

“For the Glory of Thy Name”  
Psalm 79  
(Preached at Trinity, September 11, 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. Years ago one of our families had a three-year-old daughter who was very cute and articulate and doted upon by all. One Sunday morning she had been retrieved from the nursery and as soon as she entered the Sanctuary she announced loudly, “Here I am.” This may sound cute for a three-year-old, but, sadly, most of us have this heart. Everybody look at me, admire me, listen to me, praise me, glorify me.
2. As Christians, we resist such a heart. We know the Bible speaks loudly against pride and selfishness. We must guard against envy and against jealousy. This is why for some the Third Commandment seems strange. It just seems out of place. **Exodus 20:4-6 KJV** - "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: <sup>5</sup> Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; <sup>6</sup> And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."
  - A. We read that God is a jealous God. But isn’t jealousy evil? Isn’t it sin?  
**James 3:14-16 NAU** - "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."  
**Galatians 5:19-21 NAU** - "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."  
**1 Corinthians 3:3 NAU** - "For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?"
  - B. Jealousy is sinful because it is motivated by pride and a desire to elevate ourselves above others. It is seeking exaltation that isn’t ours. The root meaning of the word “Jealous” is zeal. The jealous person is filled with zeal to protect their own interests. When God says, “I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God” He is saying that He burns with zeal to protect His interests.

- C. Sinful men burn with zeal to make themselves the highest. But God **is** the highest. He is infinitely great. He has no equals. When we read that God is jealous it means that God is careful to maintain His own glory, that which is His alone. Everything God does is designed to manifest and promote His glory. To try to take away any of God's supremacy is to rob Him of that which is rightfully His.
- Isaiah 42:8** – "I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."
- Isaiah 48:11** – "For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."
3. We need to understand this at the very beginning because the glory of God is at the very heart of **Psalm 79**. The driving verse in this whole passage is **Verse 9**  
**Psalm 79:9 KJV** - "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake."  
In this psalm Asaph is pleading for God's glory – for God to work in such a way that His great name would be magnified.
  4. **Psalm 79** shares the same context as **Psalm 74**. Babylon invaded Judah in 586 B.C and the nation suffered a terrible defeat; Jerusalem was devastated, the temple was burned, and the people were taken into captivity. Both psalms find the agony of a defeated people suffering under the darkness of God's absence.  
**Psalm 74:1 KJV** - "O God, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever?"  
**Psalm 79:5 KJV** - " How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? "
  5. Asaph is pleading for God's deliverance but the main objective of his plea is not his own or Israel's relief. His main motivation is the glory of God.  
Asaph knew clearly why Israel had been given over to their enemies. The prophets had clearly warned Israel of their sinful and rebellious deeds that had continued for years. Asaph knew God was just in His anger.  
**Psalm 79:5 KJV** - " How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? "
  6. On the other hand Asaph knew Israel was God's chosen nation, His peculiar people.  
**Deuteronomy 14:2 KJV** - "For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth."
  7. The heathen nations were trampling on God's people, Gods own people. In attacking God's people and defiling God's temple they were actually assaulting the holy name of God.  
**Psalm 79:1 KJV** - "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps."
  8. I want to divide this brief chapter into three sections.
    - A. **Verses 1-4** – A predicament probed
    - B. **Verses 5-12** – A prayer presented
    - C. **Verse 13** – Praise Promised
  9. Remember, the driving verse in this whole passage is **Verse 9**  
**Psalm 79:9 KJV** - "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake."  
Asaph was pleading for God's glory – for God to work in such a way that His great name would be glorified.

I. **Verses 1-4** – A predicament probed

A. Asaph laments the complete destruction of Jerusalem – **Verse 1**

1. The Temple had been defiled and demolished  
The walls of the great city had been brought down
2. Remember, Jerusalem was the city of God – Zion  
The Temple was the place where Israel met God. It was the place of the sacrifices, it was the place of the Ark of the Covenant. It represented their relationship with God
3. The absence of Jerusalem was the absence of God  
**Psalm 74:2 KJV** - "Remember thy congregation, *which* thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt."

B. Worse than the destruction of Jerusalem was the abuse of God's people – **V. 2-4**

1. King Zedekiah watched his sons executed and then he was blinded
2. Multitudes were killed. The corpses were left to rot or be eaten by animals. The Babylonians did not bury the dead and there were not enough Israelites left behind to carry out the gruesome task.  
**Psalm 79:3 KJV** - "Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was none to bury them.*"
3. Israel had become a reproach in the eyes of the neighboring nations – the objects of scorn and derision.
4. Asaph reminds God that they were doing this to God's inheritance  
**Psalm 79:1 KJV** - "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance"

C. This situation was the cause of great lamentation

1. James Montgomery Boice said the destruction was *political, economic, social, and religious*  
*Political* – the nation was destroyed, there was no king, no counselors, no people in authority, no army  
*Economic* – The land was devastated. No one could earn a living and there was no one to buy anything that might be produced.  
*Social* – entire families were wiped out. There was no one who had not lost a husband, son, father, mother, wife, or children in the conflict.  
*Religious* – There was no temple and the worship of God had ceased.

