

“God’s Sovereignty Displayed”  
Psalm 75  
(Preached at Trinity, August 14, 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. As we’ve seen in the psalms, the people of God are often pressed with terrible affliction and assaulted by enemies upon the earth. Sin can greatly add to our grief as we find ourselves out of fellowship with God.  
Last week we saw Asaph crying out because of the absence of God.  
**Ps. 74:1 NAS** - "O God, why hast Thou rejected *us* forever? Why does Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture?"
2. But this is not the theme of this psalm. Here we find that even though we may struggle in this life God is nevertheless near and He is ruling with absolute sovereign dominion.
3. As we begin **Psalm 75** we find in the superscription:
  - A. That it was designated to be given to the chief musician, telling us that it was composed to be sung in the holy sanctuary.
  - B. That it carries the designation, Altaschith, which literally means, “Do not destroy.” This is familiar to us as we’ve seen it in Psalms 57, 58, & 59.  
It could be a command to preserve this psalm, but more likely, it was a familiar tune that the psalm was to be sung to.
  - C. Finally, we find that this is another psalm attributed to Asaph.
4. No matter what happens there are several absolute truths that should comfort us:
  - A. God does His good pleasure and no one has the power to resist His will.
  - B. God has ordained every detail of our life and as His people He ordains all things for our good.
  - C. God will judge righteously in the end.
5. This psalm has several stanzas which we will use to divide the psalm:
  - I. First the congregation speaks, thanking God for His nearness – **Verse 1**
  - II. Next, God speaks, assuring His people that He is indeed in control of the universe and warns the wicked to submit – **Verses 2-5**
  - III. Next, the preacher speaks, affirming God’s words – **Verses 6-8**
  - IV. Finally, we hear from the individual worshipper, adding his agreement in praise – **Verses 9-10**
  - I. First the congregation speaks, thanking God for His nearness – **Verse 1**
    - A. The focus of this section is thanksgiving to God
      1. This is the heart of God’s people
        - a. Thomas Watson - "Take a Christian at his worst, yet he is thankful."
        - b. The repetition adds force to it

- c. Thanksgiving is one of our identifying marks  
**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.”  
**Ephesians 5:3** – “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.”
2. The Hebrew word for thanks is יָדָהּ yadah which is the same word usually translated “Praise” –
- You *cannot* praise Him without thanksgiving.
  - You *cannot worship* God without thanksgiving
3. A failure to give thanks is to deny God  
 Jesus equated the unthankful with those who are evil, the enemies of God  
**Luke 6:35** – “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to the evil.*”
- B. Asaph gives a particular focus of thanksgiving  
**Psalm 75:1** – “for *that* thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.”
- He is praising God for His nearness
  - This could have a several meanings
    - It could refer to God’s omnipresence, particularly with regard to the wicked. God knows and sees all things and His judgments are inescapable. God declares in **Verse 2** that He will judge uprightly.
    - It could refer to God’s Sovereign rule over all the universe. All of creation declares God’s nearness – His “wondrous works” declare God’s glory.  
**Psalm 19:1** – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”  
**Psalm 97:6** – “The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.”
  - Asaph is also declaring thanksgiving for God’s mighty works as they apply particularly in the life of His people. This is particularly worthy of praise in light of the previous psalm when God appeared absent.  
**Psalm 74:1** – “O God, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever?”
3. Remember, the “name” of God speaks of the fullness of the Divine essence. Asaph is expressing great thanksgiving that God in the fullness of His being is with them.  
 Spurgeon – “We sing not of a hidden God, who sleeps and leaves the church to her fate, but of one who ever in our darkest days is most near, a very present help in trouble.”

- II. Next, God speaks, assuring His people that He is indeed in control of the universe and warns the wicked to submit – **Verses 2-5**
- A. God exercises sovereign dominion over judgment
1. The KJV translates **Verse 2** a bit differently:  
 “When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.”
    - a. The word for “congregation” can be translated: “appointed place.” In this line of translation it can refer to an assembly thus the KJV translates it “congregation”
    - b. But it can also be translated “appointed time” which is the way most translations read it. We can see this in Genesis 18  
**Genesis 18:14** – “Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”
  2. **Verse 2** speaks of the time God chooses  
NAU **Psalm 75:2** – “When I select an appointed time, It is I who judge with equity.  
ESV **Psalm 75:2** – “At the set time that I appoint I will judge with equity.”
  3. In giving His people over to their enemies it may seem that He has abandoned them. Sometimes it may appear to be an unending delay, yet God chooses the time of His deliverance. He only delays until the appointed time. In due time He will avenge the righteous.
  4. And God has chosen the final day
    - a. God is working everything according to His eternal decree  
**2 Peter 3:9-10** – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”
    - b. It will be an unexpected day  
**Matthew 24:36-37** – “But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. <sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”
    - c. We are to stay alert and prepared  
**Romans 13:11-12** – “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. <sup>12</sup> The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”
- B. In a world that seems chaotic at times God is ruling with absolute sovereignty  
**Verse 3** – “The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.”
1. God says the earth and everything on it seems to dissolve but in reality He has everything carefully maintained. Everything is carefully ordered.

