *He did not delight in blessing* (therefore)*; may it be far from him!* (no blessings coming his way)

[18] He clothed himself with cursing as his coat; (Just like you put on a coat, he put on cursing) *may it soak into his body like water, like oil into his bones!*

[19] May it be like a garment that he wraps around him, like a belt that he puts on every day!

[20] May this be the reward of my accusers from the Lord, of those who speak evil against my life!"

And we read these verses down here through verse 20, and we think, wow, yeah, that's pretty harsh David. Here you are giving God all this advice on how to judge this guy and so forth, who's been speaking abusively and hurtfully toward you and obviously hurt a good many other people as well. And however you and I may look upon what David is doing here, there's one thing David didn't do: he didn't take the situation into his own hands. That's one thing he didn't do.

He told the Lord, and he's pouring out his heart to God. And he's being completely transparent with God, saying, this is what I would like you to do. It's not like you can hold that stuff back from God anyway, and David knew that. I can't hide from God what I'm thinking, what I'm feeling. He gave voice to it, but what he didn't do is take it into his own hands. And now, he begins to pray regarding his own needs related to this whole thing, and he says,

"[21] But you, O GOD my Lord, deal on my behalf for your name's sake; because your steadfast love is good, deliver me!"

And I want you to notice here, David is not asking God to help him because he's been a good person. In fact, he says, if you're going to do it for your name's sake, do it so that you will get the praise. And he says, if you're going to do it, do it based on your steadfast love, not mine. And then he says,

"[22] For I am poor and needy, and my heart is stricken within me." In other words, the hurt of this situation is really taking a toll on him. He says,

"[23] I am gone like a shadow at evening; I am shaken off like a locust." Shake like, she's shaken off the branch by a heavy wind.

"[24] My knees are weak through fasting; my body has become gaunt, with no fat.

[25] I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they wag their heads.

[26] Help me, O LORD my God! Save me according to your steadfast love!" Again, that reference to *"according to your love."*

And he says in verse 27,

[27] Let them know that this is your hand; you, O LORD, have done it!" Not mine, yours.

"[28] Let them curse, but you will bless! They arise and are put to shame, but your servant (he's talking about himself now) *will be glad!*

[29] May my accusers be clothed with dishonor; may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a cloak! (But he says,)

[30] With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

[31] For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death."

And so what we have in this Psalm, again, is the best way to deal with someone who's pouring out lies. It happens, doesn't it? People do that. I don't know why they do it, but they do it. And the answer here is to bring that person to the Lord and leave them there. We need to learn to trust. When I say, trust the Lord with somebody who's hurting you, what I mean by that is trust that God is able to take care of that situation.

Do you know why we don't bring people in situations like that before the Lord? We don't think He's going to do anything about it. If we thought He was going to do something about it. We would, we'd bring them there, we'd put them there, and we'd leave them there.

But I've noticed in my own life, the reason I don't go to the Lord at times like that is because I don't think He's going to do it. I have my—I'm full of doubt at that point. And so I feel like if something's going to be done, I'm probably going to have to do it.

And that's the opposite of faith. Lord, may we begin to walk in faith, knowing that You are a God of justice and that You're going to take care of Your children. Bring those people to God and leave them there because only He can make it right without compromising your heart before the Lord.

When somebody says something hurtful to you, and you return something hurtful to them, you have compromised your heart. Now your own heart is compromised. You've jumped into the fray, and now, until you repent, you have no right to go to the Lord and say, Lord, work on my behalf, because you already started working on your own behalf.

When that happens—when we set out to do a work of our own deliverance, when we set out to avenge ourselves—we can't expect the Lord then to step in and take care of it for us after we've jumped in and thrown the same verbal barbs back at them that they threw at me. I'm on my own at that point.

You know what I mean? I can't say, oh yeah, well, and then go, Lord, take care of them. And the Lord's just going to say, well, I think you already did. And that's as good as it's going to get. You took care of it, and there you go. That's not what we want to do. It's not what we want to do. So leave it with the Lord.