

## Psalm 58

**Read Psalm 58:1-5:** David is musing over the wicked. What makes them tick? Why do they choose evil instead of good? Do they have redeeming qualities? Are there examples in nature that are comparable to a wicked man? One defining feature is that they purposefully have separated themselves for evil purposes. Sin separates men; and alienates them from God.

*But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with [a]blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity. 4 No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive [b]evil and bring forth iniquity. 5 They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web; He who eats of their eggs dies, And from that which is crushed a viper breaks out. 6 Their webs will not become garments, Nor will they cover themselves with their works; Their works are works of iniquity, And the act of violence is in their hands. 7 Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths. 8 The way of peace they have not known, And there is no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace. (Isaiah 59:2-8)*

David also asks about the silent observer. Many people believe that you are in good shape if you do not bother anyone. Jesus clarified this ‘neutral observer’ position:

*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. (Matthew 12:30)*

David starts by noting that they do not speak anything righteous; nor do they judge anything justly. Their mind is closed to receiving godly instruction. Speaking righteously requires that the Holy Spirit override a man’s natural tendencies.

*...no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus [c]accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)*

*A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. **19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:18-20)*

Are these men just born without an accurate moral compass; or does something happen along the way; to turn them south? The scriptures tell us that we are all born with a conscience; but willful sin damages our ability to navigate life rightly. When we knowingly avoid correction and detection; we become lost. We think that we are just hiding from criticism and judgement. Once you get off of the yellow brick road; you lose your sense of direction and desire to get back on it. We are reduced to more of an instinctual animal-like state.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who [d]suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19** because what may be known of God is [e]manifest [f]in them, for God has shown it to them. **20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [g]Godhead, so that they are without excuse, **21** because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:18-21)*

Today, we see intelligent people making terrible moral decisions. They have lied about the damage of drug abuse and adultery. The *free love* generation of the 60's and beyond pushed back for their freedom to sin. Our current generation of political correctness, Muslim freedoms and alternative lifestyle inclusions was sold as preventing our religious bigotry. Now that it has gained strength, its true intentions are revealed. Now the Christians are being expunged and silenced as irrelevant. When you knowingly say that *north is south* to turn off the light that is shining on your personal agenda, you do not deceive others as much as you deceive yourself.

*And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. (John 3:19-20)*

It is interesting to observe people who are living a lie. They become so used to lying, that they lie for no reason. You begin to believe the lies that you tell others. The

deceiver has become deceived. This also explains how Lucifer could ever think that his plan to replace God could work. He has sold his lies; and lost his ability to see that Jesus will stomp it all out.

*But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*  
(2 Timothy 3:13)

Regardless of what makes the evil man distinct; there is a universal problem among all men. We are all born as sinners.

*“The heart is deceitful above all things, And [d]desperately wicked; Who can know it?*  
(Jeremiah 17:9)

Psalm 1 broaches the idea of the continuum of wickedness. It begins by not agreeing to be holy; or have any filter on what you listen to. It ends by the embittered person hating God and his people.

**Read Psalm 58:6-11:** This is considered an *imprecatory psalm*. An imprecatory psalm calls for curses and punishment on an evil person or an enemy. The major imprecatory psalms are [Psalms 5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137](#), and [140](#).

How do these imprecatory psalms align with the words of Jesus about our enemies?

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’* **44** *[o]But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, **45** *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.* **46** *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?* **47** *And if you greet your [p]brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the [q]tax collectors do so?* **48** *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.* (Matthew 5:43-48)*

The Old Testament is clear about sin requiring judgement. The Law of Moses prescribed how much of a penalty could be levied against a sinner. The ‘eye for an eye’ standard is not a minimum penalty. It is a maximum penalty. The Law of Moses was not written for people who were faithful to God. They were hard rules and penalties for godless people; in order to sustain their society.

*.. knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, **10** for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurors, and if there is any other thing that is [c]contrary to sound doctrine, (1 Timothy 1:9-10)*

There is not a requirement to damage those who damage you. It is a limitation and penalty table. There was always an unspoken option; not mentioned in the Law. No man was required to take the ox of a man who was responsible for his ox dying. The option of mercy always has existed. If you care about people; you would not do anything to bring damage to him. In fact you would protect him.

Jesus did not abolish all of the Old Testament Law. He fulfilled its intent; by loving his neighbor and loving God. The Law focused on the physical violation of a person's rights. Jesus was more focused on our underlying intentions more than what was carried out. That is why accidents had less penalty than crimes of intention.

*“You have heard that it was said [i]to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ **28** But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. **29** If your right eye causes you to [j]sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. **30** And if your right hand causes you to [k]sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. (Matthew 5:27-30)*

God hates sin; but he loves the sinner. The Law is to keep him from hurting others. Jesus paid for sinners' penalties; in order to open our eyes and hearts to a better way of living.

*These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to [h]Him: **17** A[i] proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, **18** A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, **19** A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. (Proverbs 6:16-19)*

*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:17)*

Jesus introduced better solutions to the damaged party. That includes the option of showing mercy. We are sometimes better served by letting God perform the vengeance.

*“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17)*

*For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:20)*