2. Picture a world without order
    - a. Could there be a hurricane or tornado with enough strength to sweep across the nation destroying everything in its path? How could we control it?
    - b. What would stop thunderstorms from causing floods that would swallow whole nations?
    - c. What would stop snow from covering the earth?
    - d. What would stop the earth's rotation from slowing bringing the end to life?
    - e. What would stop the animals of the earth from suddenly banding together to invade our cities?
    - f. What would stop a disease from sweeping across the earth destroying all life?
  3. The truth is every catastrophic event is of limited proportion – The earth may seem to dissolve but God has everything under His sovereign power
 

**Psalm 135:6** – “Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.”

**Psalm 115:3** – “But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”
- C. In light of God's almighty dominion, God warns the wicked to take heed
- Verses 4-5**
1. He refers to the wicked as “fools.” Why would be so foolish as to deny God's almighty power. Who would be so foolish as to pretend to war with God?
  2. “horn” is a word used to designate strength  
Lifting up the horn refers to haughty, proud boasting.  
Or walking with a stiff neck – with heads raised high.  
Isaiah described the arrogance:  
**Isaiah 3:16** – “Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks. . .”
- III. Next, the preacher speaks, affirming God's words – **Verses 6-8**
- A. In light of what's been said, look to God and trust your life to Him
1. Knowing that nothing happens by chance, look to the One who rules over all things.
  2. **Verse 6** - Don't look to the east or the west, or to the south – Don't imagine that deliverance will come from any other but God.
  3. The word for “promotion” here implies self-advancement.
    - a. To whom will we look for promotion or advancement?
    - b. Will we trust in own power or our cunning schemes?  
**1 Peter 5:6** – “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”
- B. God judges and ordains the estate of all men  
**Verse 7** But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

1. We see this over and over in Scripture
    - 1 Samuel 2:7** – “The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.”
    - Acts 17:26** – “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;”
  2. Empires rise and fall at the sovereign direction of God. Men are exalted or brought low by the sovereign hand of God.
- C. Although the wicked seem to prosper and God may seem to delay avenging His righteous people, He is working His perfect purpose
1. Each of the wicked will face God’s judgment – **Verse 8**  
To drink the wrath of God’s judgment is terrifying.
  2. Either Christ drinks the cup of God’s wrath for us, or we will drink it to the full.
  3. This demands that we trust the sovereign purpose of God.
- IV. Finally, we hear from the individual worshipper, adding his agreement in praise –  
**Verses 9-10**
- A. The righteous faithfully declare God’s sovereign dominion
- Psalms 75:9** – “But I will declare for ever”
  - Psalms 73:28** – “But *it is* good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”
1. We must make unending declarations of God’s mighty rule
  2. We must warn all men of God’s coming judgment and of the need to bow before Him.
- Psalms 2:12** – “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.”
- B. The righteous also continually sing forth the praises of God:
- Psalms 75:9** – “I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.”
1. What shall we say to these things? How shall we respond to this mighty testimony of God’s sovereign authority?  
We must respond with great praise!
  2. The word here points particularly to “singing” God’s praise.  
Our hearts should be filled with song towards God
- C. I believe **Verse 10** is a testimony and declaration of God’s sovereign power on behalf of His church. It is a testimony of the church triumphant.
1. In light of the testimony of God, the righteous have confidence that all of our enemies will fall beneath us. No weapon formed against us will prosper. We will have the ultimate victory. We are more than conquerors.
  2. In addition, we have absolute confidence that we will be exalted by Christ because He is exalted.
  3. It is also a declaration of our work upon the earth.  
Acting under God’s authority we will seek to exercise God’s justice upon the earth, casting down the wicked and lifting up the righteous.

**Conclusion:**

1. God rules this world with absolute sovereign dominion
2. We must bow before His rule. We must declare His glorious works to others commanding all to bow before Him.
3. And we must recognize our unique privileged position in being the children of so great a God.