

“Vengeance is Mine”  
Psalm 94  
(Preached at Trinity, January 29, 2012)

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. You’ve been an excellent worker and have risen in the company. You’ve been a great model of Godliness but now one of your peers has become envious of your position. He craftily rearranges some accounts and manipulates some funds in such a way as to appear that you have been embezzling from the company. Your boss calls you into his office and dismisses you. After 20 years with the company you’ve lost your job. You go home and share with your wife the unsettling situation—you pray, you weep. And then, later that afternoon there’s a knock at the door and you open it and face two police officers who proceed to put handcuffs on you and you are charged for grand larceny; you go to trial and are convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison.  
What feelings come over you? As you sit in your cell what consumes your thoughts.
2. God’s people have often faced such wicked injustice. Joseph was thrown into prison falsely accused of improper advances towards Potiphar’s wife.  
Daniel was imprisoned for praying. Naboth falsely condemned.  
Paul and Silas were falsely accused of causing disorder in the town and were beaten and cast into prison.
3. There are countless ways God’s people have been abused by wicked people. Many have suffered martyrdom and it continues today. How are we to respond? What are we to do?
4. This is the nature of **Psalm 94**. We are given no details regarding the situation or context of the psalm, only that the psalmist is facing some great injustice from the hands of the wicked. Like all men, he must have been tempted to strike back but at the very beginning of the psalm we find the state of his heart.  
**Psalm 94:1 KJV** - "O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself."
5. He recognizes clearly that vengeance belongs to God. He then sets his heart to the proper way God’s people must react towards the wicked.  
Calvin said that the psalms cover every emotion known to man.  
“I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, “An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul” for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror.”  
To the grieving there is a psalm. To the joyous there is a psalm. To the suffering there is a psalm. To those facing enemies there is a psalm. To those seeking to worship God there is a psalm. To those struggling with depression there is a psalm. To those who have fallen into sin there is a psalm. To those struggling with prayer there is a psalm. To those being falsely accused there is a psalm.
6. I’ve divided this psalm into five parts:
  - I. The psalmist cries out for God to come to execute His vengeance – **Verses 1-4**
  - II. The psalmist describes the wicked – **Verses 5-7**
  - III. The psalmist reminds the wicked that their wicked deeds are not hidden from God – **Verses 8-11**

- IV. The psalmist declares the blessing of God's chastening of His people – It is not vengeance – **Verses 12-5**
- V. The psalmist makes the ultimate declaration: Who but God will come to the defense of His people? – **Verses 16-23**
- I. The psalmist cries out for God to come to execute His vengeance – **Verses 1-4**
- A. He recognizes that vengeance belongs to God alone
1. **Psalm 94** hears of the echo of **Romans 12 & Deut. 32**  
**Romans 12:19 KJV** - "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."  
**Deuteronomy 32:35 NAS** - "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them."
  2. There is something within us that makes us desire to retaliate when we are harmed. It is called sin which flows forth from our pride and self-love.
  3. God does not allow us to seek the harm of those who harm us. God alone is worthy of judgment and justice
  4. But although we are not allowed to seek vengeance, we are surely allowed to seek justice.
- B. Instead of seeking vengeance himself the psalmist cries out to God
1. He says in **Verse 1** "Show Thyself"
  2. He cries out for God to give them what they deserve – to give them their just reward.  
**Psalm 94:2 KJV** - "Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud."  
    - a. The word describes a recompense, a payment. It describes receiving what one is due.
    - b. Paul described the penalty of sin as our wages  
**Romans 6:23 KJV** - "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
    - c. The psalmist is crying out for God to give them what they have earned. It is a simple cry for justice. And God will surely execute justice.
  3. The indication is the affliction has been continuing for a while and the psalmist is crying out for God to take action.  
Twice in **Verse 3** he cries out, "How long!"
- II. The psalmist describes the wicked – **Verses 4-7**
- A. God doesn't need us to inform Him, yet in the course of our prayers we should lay our case out before Him
1. They spew proud arrogant words – proud threatening words.  
**Psalm 94:4 NAS** - "they pour forth *words*, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves."

2. These wicked people are laying their hands on God's own possession  
**Psalm 94:5 KJV** - " They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage."

The word for "heritage" refers to a "possession" – these wicked people are setting their hands on God's property—His holy people.

3. They attack the weak. The tears of the widow surely capture the attention of God. God will surely execute vengeance upon those who abuse these weak ones.

**Psalm 94:6 KJV** - "They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless."

**Exodus 22:22-24 KJV** - "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. <sup>23</sup> If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; <sup>24</sup> And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

- B. Like all wicked men, they pretend God does not see or know

1. This is the heart of all lost people. If they truly believed God was watching every move they would tremble and cry out.