2. Asaph was crying out in desperation

D. Few of us have suffered under such affliction

1. We haven't experienced the horrible terrors of the holocaust
2. We haven't experienced the genocide that has occurred far too many times
3. But all of us have experienced times of affliction when we've cried out to God. And if our affliction is due to our own sinful resistance to God's standard of obedience may we have the discernment to repent and cry out to God.  
Matthew Henry: "If God's professing people degenerate from what themselves and their fathers were, they must expect to be told of it; and it is well if a just reproach will help to bring us to a true repentance."
4. Even though their suffering was great Israel cried out to God.

## II. Verses 5-12 – A prayer presented

### A. How long will this punishment last? – Verse 5

**Psalm 79:5 KJV** - "How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?"

1. This is similar to Asaph's question in **Psalm 74**  
**Psalm 74:10 KJV** - "O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?"
2. Israel was in Babylon for 70 years. 70 years without the Temple worship, 70 years without their freedom, 70 years without their nation
3. Asaph is not complaining that their suffering is unjust.  
**Psalm 79:9 KJV** - "purge away our sins, for thy name's sake."
  - a. But Asaph is wondering that with Jerusalem destroyed and time continuing to drag on, will God's judgment ever end.
  - b. Remember, God's jealousy is His burning zeal for His own glory. It is only by His mercy that we are not consumed.

### B. Asaph's imprecations towards their enemies – Verses 6-7, 10-12

1. We've seen the imprecatory prayers in the Psalms over and over  
By now we should understand their meaning.
2. On one hand they are judicial – Oh God, may you bring justice upon them.  
**Psalm 79:6 KJV** - "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name."  
**Psalm 79:12 KJV** - " And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord."  
**Psalm 28:4 KJV** – "Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert."
3. On the other hand, they are a cry that God's glory might be magnified upon the earth. That all the world might know that God is God.  
**Psalm 79:9 KJV** - "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake."
4. Our problem is we don't hold the glory of God high enough. We are too lax in tolerating sin, both in our life and in the lives of others.  
James Montgomery Boice – "We err on the side, not of being too harsh with those who practice evil, but of being too lax. We treat both virtue and vice lightly, forgetting that virtue should be rewarded and that evil should be punished. So we are not so much more moral than these ancient Jews as amoral. At least they were concerned about justice; we are not."

### C. A plea for mercy – Verse 8

**Psalm 79:8 KJV** - "O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low."

1. One of the important aspects of **Psalm 79** is the admission of sin.
2. True prayer should always include confession. As we come before God we remember that He is holy and we are not.
3. The word "prevent" in the KJV literally means to "go before."  
**Psalm 79:8 NAU** - "Let Your compassion come quickly to meet us"

4. The phrase "purge away our sins" in **Verse 9** literally means atonement.
- a. The only "atonement" Asaph knew was the annual Day of Atonement when the high priest offered up a sacrifice for the people. Of course this was not possible for there was no temple.
  - b. Of course the Temple was rebuilt but this wasn't God's answer to Asaph's prayer. God brought a greater atonement.  
**Isaiah 53:5 KJV** - "But he was wounded for our transgressions, *he* was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."  
**Hebrews 9:13-14 KJV** - "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: <sup>14</sup> How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
- D. For the glory of Thy name – **Verse 9**
1. This is the heart of this psalm. This was Asaph's motivation—that God's glory might be magnified upon the earth. That God's name might be praised
  2. Asaph's prayer was that God's great name be glorified in His mercy upon His people and in His judgment upon the wicked.
    - a. By attacking God's people they were guilty of attacking God—even if God had used them for His just chastening upon His people.
    - b. This was clearly revealed with God used the Assyrians to judge Israel  
**Isaiah 10:5-7 KJV** - "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. <sup>6</sup> I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. <sup>7</sup> Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but *it is* in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few."  
**Isaiah 10:12-13 KJV** - "Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. <sup>13</sup> For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man*:"
  3. Our great motive in everything should be the glory of God.
    - a. Everything we do is a reflection of our view of God. As Christians our desire must always be to demonstrate to all men the greatness of God in our lives.

- b. Calvin – “There is no part of our life or conduct, however insignificant, which should not be related to the glory of God.”
- c. Spurgeon:  
 “To whom be glory for ever.” This should be the single desire of the Christian. I take it that he should not have twenty wishes, but only one. He may desire to see his family well brought up, but only that “To God may be glory for ever.” He may wish for prosperity in his business, but only so far as it may help him to promote this-  
 “ To whom be glory for ever.” He may desire to attain more gifts and more graces, but it should only be that “To him may be glory for ever.” This one thing I know, Christian, you are not acting as you ought to do when you are moved by any other motive than the one motive of your Lord’s glory.”

### III. Verse 13 – Praise Promised

**Psalm 79:13-1 NAU** - "So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture Will give thanks to You forever; To all generations we will tell of Your praise."

- A. This is the heart of a man of God
  - 1. Asaph’s prayer has ended. This is simply an expression of his heart—that no mater what the end is, we will praise God forever.
  - 2. Many of the Jews in Babylon had been born there. They had never known of the Temple but Asaph was determined that they would not forget God. “To all generations we will tell of Your praise."
- B. Our work is generational. We have a duty to worship God now—to lift His great name up now. But we also have a duty to teach Him to the next generation.