

“Sudden Destruction”
Psalm 64
(Preached at Trinity, April 3, 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. A common theme of David in many of his psalms that we’ve looked at thus far has been the continued attacks of his enemies. They were continually present and continually on David’s mind. Even in the previous chapter where all of David’s attention was upon his thirst for God it was still in the context of his many enemies.
Psalm 63:8-9 – “My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.
⁹ But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy *it*, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.”
2. As we enter **Psalm 64** we find David once again confronted by his enemies. And once again we find him looking to God as his Deliverer. His confidence continues to rest in God. David lifts his voice in prayer -
Psalm 64:1 – “Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.”
3. We must not diminish the ferocity of David’s enemies. They were out for his blood. Their power and persistence was sufficient to bring fear to the heart of any man. David was a mighty man of war, yet he was still a man susceptible to all of the fears that plague our hearts.
 - A. Fear is a reality of our fallen human condition.
Genesis 3:10 - “And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.”
 - B. As we look to God, however, our fear is turned to confidence.
Psalm 3:6 – “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.”
Psalm 27:1 – “The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”
Psalm 56:2-3 – “Mine enemies would daily swallow *me* up: for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou most High. ³ What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”
4. David’s prayer was twofold:
First, David prays: “preserve my life from fear of the enemy.”
 - a. The word for “fear” refers to great terror.
 - b. David turns to God and prays, “O God, help me to not be afraid.”
 - c. Is this your prayer? “Help me to not be afraid.”Second, David prays: “Hide me”
 - a. David is praying for God to shield him from his enemies.
 - b. It is as a picture of a child hiding behind his mother in the face of danger.
 - c. David expressed it often as a chick taking refuge under the wings of the hen

Psalm 17:8-9 – “Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, ⁹ From the wicked that oppress me, *from* my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.”

Psalm 36:7-8 – “How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”

Psalm 91:4-5 – “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler. ⁵ Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;”

5. This is a man who in the face of great and terrible odds looks to God as his comfort. He knew that God would come to his aid and destroy his enemies suddenly and without warning. Tonight I want us to focus on this sudden destruction.
6. We’ll look at this brief psalm under two simple headings:
 - I. The nature of David’s enemies -
 - II. The suddenness of their destruction
7. I want to address in particular the lost tonight. You are the enemies of God.
NAS **James 4:4** – “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
8. This is the hardest thing for the lost man to admit – that he’s the enemy of God.
 - I. The nature of David’s enemies
 - A. **Verse 2** – They were “workers of iniquity”
 1. Iniquity - אָוֹן `avon – refers to perversity or depravity.
 2. David’s enemies were lawless. This doesn’t mean they weren’t religious. Many of David’s enemies were Israelites – proud of their heritage
 3. These people describe all men in their natural condition – all are lawless, all depraved
 - B. **Verse 3** – They used their words as terrible weapons
 1. David said they use their words like a warrior whets his sword. He fires off his words like arrows from a bow
 Spurgeon: “As warriors grind their swords, to give them an edge which will cut deep and wound desperately, so do the unscrupulous invent falsehoods which shall be calculated to inflict pain, to stab the reputation, to kill the honour of the righteous. What is there which an evil tongue will not say? What misery will it not labour to inflict?”
 2. Paul described the 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.”
 4. The wicked tongue is natural to the wicked heart
Matthew 15:18-19 – “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. ¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

