

Sermon: **Is Wealth your god or is God your Wealth? (Psalm 49)**

Date: **March 19, 2017**

The book of Psalms is the original hymnbook for the people of God. The church has worshiped God through the book of Psalms for centuries. However, not all psalms are songs of praise to God. There is a range of genres within the book of psalms. There are psalms of confidence, psalms of lament, psalms of thanksgiving, etc. Psalm 49 is a psalm of wisdom. Rather than focusing on praise to God, it focuses on instruction to man. Thus, it is more of a sermon than it is a praise song. Psalm 49 seeks to explain the following riddle: why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer? What are we to do in response to this apparent injustice? The psalmist imparts the wisdom of God to us in order to help us think about this common situation in our world. Ungodly people trust in their wealth and the things of this world. Their worldly lifestyle may bring them earthly prosperity, but it will end in eternal punishment. On the other hand, righteous people trust in God and, while they may not prosper on earth, they will surely prosper in heaven. For God has ransomed their souls from the power of Sheol.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read Psalm 49 and ensure that you have listened to the sermon.
 - a. Verses 1-4 serve as the prelude to this psalm. What do they teach us about the significance of this psalm?
 - b. What is the riddle that is discussed in this psalm? Can you think of any present day examples of this type of situation?
 - c. What does this psalm teach us about wealth? Is it a problem for one to have lots of wealth? If not, what is the main problem with regards to wealth that this psalm speaks to?
 - d. What are some temporal benefits that might be enjoyed by those who trust in their wealth according to this psalm?
 - e. Read verses 7-9. What is a ransom? Why is the price of one's life too costly for someone to pay with earthly treasure? What does this teach us about the futility of trusting in wealth?
 - f. What does this psalm teach us about what will happen to those who trust in their wealth after they die?

- g. Can you relate to the problem faced by the people of God in verses 5-6? How so?
- h. Most of us live prosperous lives compared to many of our brothers and sisters in Christ that have gone before us. What can we do to avoid falling into the trap of trusting in our wealth instead of God?
- i. Verse 15 teaches us that God has ransomed us. What did he do to ransom us? Why did he ransom us? How might this be an even greater riddle than the one explained in verses 5-6?
- j. Explain the doctrine known as the reversal doctrine/the great reversal. When it comes to the wicked and the righteous, how will the tables turn on the day of judgement? See Luke 16:19-31 for a parable related to this.

Group Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Can you think of present day examples in which the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer for the sake of Christ? Can you think of examples in your own life in which this has been true?
3. How are we to think about worldly wealth? What are some signs that we might be sinfully trusting in our wealth?
4. Compared to many of our brothers and sisters in Christ that have gone before us, we are a prosperous people. Why might we be more tempted in times of prosperity to trust in the things of this world? When we prosper on earth, how can we seek to treasure Christ more than our stuff?
5. When we see wicked people prospering and righteous people suffering, what must we remember? How does the gospel speak to this situation? How does the day of judgement give us hope?