**Psalm 94:7 KJV** - "Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*."

2. They suppress the reality of God. Some deny His existence. Most are only practical atheists—living as if He doesn't exist

3. This is the height of foolish stupidity

**Psalm 14:1 KJV** - "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* "

### III. The psalmist reminds the wicked that their wicked deeds are not hidden from God – **Verses 8-11**

- A. The psalmist spares no words in addressing them

1. He calls them brutish which refers to dullness of thinking  
NAS – senseless, ESV dullest of people, CSV – “you stupid people”
  - a. He is implying that they are no better than livestock
  - b. Then he calls them fools – a word that means “stupid” which is how the NAS translates it
2. The wicked think themselves to be wise and often look down upon God's people as being foolish. The opposite is true. It is because of the foolish management of the wicked that this world endures much of its suffering. The more they learn the more foolish they become.

**2 Timothy 3:7 KJV** - "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

- B. He assures them that God does indeed see and hear

**Psalm 94:9 KJV** - "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?"

1. Is it reasonable to presume that the one who created the ear and fashioned words would Himself be void of comprehension?  
Would it be possible that the one who created the eye would Himself be void of seeing.

2. As we consider all of the injustice in the world we can take comfort that God is not unaware. He sees! He hears!
3. In fact, not only does God hear their words, God knows ALL of the thoughts of men and He concluded that they are all vanity.  
**Psalm 94:11 KJV** - "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they *are* vanity."
4. Every thought, every word, every action is known of God. And all will be exposed on that great day.

IV. The psalmist declares the blessing of God's chastening of His people – It is not vengeance – **Verses 12-15**

A. The psalmist briefly shifts his focus to the blessings God bestows upon the righteous

**Psalm 94:12 KJV** - "Blessed *is* the man"

**Psalm 1:1 KJV** - "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

**Psalm 32:2 KJV** - "Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile."

**Psalm 65:4 KJV** - "Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee*"

**Psalm 84:12 KJV** - "O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee."

**Psalm 112:1 KJV** - "Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD"

1. The psalmist declares that his suffering is not without purpose. God's hand is upon it all. When God chastens the believer He has all good in its design. He comes forth from God's treasure of love
2. This is to be contrasted with God's vengeance upon the wicked  
**Psalm 94:13 KJV** - "That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked."
3. The implication is the psalmist sees his affliction the result of sin – yet God deals with him graciously

B. God's favor upon His people will never fail

**Psalm 94:14 KJV** - "For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance."

1. No matter how bad it may seem, God is there. He is with His people. He will never leave them.
2. We have the assurance that in the end all will be made right.

V. The psalmist makes the ultimate declaration: Who but God will come to the defense of His people? – **Verses 16-23**

A. He asks the rhetorical question – “who shall deliver him” – the answer is No one

**Psalm 94:16 KJV** - "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? *or* who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?"

1. Although we know all will be made right in the end what about now?  
The whole world teams up against God's elect. Satan rouses the wicked to stand against all that is holy. Who will stand for God's people? The answer is the most powerful force in the universe.  
**Psalm 94:22 KJV** - "But the LORD is my defence; and my God *is* the rock of my refuge."
  2. Who will you trust when all seems lost? Who will you trust when it seems it looks like injustice is winning?  
We will trust the God who never slumbers, never sleeps; the God who hears all and sees all; the God who has all power and all authority, who rules with all dominion.
  3. Spurgeon: "Never is the soul safer or more at rest than when, all other helpers failing, she leans upon the Lord alone.
- B. We must never forget God's great love for His people  
**Psalm 94:18 KJV** - "When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up."
1. **דָּוָה**
  2. Thoughts of God fill our hearts with infinite delight  
**Psalm 94:19 KJV** - " In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul."
- C. The Psalm closes with the final conclusion of all things – God will stand as the perfect Judge and He will judge righteously. The first and last verses serve to bring creation in harmony.  
**Psalm 94:1 KJV** - "O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself."  
**Psalm 94:23 KJV** - "And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off."

#### Conclusion:

1. What do we do when we are unjustly treated by the wicked of this world? How do we face persecution? **Psalm 94** provides us with the pattern.
  - A. We must resist the urge to retaliate—to seek revenge.
  - B. We must call upon the name of the Lord. He is righteous and just. He will avenge His people in due time.  
We should ask God to punish sin and avenge the righteous.
  - C. We must remember how much God loves and cares for His people.  
**Psalm 94:14 KJV** - "For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance."  
**Psalm 94:18 KJV** - " When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up." - **דָּוָה**
  - D. We must abide in patience waiting upon God to execute justice.  
**Romans 12:19 KJV** - "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."
2. But most of all, we must find all delight in Him

**Psalm 94:19 KJV** - " In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul."

This delight in Christ will transcend all else. When the wicked treat us unjustly we continue to be absorbed in the love of Christ and remember that His all encompassing rule over all things brings us the peace that passes all understanding.

- a. There is great peace in knowing that God governs all things—that nothing ever happens that He has not ordained. There is great peace in knowing that He is working for our good.
- b. God's people are at peace through every trial of life  
Since God has ordained all things, no enemy, no hardship shall ever do more than God has ordained
- c. And in the end God will judge righteously vindicating all of His holy people.