

The Treatment of the Righteous *Psalm 94:12-23*

Good morning,

Jesus, speaking to the religious leaders of His time said...

John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

John 5:40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. NKJV

Henry Blackaby said, “*Bible study will not give you eternal life.*

You could memorize the entire Bible and be able to discuss minute issues of biblical scholarship and yet fail to experience the truths found in its pages.

It is a subtle temptation to prefer the book to the Author. A book will not confront you about your sin, the Author will.

Books can be ignored; it is much harder to avoid the Author when He is seeking a relationship with you.

Can you imagine yourself knowing all that God has promised to do in your life but then turning to something else instead?

You may be tempted to turn to substitutes. These substitutes aren't necessarily bad things. They might include serving in the church, doing good deeds, or reading Christian books.

No amount of Christian activity will ever replace your relationship with Jesus.

*“Never become satisfied with religious activity rather than a personal, vibrant, and growing **relationship** with Jesus Christ.”*

Please open your Bibles to *Psalm 94* as we continue that survey.

The psalmist begins *Psalm 94* by speaking about the evil-doers and their oppression of the righteous but soon the writer teaches how the LORD is sovereign and in control of everything.

It seems that all of the attention was on the evil and the proud as the writer asked the LORD for vengeance, but soon the psalmist’s attention is turned to the treatment of God’s people.

The psalmist proclaims the LORD’s divine sovereignty and that leads him to appeal to the LORD as the great Judge of the earth.

The writer also proclaims confidence in the LORD and tells his readers about the present and future triumph of God.

In the midst of this confidence of victory, the writer describes the happy follower of the LORD, is the person who realizes that LORD corrects His children, because of His great love for us.

I. The LORD trains His people.

Read *Psalm 94:12*

We have learned before, that *blessed* means, “*oh how happy*”.

Allow me to read *vs. 12* in the New American Standard Version.

*Psalm 94:12 Blessed is the man whom You **chasten**, O LORD, and whom You teach out of Your law; NASU*

This word *chasten* translated from the Hebrew language (*yāsar*), can mean to instruct but it also means to discipline, correct, teach, or reprove.

There is a huge difference between discipline and punishment.

The root word for punishment is punitive which means to inflict harm as a way of revenge. The root word for discipline means to disciple or to teach.

God does not “punish” His children for wrong choices and sin, because our punishment for sin was laid upon Jesus on the Cross

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, everyone, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him (Messiah) the iniquity of us all. NKJV

When we give our lives to Christ, who is our Substitute for sin, our sin is forgiven and as the *Book of Hebrews* says, ***God remembers our sin no more.***

Contrast the idea of chastening or discipline with what the psalmist said earlier in this chapter.

Psalm 94:1 LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs — O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!

Psalm 94:2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth; render punishment to the proud. NKJV

The LORD will punish (punitive) His enemies, but He will chasten (**disciple**) those whom He loves.

All true believers, love to serve the LORD when everything seems to be going our way, but a lot of us don't like it when the LORD corrects us.

Solomon said in *Proverbs 3:11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction.*

Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. NKJV

Hard times can test our faith and character, and ultimately it reveals whether we trust God and what we believe about Him.

Like the old **saying**, suffering can make us **bitter or better**.

Suffering can also cause us to come to some false conclusions about why God allows them to happen within our lives.

Wiersbe said, "*Chastening is the evidence of the Father's love. Satan wants us to believe that the difficulties of life are proof that God does not love us, but just the opposite is true.*"

Sometimes the Lord shows His love by allowing some physical suffering, but whatever our situation, we can be sure His chastening comes from His loving heart.

Don't despise His **chastening**, because He is trying to mature you, and He loves you more than you love yourself!

I always think about the LORD's correction as being similar to a parent **stopping** a child from running out in front of a bus, because they failed to look both ways before crossing the street.

How often do we fail to see the bus in the spiritual realm? But the LORD protects us in our ignorance and spiritual blindness.

Notice, *Psalm 94:12b and teach out of **Your law**, NKJV*

We need a healthy diet of God's Word not only to encourage us but also to remind us of who we are, as His children.

The comfort and strength we need can be found in God's Word!

Brooks cited in Spurgeon said, *"All the chastening in the world, without divine teaching, will never make a man blessed.*

...that man that finds correction attended with instruction, and lashing with lessons, is a happy man."

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. NKJV

So, the psalmist said, *"Oh how happy"*, is the person who is corrected by the LORD and is instructed from His Word.

A foolish person believes their way is the way to happiness, but the Word of God and His chastening, make a person ***blessed***.

II. God's rest and protection.

Read *Psalm 94:13-15*

Jesus said in this world we will have tribulation but fear not.

Here the psalmist promised the LORD will give *rest from the days of adversity*.

Allow me to give you a theological definition of *rest*...*Rest* is freedom from work, toil, strain, or activity.

This means a *rest* from labor, from mental exertion, or a *rest* of body or mind. A body is at *rest* when it ceases to move. The mind is at *rest* when it ceases to be disturbed or agitated.

*vs. 13 “That You may give him rest from the days of **adversity**”*

Rest also means freedom from whatever worries or disturbs you.

R. Kent Hughes said, “*As Christians, we understand there is no rest for the soul apart from Christ.* (Hughes)

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us. NKJV

Rest comes when we trust and know the Lover of our souls.

People who received *rest* are those, who not only heard the Gospel that was preached but also mixed it with **faith**!

This is why two people can hear the same message and one is fed by the Spirit and the other is not.

“Until the pit is dug for the wicked” describes when the LORD will make all things right, in the day of His judgment.

