

“David’s Adversary”
Psalm 52
(Preached at Trinity, January 2, 2011)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. David knew what it was like to be under the constant assault of enemies; men who wanted nothing else than to destroy David. When facing such conditions David had one course of action—to look to the great God of his deliverance.
2. This psalm is designated as another one of the Maschils—a psalm written with the purpose of instruction.
3. **Psalm 52** deals with the hatred of Doeg the Edomite towards David and his tale-bearing treachery as he told Saul that David had come from the house of Ahimelech. His treachery led to the death of all the priests at Nob – 85 in all, and then he turned on their wives and children.

1 Samuel 21:6-7; 22:9-23

4. This short psalm cries out against this dastardly deed.
We can divide it into three sections.
Verses 1-4 - David describes the deeds of his adversary
Verses 5-7 - David describes the the destruction of his adversary
Verses 8-9 - David describes the dissimilarity of his adversary

I. David describes the deeds of his adversary - **Verses 1-4**

A. He was filled with self-pride – **Verse 1**

1. “Why boastest thou thyself” – The word for “boasteth” here is **הִלָּל**
It is most often translated “praise.” It is part of the compound word hallelujah – “praise Jehovah, or Yahweh”
2. It can also refer to prideful boasting – a praise of self. Doeg was proud and confident. He didn’t need God. What he did need was self-advancement. And he was willing to go to any means to get what he wanted.
3. We can see just how wicked pride is. It is praising yourself above God. It is the root cause of every sin.
4. David adds the phrase, “O mighty man” with a sarcastic tone.
 - a. There are truly no mighty men. Only lumps of clay. Only fading grass. Only weaklings totally dependent upon God for their very existence.
 - b. It’s like calling a mouse mighty as it stands alone in the path of an elephant.
 - c. It was a particular mockery to Doeg who boasted in killing 85 priests who had never laid their hands upon a sword. What bravery it must have taken to kill the defenseless women and then to turn the sword upon the children.

- B. He used his tongue as a terrible weapon meant to bring suffering to his own delight – **Verse 2**
1. He used his tongue “like a sharp razor” an instrument designed for cutting
 2. Paul describe such a tongue as a deadly poison
Romans 3:13 – “Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips”
 3. James also described the poison of a wicked tongue
James 3:8 – “But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”
- C. The wicked use of his tongue brought him great pleasure – **Verses 3-4**
Psalm 52:3 – “Thou lovest evil more than good; *and* lying rather than to speak righteousness”
1. Knowing the great effect his words would have upon Saul Doeg was more than pleased to tell all. His words were designed to devour and cause pain rather than to bless and edify.
Psalm 52:4 – “Thou lovest all devouring words”
 2. The evil heart loves evil rather than good
John 3:19 – “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
Romans 1:32 – “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”
Isaiah 5:20 – “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”
 3. Such is the case with gossip. It bring great pleasure for the gossiper to unload his venom. We must have nothing of it. We must guard our tongue against the spreading of malicious gossip and we must stop others in their tracks when they try to unleash their gossip in our presence.
 4. For a sinful heart it is much more pleasurable to speak words that tear down than to edify. We need to guard our tongues carefully.
Ephesians 4:29 – “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”
 5. Doeg’s evil was far more than just an evil tongue. He had no heart of compassion. He had no common decency. He found it quite easy to run a sword through a toddler or an infant in the crib.
Doeg demonstrates the same heart in all of us who use our words to destroy. His evil was only worse by degree, not by quality.

