**THE BOOK OF PSALMS**

**Psalm 35 – A Prayer of Vindication (Plead My Cause)**

**January 6, 2021**

**Objectives:**

1. To continue to appreciate the value of the Psalms to us individually and as a community.
2. To hear what it is to call out to the Lord for justice and mercy.
3. To appreciate the uniqueness of the Psalms as scared text in scriptures and as the voice of God.

**Summary:** Psalm 35 is a Psalm of David**.** With great emotion and urgency, David prays this prayer of psalm 35. The context of the writing of this psalm is uncertain as its language shifts between legal and military. It may be classified as an **individual lament.**

**Points of Psalm 35 – A Prayer of Vindication**

1. **Call on the Divine Warrior (1-10)**
   1. Plead my cause and fight for me
   2. Stand up for my help
   3. Stop those who pursue me; say to my soul I AM your salvation
   4. Put to shame and dishonor those who seek after my life
   5. Let the angel of the Lord pursue them
   6. Let their way be dark and slippery
   7. They have set a pit for me without cause
   8. Let destruction come upon them and let them be caught in their own trap
   9. My soul shall rejoice in the salvation of the Lord
2. **The trouble Soul (11-18)**
   1. Fierce witnesses rise up against me
   2. They return evil for good
   3. When they were sick I prayed for them
   4. I cared as a friend or brother would
   5. But when I was in distressed they came against me
   6. Lord rescue me form destruction
   7. I will praise you in the great assembly
3. **Prayer for Vindication (19-25)**
   1. Let my enemy not rejoice over me troubles
   2. My enemies are deceitful
   3. My enemies speak against me
   4. Come to my rescue Lord
   5. Vindicate me Lord
4. **The Joy of Deliverance (26-28)**
   1. Take the victory away from my enemies
   2. Bring them to shame and dishonor who come against me
   3. Let those who are on my side celebrate the goodness of the Lord on my behalf
   4. I will praise you all day long; for the Lord had given me the victory



**Questions for contemplative reflection:**

**Verses (1-10):**

* Do you ask the Lord to speak to your soul?  To encourage your soul?
* Recall a time when you called out to the Lord. Did the Lord speak through others, the Holy Spirit, God’s word, or all three of these?
* How does having the objective Truth of God’s Word reorient you to God? What does it mean to you personally, to know that God speaks to you with truth?

**Verses (9-10):**

* What has it meant for you personally to “assume the right posture” before God?
* What do you think David is getting at when he numbers himself among the poor and needy?

**Verses (11-16)**

* Think of a time when you’ve been betrayed. Was it by someone you thought was a friend?
* What feelings and emotions did you experience?

**Verses (17-18)**

* Have you ever been in a place where you felt like you needed God to act and act now, but instead, it seems like he’s just standing still?
* How did knowing that his timing, like his actions…is on purpose…not random help for you?

**Verses (19-28)**

* This is an honest call from David’s heart for Justice. What about you?
* David expresses confidence in the Lord. What about you?

**Apply:**

* Now that you’ve read through psalm 35 think back to your own enemies. Think about how you felt, and then think about how David felt. Were there any similarities?
* How has this psalm has resonated with you?

***A Psalm* of David. The Lord the Avenger of His People**

**35**Plead*my cause,* O Lord, with those who strive with me;  
Fight against those who fight against me.  
**2**Take hold of shield and buckler, And stand up for my help.  
**3**Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me.  
Say to my soul, “I *am* your salvation.”

**4**Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor  
Who seek after my life; Let those be turned back and brought to confusion, Who plot my hurt.  
**5**Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the Lord chase *them.*  
**6**Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the Lord pursue them.

**7**For without cause they have hidden their net for me *in* a pit,  
*Which* they have dug without cause for my life.  
**8**Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, And let his net that he has hidden catch himself; Into that very destruction let him fall.

**9**And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; It shall rejoice in His salvation.  
**10**All my bones shall say, “Lord, who *is* like You,  
Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him,  
Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?”

**11**Fierce witnesses rise up; They ask me *things* that I do not know.  
**12**They reward me evil for good, *To* the sorrow of my soul.  
**13**But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing *was* sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart.  
**14**I paced about as though *he were* my friend *or* brother;  
I bowed down heavily, as one who mourns *for his* mother.

**15**But in my adversity they rejoiced And gathered together;  
Attackers gathered against me, And I did not know *it;*  
They tore *at me* and did not cease;  
**16**With ungodly mockers at feasts They gnashed at me with their teeth.

**17**Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue me from their destructions, My precious *life* from the lions.  
**18**I will give You thanks in the great assembly; I will praise You among many people.

**19**Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies; Nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause.  
**20**For they do not speak peace, But they devise deceitful matters Against *the* quiet ones in the land.  
**21**They also opened their mouth wide against me, *And* said, “Aha, aha! Our eyes have seen *it.*”

**22***This* You have seen, O Lord; Do not keep silence. O Lord, do not be far from me.  
**23**Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication, To my cause, my God and my Lord.  
**24**Vindicate me, O Lord my God, according to Your righteousness; And let them not rejoice over me.  
**25**Let them not say in their hearts, “Ah, so we would have it!”  
Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up.”

**26**Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion  
Who rejoice at my hurt; Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor Who exalt themselves against me.

**27**Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, “Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.”  
**28**And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness *And* of Your praise all the day long.

**Next week’s lesson is Psalm 37 “The Meek Shall Inherit The Earth”**