John Trapp said this means, “*Until the cold grave hold his body, and hot hell hold his soul.*”

Psalm 94:14 For the LORD will not cast off His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance. NKJV

The promise God’s children have is we know we are loved by Jesus so we can *rest* in the truth that He will never let go of us.

Hebrews 4:1 Since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. NKJV

Notice *vs. 15*, “***Judgment will return to righteousness.***”

When the LORD returns with His Saints to rule and reign in the Millennial Kingdom, all things will be ruled in righteousness.

vs. 15b, and all the upright in heart will **follow it.** NKJV

The LORD will protect and give His followers **spiritual rest**, *even before* He finally comes back and sets up His kingdom.

III. God’s comfort.

Read ***Psalm 94:16-19***

The psalmist here communicates the limits and frailty of himself and that no matter how great he thought he was, he was unable to defeat evil workers of sin on his own.

Notice he said, “***Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul would soon have settled in silence.***”

The psalmist was so deeply troubled that he nearly slipped into utter depression and defeat.

The follower of Christ must understand, that without the LORD intervening on our behalf, we would be in real trouble and could not stand against the evil of this world.

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. NKJV

“If I say, my foot slips, Your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up”

The psalmist knew his situation was well beyond his control.

The LORD’s mercy will sustain us during difficulties, even when we think we will fall, the LORD is still faithful.

The LORD understands our human weaknesses and frailties, yet He supplies rest and grace for His righteous followers.

Psalm 103:13 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. NKJV

The LORD reaches out to support and save His people, even when we feel like our footing is failing.

When you feel like your footing in life is giving out, reach out to the **faithful** One who understands you and is ready to offer His grace and mercy in your time of need.

Notice, *“In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.”*

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

2 Corinthians 1:4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 Corinthians 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. NKJV

Paul said here in *2 Corinthians* that the LORD *comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble.*

Not only does the LORD use trials and correction to grow us, but He also uses our experiences to equip us to be able to offer **comfort** to others who experience the same trials we have.

The psalmist says, *“When anxiety was great in me, Your relief brought joy to my soul.”*

During times of anxiety and trials, the LORD sends relief despite the trouble we experience, and His relief brings us joy.

If we truly trust the Lord, often the bigger the trial, the more we experience the joy we receive from God’s comfort.

IV. The LORD defends His people.

Read *Psalm 94:20-23*

Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You?

Some leaders are bent on sin and there are some laws that were invented by evil, but these will never fellowship with God.

Alexander Maclaren, *“The height of crime is reached when rulers use the forms of justice as masks for injustice and give legal sanction to ‘mischief.’*

“The ancient world groaned under such travesties of the sanctity of Law and the modern world is not free from them.”
(Maclaren)

Notice, ***“They gather together against the life of the righteous”***

The psalmist experienced evil coming against the people of God, but we also see this in the world now.

Jesus said, ***John 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.***

John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. NKJV

The closer we get to the End Times, the more the hatred of the world toward God’s people will become evident.

2 Peter 3:3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

2 Peter 3:4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." NKJV

Adam Clarke said, "In everything that is evil, they are in unity.

"The devil, his angels, and his children, all join and draw together when they have for their object the **destruction** of the works of the Lord." (Clarke)

What should we do when the evil gathers together against the life of the righteous?"

Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. NKJV

But more than anything else, the psalmist gives the hope and the answer, "***But the LORD has been my defense***".

Though the wicked came against the psalmist, he had the LORD as **the rock** as his **refuge**.

Remember from last week, "The **rock**" symbolizes stability, a strong foundation, a firm footing, wisdom, and power beyond a person's abilities.

The LORD's love is solid as rock, and we are offered safety, assurance, and shelter in His great love.

And finally, the psalmist said, "*He has brought on them their own iniquity.*"

The doom of the wicked is guaranteed and the LORD's judgment will be righteous and sure. Those who commit such evil will not be able to stand with the righteous.

V. Practical Application.

Again, *Psalm 94:17 Unless the LORD had been my help NKJV*

Those who place their trust in the LORD, look to Him, and are confident He is our **ever-present** help in times of trouble.

G. Campbell Morgan said, "*The secret of the confidence is the consciousness of the nearness of God.*"

Listen to the words of King David...*Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Psalm 46:2 Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. NKJV

King David looked to the LORD for help in difficult times and found it. David said the LORD Himself was a place of **refuge**, just as the cities of refuge protected the fugitive in Israel.

David would say that the LORD Himself was **strength** for His people, being strong for them and in them.

David would say that the LORD alone was his **refuge and strength**, not God and something or someone else.

David would say that the LORD Himself was their **help** — not from a distance, but a **very present help**.

John Trapp said, “*All creatures, when in distress, run to their refuges, [The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags].*”

Think about ground hogs running from a potential danger and slipping into their hole or a deer running into the woods.

The question for us is, “*Where do we run for refuge?*”

Some of us veg out on video games, some find refuge in drugs or alcohol, or even veg out on the couch and find refuge.

We might think this is a healthy way to download but usually trying to find refuge those ways can lead to disassociated behaviors.

When we take refuge by becoming distant and emotionally unavailable, we can alienate those around us as we fail to handle our problems in a healthy way.

When we are anxious, scared, or stressed, and we find our refuge in the LORD, we find real strength and become healthy spiritually and emotionally because His ways are always right.

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A foolish person believes their way is the way to happiness, but the Word of God and His chastening, make a person ***blessed***.

And once we have received the free gift of salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ, we become children of God and are officially in a relationship with Him.

Paul said in... *Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Romans 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Romans 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. NKJV

Psalm 94 begins with the psalmist speaking about the evil-doers and their oppression against the righteous, but we discover the Lord is sovereign and in control and will deliver His children.

He is our refuge, and He provides safety.

We take shelter in our relationship with Him. Because we are more than conquerors in Him!