

Psalm 119
week 4, v. 53-54

How do you react when the people you love are deliberately mistreated?

There are reports every day of wicked people taking innocent lives or abusing the weak. We react strongly to these news items because we see the injustice towards those undeserving of acts of violence against them. It is disgusting to hear of the morally depraved preying upon the frail. Sometimes it is difficult to comprehend the evil we hear about.

Ps 119:53 Burning indignation has seized me because of the wicked, who forsake Thy law.

Ps 119:53 Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law. (KJV)

David wrote that consuming anger seizes him when the ungodly refuse God. Anger is sin in most contexts, however, anger is justified when God is blasphemed.

Jesus showed anger towards the Pharisees and their rules. Mr 3:5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He *said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Moses showed anger towards the Israelites after he had pleaded with God to be merciful and then found them worshipping an idol. Ex 32:19 And it came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and [the] dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

God is angry towards the wicked.

Ps 7:11 God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day.

Ro 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Think of your reaction when you see or hear of someone being grossly mistreated. Now think of your reaction towards those who continuously blaspheme the name of God by their depraved conduct. God is perfect in all His ways. Each time a perverse lifestyle is held in esteem, God is dishonored. Each time God is rejected, His ways are disgraced. David's example to us is to be horrified when God's name and laws are rejected.

Look at Ezra's reaction when the nation of Israel did not follow God's commands:

Ezr 9:2-3 "For they have taken some of their daughters [as wives] for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has intermingled with the peoples of

the lands; indeed, the hands of the princes and the rulers have been foremost in this unfaithfulness." 3 And when I heard about this matter, I tore my garment and my robe, and pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard, and sat down appalled. (appalled: devastated)

The Family Bible Notes says "horror" can be translated to mean vehement disapprobation. This is fierce disapproval. "Pious men are grieved when the wicked break God's law."

V. 53. Horror-A mixed passion, made up of abhorrence of their sins, and dread and sorrow at the consideration of the judgments of God coming upon them. John Wesley's Notes

The impression which the wickedness of the wicked made upon David; it frightened him, it put him into an amazement. He trembled to think of the dishonour thereby done to God, the gratification thereby given to Satan, and the mischiefs thereby done to the souls of men. He dreaded the consequences of it both to the sinners themselves (and cried out, O gather not my soul with sinners! let my enemy be as the wicked) and to the interests of God's kingdom among men, which he was afraid would be thereby sunk and ruined. He does not say, "Horror has taken hold on me because of their cruel designs against me," but "because of the contempt they put on God and his law." Matthew Henry's Commentary

It seems David's horror is brought on by three things: the dishonor of God; the evil influence to others and the judgment of God towards the wicked.

How do you react when God's word is dishonored?

Are you concerned when someone is enticed by evil?

Do you cringe thinking of the eventual judgment towards those who forsake God?

A holy heart is horrified at sin, at sinners, and at the sinner's doom: those who think lightly of other men's sins will soon sin lightly themselves. Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

The word 'horror', <zilaphah>, is the name used for the burning wind called by the Arabs *Simoom*. Ps 11:6 Upon the wicked He will rain snares; fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.

From the Encyclopedia Britannica: Simoom – an extremely hot and dry local wind in [Arabia](#) and the [Sahara](#). Its temperature often reaches 55 °C (about 130 °F), and the humidity of the air sometimes falls below 10 percent. It is caused by intensive ground heating under a cloudless sky. *Simoom* is an Arabic word that means "poison wind."

Zilaphah properly signifies the pestilential burning wind called by the Arabs Simoom, (see Ps 11:6.) It is here used in a figurative sense for the most horrid mental distress; and strongly marks the idea the Psalmist had of the corrupting, pestilential, and destructive nature of sin. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge

Are you horrified at the actions of those who forsake God's law?

Do you recognize the pride that leads them to push God away?

Do you grieve for the punishment of those who reject God' s grace?

Their laughter had not distressed him, but he was distressed by a foresight of their overthrow. Truths which were amusement to them caused amazement to him. He saw them utterly turning away from the law of God, and leaving it as a path forsaken and over grown from want of traffic, and this forsaking of the law filled him with the most painful emotions: he was astonished at their wickedness, stunned by their presumption, alarmed by the expectation of their sudden overthrow, amazed by the terror of their certain doom. ... Those who are the firmest believers in the eternal punishment of the wicked are the most grieved at their doom. It is no proof of tenderness to shut one's eyes to the awful doom of the ungodly. Compassion is far better shown in trying to save sinners than in trying to make things pleasant all round. Oh that we were all more distressed as we think of the portion of the ungodly in the lake of fire! The popular plan is to shut your eyes and forget all about it, or pretend to doubt it; but this is not the way of the faithful servant of God. The Treasury of David

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! --Jonathan Edwards, in a Sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an angry God."

What is your response towards Psalm 119:53? How can you apply these truths to your life today? What action point will you take?

Amidst the Psalmist' s dread for those who are unsaved, he is able to find joy in his journey.

Ps 119:54 Thy statutes are my songs In the house of my pilgrimage.

God' s statutes in this sense are His laws, commandments, precepts, etc.

David was familiar with God' s law; he sang them for comfort.

Ps 138:5 And they will sing of the ways of the LORD. For great is the glory of the LORD.

Is the Bible your ' songbook' ? Are the words sweet to your ears? Does truth resonate in your heart? Does God' s word bring joy to your heart even when your journey is difficult?

Ps 119:165 Those who love Thy law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.

What does the Psalmist mean by the ' house of his pilgrimage' ?

We are pilgrims or sojourners here on earth. Our present life is our pilgrimage. This world is our temporary residence that we are traveling through as we await the coming of Christ and our eternal life with Him.

The Bible is the believer's songbook, and sweet to his ear are its psalms and hymns. Let us all sing more, and complain less. Spurgeon

Application Questions

Read Psalm 119:53. What is David' s reaction towards the wicked?

How are the wicked described?

What does it mean to ' forsake God' s law' ?

Read Mark 3:5; Exodus 32:19; Romans 1:18

According to these verses, when is anger justified?

Look up Ezra 9:23. What was his reaction to the nation of Israel when they did not follow God' s commands?

What is your reaction to those who reject or dishonor God?

Are you concerned when someone is enticed by evil, things that are not true?

Do you think of the eternal judgment towards those who reject God?

How are you challenged to react?

Think thankfulness for what you have been given and urgency to share truth.

Read Psalm 119:54.

Does your thankfulness lead you to praise? Is there a 'song' in your heart that is a welcoming source of comfort?