II. David describes the destruction of his adversary - **Verses 5-7**

- A. We do not live in an amoral universe. God is holy and opposes all sin.
1. Doeg designed destruction in his heart but God would destroy him
Psalm 52:5 – “God shall likewise destroy thee for ever”
 2. Doeg’s words were for but a moment. God’s judgment is eternal
 3. God’s curse is upon the wicked although in this life it may not be evident
 - a. We saw back in **Psalm 37**. Sometimes it appears that the wicked are blessed above the righteous
 - b. Doeg was gaining the approval of the king while Ahimelech and the priests and their families were massacred. We must remember that God’s hand is upon His people for eternity in spite of what we see in this life
 4. As we saw in **Psalm 37** our duty is to Trust, Delight, Commit
 - a. We must trust our lives to God, regardless of what we see going on around us.
 - b. We must delight ourselves in God. The delights of this world are but an illusion. They are fleeting and quickly fade.
 - c. We must commit our way to God who will make all things right in the end.
 5. Doeg would be brought to shame. David knew this as absolute truth
“God shall likewise destroy thee for ever”
NAS “But God will break you down”
 - a. The wicked of this world will be shamed on the Day of Judgment
 - b. They may seem to prosper now but things are not always as they seem. David received this truth by faith.
Psalm 52:5 – “God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living.”
- B. A knowledge of God’s judgment should cause us to tremble now
1. We all know the deceitfulness of sin. We are sinners too.
 2. We should tremble at the thought of falling into sin
1 Timothy 5:19-20 – “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”
 3. While the righteous should fear at his sinfulness they also mock the downfall of this “mighty man.”
Psalm 52:6 – “The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him”
Psalm 2:4 – “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.”
- C. What a tragedy for men to spend all of their energy on obtain worldly riches and power and influence.
Psalm 52:7 – “Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* strengthened himself in his wickedness.”
1. Rather than trusting in God Doeg trusted in his own desires and wicked schemes
 2. He and all like him are left empty

III. David describes the dissimilarity of his adversary - **Verses 8-9**

David sets his own life as a great contrast to Doeg

A. "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God"

1. Doeg was a worthless briar good for nothing but the furnace
2. David was fruitful, well watered from the springs that flow from God
Psalm 1:3-4 – "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. ⁴ The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away."
3. David was blessed in the presence of God. Doeg was cursed of God.

B. "I trust the mercy of God forever"

1. **רַחֲמֵי** - the covenant love, steadfast love, unfailing love
2. Doeg thought he was in control trusting in his own shrewdness. In reality he was cut off from the source of all power.
3. David had the blessing and assurance of God's abiding covenant love—a love that will never forsake us, a love that works all good things for us. We can trust in God's rich love for us. When we know that God is for us no evil will cause us to fear
Romans 8:31 – "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against 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?"

C. David's life was characterized by gratitude to God

Psalm 52:9 – "I will praise thee"

1. **תְּהַלֵּל** – thankfulness or gratitude
2. The terrible sin of humanity is their lack of gratitude to God
Romans 1:21 – "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 - a. Doeg enjoyed the rich daily provision of God
 - b. He enjoyed life and vitality. All of his strength was from God
 - c. Instead of praising God he cursed God. He didn't give glory and honor to God.
3. In contrast, David was a man of praise – one quick observation of the psalms will attest to this
Psalm 7:17 – "I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high."
Psalm 9:1 - "I will praise *thee*, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works."
Psalm 35:18 – "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people."
Psalm 57:9 – "I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations."

- D. David had confidence in eternal blessings
Psalm 52:8 – “I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.”
Psalm 52:9 – “I will praise thee for ever”
1. Doeg’s confidence was in this life alone. It was based only upon what he could see.
 2. David’s hope was eternal – “I will praise thee forever.”
- E. David would continue to trust God, waiting upon Him.
Psalm 52:9 – “and I will wait on thy name”
1. To “wait” expresses looking to God with patience and expectation. It is an activity of trust and hope and confidence.
 2. The “name” of God expresses all that God is, the fullness of His attributes

Conclusion:

1. Once again, David found himself under attack from a foe fixed upon his destruction. But his hope was fixed upon God. He knew his end and he knew what would become of Doeg.
“I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it”
2. We aren’t told of Doeg’s end before now, but it was inevitable. Such is the end of all who will not have God. And the situation is no different today. The righteous are blessed of God they are blessed with His everlasting love.
 The wicked are cursed of God.
3. No matter what the wicked bring our way, we will confidently look to God for our deliverance. And when He does we will testify to other believers that it might encourage them.
 NIV - “I will praise you in the presence of your saints.”