

**God Hears the Lament of His Children**  
**Grace Community Church**  
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**God Hears the Lament of His Children**

Good morning. My name is Ricky and I serve as the Pastor for Discipleship and Care. Today we're going to be in Psalm 5. When I was looking through texts to preach for today, this Psalm jumped off the pages to me and struck me as a timely word from God, and I believe it's what the Lord has for us today.

I love how the Lord used super-vulnerable people to write the Bible. You don't have to read the Bible and wonder what the authors, or God for that matter, really felt. It's so raw! David is the author of Psalm 5 and he's lamenting to the Lord concerning his enemies and their evil and wickedness that's pressing in around him. However, it's clear that **David's confidence is in God alone for protection from his enemies.**

I read one author this week who speaks of the importance of, and yet the lost practice of, Christian lamenting. David knew that God hears the lament of his children, but I'm afraid many Christians in America (me included!) have forgotten the incredible truth that God hears the lament of his children. Understandably, we may cry out in our frustration and confusion to our family, friends, strangers, and even on social media, but have we lamented to God?

**God hears the lament of his children.** Christian lamenting is prayer in pain that leads to trust in God. Therefore, Christian lamenting will always, eventually, make our hearts grateful before God. I read one pastor who said, "Laments are not cul-de-sacs of sorrow, but conduits for renewed faith."

Do you feel unheard? Do you feel mistreated, misunderstood, or misled? Do you feel threatened? Do you feel scared and desperate? Then the message for you today is to **cry out to God for protection from your enemies.** God hears the lament of his children.

David has gone before us and has left for us the map of how to escape from the evil and wickedness of our enemies. The map of Psalm 5 leads us to protection in God, but the compass David uses, and hands to us, carries us on the path of lament. Like David, let us as children of God, cry out to him for protection from our enemies. God hears the lament of his children.

Let's jump in. Hear the Word of the Lord as I read our text in its entirety. Psalm 5.

To the choirmaster: for the flutes. A Psalm of David.

[1] Give ear to my words, O LORD;

consider my groaning.

[2] Give attention to the sound of my cry,

my King and my God,

for to you do I pray.

[3] O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice;

in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

[4] For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;

evil may not dwell with you.

[5] The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;

you hate all evildoers.

[6] You destroy those who speak lies;

the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

[7] But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,

will enter your house.

I will bow down toward your holy temple

in the fear of you.

[8] Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness

because of my enemies;  
make your way straight before me.

[9] For there is no truth in their mouth;  
their inmost self is destruction;  
their throat is an open grave;  
they flatter with their tongue.

[10] Make them bear their guilt, O God;  
let them fall by their own counsels;  
because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out,  
for they have rebelled against you.

[11] But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;  
let them ever sing for joy,  
and spread your protection over them,  
that those who love your name may exult in you.

[12] For you bless the righteous, O LORD;  
you cover him with favor as with a shield. (ESV)

**Pray:** Father, help us understand your words. Let them convict us in the ways we need convicting and comfort us in the ways we need comforting. For your glory we ask these things, and for our good. Amen.

### **God hears when you call (1-3)**

I have five points this morning and my first point comes from verses 1-3: **God hears when you call**. That's point 1. God hears when you call. I find it very encouraging when I read verses 1-3.

[1] Give ear to my words, O LORD;  
consider my groaning.

[2] Give attention to the sound of my cry,  
       my King and my God,  
       for to you do I pray.

[3] O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice;  
       in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

Even in the first three lines, maybe you can relate. David asks the Lord to not only hear his words, but to consider his groaning, and give attention to his cries. Maybe some of you respond to sorrow in anger, with tears, or you're speechless, but feel deeply.

Maybe you can relate to David's plea to God because a coworker has been out to get you or a family member has turned on you. Maybe all you can do is groan when you recall the video of George Floyd or you can't stop crying because of the fear you have with from civil unrest in our cities. God hears your words, but he also hears your groaning, and he even gives attention to your tears. How intimately connected is God to his people when they lament!

Verse 2 makes it clear that David is a man who knows he is under the authority of his God and King, and verse 3 makes it clear that David asks with expectation, as he watches for a response. Not only is God intimately connected to his people, but his people can boldly access his heart.

As we see laid out in this Psalm, David knows what the Lord loves and what he abhors. And this boldness comes through submission to his God and King. I love how what makes sense in our world, God completely flips it to accommodate the weak!