5. Likewise, it is unnatural for a righteous man to speak words that
James 3:10-12 – “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. ¹¹ Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? ¹² Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”
 6. Do your words build up or tear down? Do they encourage and edify? Think back to the last time you used your tongue as a wonderful balm to refresh and encourage your brother? Have you complimented someone today? Have you told someone you are thankful for them?
- C. They are cunning in the pursuit of their evil plans
1. **Verse 4** – They sometimes come suddenly upon the innocent
 - a. The word “suddenly” is key to this psalm.
 - b. They often perform their evil deeds suddenly and without warning
 - c. This, by the way, is the way Satan works. His temptations are seldom obvious. He is cunning. His lies are carefully concealed.
 - d. The Godly need to be wise – always watchful
1 Peter 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”
 2. **Verses 5-6** – They are cunning in their wicked acts
^{NIV} **Psalm 64:6** – “They plot injustice and say, “We have devised a perfect plan!” Surely the mind and heart of man are cunning.”
Ephesians 4:14 – “That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”
- II. The suddenness of their destruction
- Psalm 64:7** – “But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.”
- A. God’s weapons of justice are swift and sure
1. David often compared God’s judgment in terms of weapons of war
Psalm 64:7 – “But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow”
Psalm 7:11 – “God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day. If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts.”
Psalm 17:13 – “Arise, O LORD, confront him, bring him low; Deliver my soul from the wicked with Thy sword,”
 2. God’s judgment is always just – notice the wicked received the same thing they gave. They used their weapons of war to strike the innocent. God turns their weapons upon them
Romans 12:19 – “Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

3. God's judgment comes swiftly
Deuteronomy 32:35 – “To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”
 4. Often we find the the Psalter a tone of impatience. Sometimes it seems that God tarries.
Psalm 94:1-3 – “O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. ² Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. ³ LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?”
 5. The Book of Revelation pictures the martyrs in heaven crying out how long before their blood would be avenged.
Revelation 6:10 – “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”
 6. The answer is, “Soon!” “Suddenly!”
- B. Sometimes judgment comes suddenly in this life
1. The flood was a terrible spectacle of God's judgment
 - a. On one hand God demonstrated great patience – it took Noah 120 year to build the ark.
 - b. On the other hand it came suddenly and unexpectedly
Matthew 24:38-39 – “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;”
 - c. They were going about life as usual
 They were eating and drinking – it was a regular day
 They were also getting married and giving their daughters in marriage – they were planning for the future
 - d. Judgment came suddenly and unexpectedly
 2. King Herod was proud and had no regard for the glory of God
Acts 12:21-23 – “And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. ²² And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man. ²³ And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.”
- C. Death comes suddenly and unexpectedly
1. With death comes the judgment
Hebrews 9:27 – “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”
 2. Human life is always in danger of death - Death is a reality of life.
 - a. 150,000 people die each and every day
 - b. Death overshadows our entire life.
 - c. Our very lifeblood is slowly being drained from our veins and nothing can stop the flow

- d. The truth is we hold to life by a thread – death can come at any moment and for most it will come suddenly and unexpectedly
Most of the 150,000 who died today were confident of a tomorrow
3. They woke up this morning completely unaware that they were going to stand before the Judge of all the earth today
- C. The final judgment will come suddenly and unexpectedly
1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 – “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. ³ For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”
 1. Most will be utterly shocked – totally unprepared
Christ will return on a day like any other day
Matthew 24:37 – “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. or as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,”
 2. Christ will come at a time most unexpected
Some will have just entered into marriage
Some will have just graduated from school
Some will have just had a baby and enjoying the pleasures of family life
None will expect that this day they would stand before the Creator
 3. Such is life for most men – the end comes suddenly and unexpectedly
One moment we will be going through the details of life and the next we will stand before Christ.
2 Corinthians 5:10 – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.”

Conclusion:

1. These things bring comfort to God’s people.
Psalm 64:10 – “The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.”
We long for Christ to return. For justice to prevail upon God’s creation. For us to receive our inheritance.
2. For the unprepared the judgment of God strikes fear upon their hearts.
^{NAS} **Psalm 64:9** – “Then all men will fear, And will declare the work of God, And will consider what He has done.”
3. It will all come suddenly. The Gospel carries with it great urgency:
This is the nature of the Gospel – there is urgency.
Hebrews 4:7 – “. . . To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”
You are still alive!! There is hope. Turn to Christ now without delay.
4. And Christian—may we not be as the foolish caught unprepared.
1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 – “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.”
Romans 13:11 – “And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.”