David's humble submission connects his heart with God so that he can boldly request the King not only hear his words, but even consider his groanings, give attention to the sound of his cry, and give a response. You don't have to be the loudest for God to answer you, but you must be humble. Like David, **we can have confidence that God hears us when we call out for protection from our enemies.** Verses 4-6.

**God rejects the wicked (4-6)**

[4] For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;  
evil may not dwell with you.

[5] The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;  
you hate all evildoers.

[6] You destroy those who speak lies;  
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

Now, some may read this as David making a case for the things he is not, comparing himself with the enemy. While that is true, self-righteousness is not David's point. David knows the heart of God, so he's presenting his case for justice against his enemies, not a case of innocence for himself. Do you approach God out of the confidence you have in his heart? Or do you approach God out of the confidence you have in your own heart?

Here's my second point: **God rejects the wicked.** God rejects the wicked. David knows God's heart and that is what he is appealing to. Knowing the heart of God, David can boldly ask for justice concerning his enemies, who are evil, wicked, boastful, liars, and murderers. Those who know the heart of God have a clear category for the justice of God.

My children have shown me a great example of this. If I have a kid shooting one kid with a Nerf gun, which we all know doesn't really hurt, but somehow it causes great pain and a foam bullet can even bring tears. I can tell Carey, "Stop shooting Olson with the Nerf gun." Carey drops the gun and moves on. Not more than 30 seconds later, Carey will come to me saying that Olson is shooting him with the Nerf gun. Carey's motive is deliverance from the onslaught of blue foam bullets! His motivation is not at all to defend his innocence from earlier, but because he was once guilty of the same crime, he knows my heart to save my children from death by Nerf, and he needs saving!

How is it David has the audacity to ask God to give him justice when we all know he's not perfect himself? Because his appeal is solely based on the righteousness of God! Not once does David appeal to his own righteousness as the basis for deliverance from his enemies, but he appeals only to the righteousness of God. David's appeal to God for deliverance isn't self-righteous, but he's fearful and he knows God's heart on the matter because he knows God. Like David, **we can have confidence that God will reject the wicked when we call out for protection from our enemies.** Verses 7 and 8.

### **God welcomes the lowly (7-8)**

[7] But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,  
will enter your house.

I will bow down toward your holy temple  
in the fear of you.

[8] Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness  
because of my enemies;  
make your way straight before me.

While verses 4-6 make it clear that God rejects the wicked, verses 7-8 make it clear that God welcomes the lowly. That is my third point: **God welcomes the lowly.** Unlike the wicked, David has humbled himself and received the mercy of God. It is only through the abundance of God's steadfast love that he is no longer wicked but is now holy.

This Psalm not only lets us know how to lament to God for deliverance from our enemies, but it also shows us how we go from being God's enemies to getting a house key to God's heart! Maybe you see the comparison in verses 4-6 between the wicked and God, and you've realized your future might not be so bright because of the wickedness in your own heart.

Verse 7 shows us the dividing line between David and his enemies. It shows us the dividing line between God's people and their enemies, and it also shows us the dividing line between God and man. What can make this line disappear?

The abundance of God's steadfast love. It is not your innocence that can justify you before God, not your best attempts at life, not your self-righteousness—only the steadfast love of God. And those who know their own wickedness before God and cry out to him for mercy will find that dividing line ripped up, for the apostle Paul says in Romans 8:

[38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That's the new reality for those who have cried out to God for salvation. Having died to their old selves, they bow in God's presence innocent, justified by the blood of the spotless lamb of God, Jesus Christ, from whom out of his great love for us, God sent his son Jesus to die for us, so that all who believe in him might be saved.

Again, the Kingdom of God is made accessible to the weak, to the lowly, to those who fear God more than they fear man. Those who fear the presence of God are those who can most confidently approach God and ask him, the Creator of the entire universe, to lead them to safety. What boldness! Yet, it comes through humility.

James Montgomery Boice in his commentary on the Psalms draw readers' attention to Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

The Pharisee was an ostensibly righteous man. He prayed—and we have no reason to disbelieve him—“God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I

get” (Luke 18:11–12). The tax collector, who was standing at a distance, did not consider himself worthy even to look up to heaven but only prayed, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner” (v. 13). In a situation like this the world will always side with the visibly righteous man. But Jesus said, “I tell you that this man [the tax collector], rather than the other [the Pharisee], went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (v. 14).

While God rejects the boastful, he welcomes the lowly, those who willingly bow to him. David knows he’s welcomed because he has been declared holy and welcomed by God solely because of the abundance of the steadfast love of God. Therefore, he can confidently ask in verse 8 for the Lord to lead him. Like David, **we can have confidence that God will welcome the lowly when we call out for protection from our enemies.** Verses 9 and 10.

#### **God’s enemies condemn themselves (9-10)**

[9] For there is no truth in their mouth;  
       their inmost self is destruction;  
 their throat is an open grave;  
       they flatter with their tongue.

[10] Make them bear their guilt, O God;  
       let them fall by their own counsels;  
 because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out,  
       for they have rebelled against you.

David has contrasted God with evil in verses 4-6, but now David gets more personal and tells specifics about how his enemies are evil. Note the importance of words in verse 9. Words spoken reveal the condition of the heart. David, nor God, will be fooled by their lying and their flattery. God will not be fooled by the lies of your enemies.

When David is backed against the corner, what does he do? He turns to God because he knows their sin is ultimately against him. Even though David is suffering the consequences of wickedness, just as you might be suffering the consequences of people's wickedness, their actions are really rebellion against God!

Therefore, point number 4, **God's enemies condemn themselves**. God's enemies condemn themselves. We don't have to do the condemning. When our enemies are within grasp, maybe we ought to step aside, lament to God, and trust God to have his justice, and know that he will in time. When God's justice is satisfied against his enemies (and it will be), God's people are justified against their enemies. Until then, we lament while trusting in and waiting on God.

Corrie Ten Boom says, "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest." Look to Christ, and you'll see the heart of God to save you.

Like David, **we can have confidence that God's enemies condemn themselves when we call out for protection from our enemies**. Verses 11 and 12.

#### **God's people are protected by him (11-12)**

[11] But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;  
       let them ever sing for joy,  
 and spread your protection over them,  
       that those who love your name may exult in you.

[12] For you bless the righteous, O LORD;  
       you cover him with favor as with a shield.

You've heard of Athanasius, the beloved Bishop of Alexandria in the 300's. He's most known for defending for the deity of Christ against Arian and making contributions in the council of

Nicaea. There was a phrase that arose around Athanasius—Athanasius contra mundum—that is, Athanasius against the world.

He was driven into exile 5 times by the powers of the Roman Empire, spending 17 of his 45 years as a bishop in exile. He got one of his strategies of how to handle conflict from a hero of his, Antony, and this strategy was to out-rejoice his adversaries.

Athanasius stared down murderous intruders in his church, he stood before emperors who could have killed him as easily as exiling him, and he risked the wrath of parents and other clergy by consciously training young people to give their all for Christ, including martyrdom. Athanasius had a joyful courage in facing his adversaries. Referring to Athanasius, John Piper writes:

If something is worth fighting for, then it is worth rejoicing over. And the joy is essential in the battle, for nothing is worth fighting for that will not increase our everlasting joy in God. Courage in conflict must mingle with joy in Christ.

Last point: **God's people are protected by him.** God's people are protected by him. A Christian's lament is never hopeless, because God hears the lament of his children. David hands us the map showing us the way to victory over our enemies in Psalm 5, and he gives us a compass that guides us by way of the path of lament to the heart of God, but we see in verses 11 and 12 that we're also handed a shield of God's protection.

April and I wanted to go on a walk the other day, but it was raining. We were bummed. Then I remembered, we have an umbrella to shield us from the rain—one of those big golfing umbrellas. Who enjoys having to walk somewhere in the rain? We did, because had the sure protection of a giant umbrella! Who wouldn't enjoy a walk in the rain if the rain couldn't get to you? The rain couldn't get to us even though it was all around, and we enjoyed our walk!

As you are surrounded by enemies, whoever they may be, lament to God, know you are protected by God...and don't forget to sing. In Acts 16 when Paul and Silas are wrongfully imprisoned and beaten, what did they do? They sang, together, for all to hear. Notice that David isn't alone anymore in verse 11, but says to let ALL who take refuge in you....the path of lament may be personal, but it's meant to be shared by all of God's people.

Let us look to God, together, in our lament, but then let's sing together the joyful promises of God, whether it be with words, or through the groanings and cries of our hearts:

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found;  
Dressed in his righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

Now, if you feel your enemies near, lament to God, have joyful courage, sing, and know he will protect you. God hears the lament of his children. Let's pray.

**Pray:** Father, thank you for the gift of lament and for hearing us when we cry out to you. Thank you for protecting your children, knowing that evil will not prevail, that your justice will be satisfied against your enemies, and your children will be justified against their enemies. We rest in your protection, trusting in the love of God shown to us through Jesus Christ, by whose name we pray these things, amen.