



Sermon, Sunday June 12, 2022

“What the Lord is Doing in the World”

SCRIPTURE: Psalms 75:1-10 ¹We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks; your name is near. People tell of your wondrous deeds. ²At the set time that I appoint, I will judge with equity. ³When the earth totters, with all its inhabitants, it is I who keep its pillars steady. *Selah* ⁴I say to the boastful, “Do not boast,” and to the wicked, “Do not lift up your horn; ⁵do not lift up your horn on high or speak with insolent neck.” ⁶For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, ⁷but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. ⁸For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed; he will pour a draught from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs. ⁹But I will rejoice forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. ¹⁰All the horns of the wicked I will cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Introduction: A song of hope amidst despair

Psalm 75 contains the prayer of a psalmist who is in great danger to God, “**Do not make it a ruin, do not destroy it.**” There are several views on the background of Psalm 75, but most scholars view the background of Psalm 75 as the history of the Assyrian king Sennacherib's invasion of southern Judah in 2 Kings 18-19.

According to 2 Kings, in the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah. Hezekiah then asked the king of Assyria to make peace with him and to withdraw his army. Then Sennacherib, king of Assyria, asked King Hezekiah for three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. Hezekiah complies with Sennacherib's request, but Sennacherib did not withdraw his army, but instead attacked Jerusalem. Furthermore, King Sennacherib even spoke of ignoring God. Psalm 75 expresses this historical fact.

The psalmist sang of hope even in a desperate situation. The psalmist's appearance gives us a strong religious challenge. So, what could be the basis for the psalmist singing of hope during despair? It is the conviction of what the Lord is doing in the world. May we all have the same faith as the psalmist.

Body: What the Lord is doing in the world

1. The Lord exalts the righteous in the world.

Today's text, verses 6-7, tell us. “**For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up; but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.**”

These verses clearly state what the Lord is doing in the world. The Lord is the One who does things in the world that exalt people. So, who is the one the Lord exalts? First, the Lord exalts those who know our weaknesses, shortcomings, and limitations and those who draw near to Him. Second, the Lord exalts those who acknowledge His sovereignty, are not impatient or envious of the prosperity of the wicked, and those who wait for the Lord to act. Third, the Lord exalts those who wait for the time of judgment and live as holy people.

The Bible calls these people righteous. The righteous here has a much broader meaning than that of being morally righteous.

One example is Abraham of the Old Testament. The Lord commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. In obedience to the Lord's will, Abraham tried to offer his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice to the Lord. However, these actions of Abraham raise various questions and misunderstandings about the Lord in our minds. In Abraham's image of sacrificing Isaac, we think of a heartless father, a religious fanatic, or a cruel Lord. Of course, we know that the Lord's command to sacrifice Isaac was to test Abraham's faith. But if the things that happened to Abraham happen in our daily life, it may be difficult for us to handle.

What is clear is that the righteous in the Bible are not determined by our moral judgments and values, but by the will of the Lord. Even if we don't understand it now, we should not misunderstand the Lord as a God who makes unreasonable demands against our common sense.



Ultimately, the righteous are determined by how they respond to the Lord's sovereignty and word. The righteous and the wicked are divided based on our relationship with the Lord. If we have a deep relationship with the Lord and trust Him completely, we will be recognized by the Lord as righteous, otherwise we will not fall into the category of righteous people.

May we be blessed to experience daily His warm touch toward us as we trust Him and form a deep relationship with Him. Therefore, the righteous can see hope even in despair and praise the Lord. So, what else is the psalmist sure of the Lord doing to the world?

2. The Lord judges the wicked in the world

The Lord exalts the righteous and humbles and judges the wicked in the world. Who are the wicked whom the Lord humbles and judges? Let's look at verses 4-5 of today's text. **"I say to the boastful, "Do not boast," and to the wicked, "Do not lift up your horn; do not lift up your horn on high or speak with insolent neck."**

The wicked the Lord judges are the arrogant. They do not value the grace the Lord has bestowed upon the world. Also, the arrogant do not recognize the Lord's sovereignty over the world. And the proud man neither fears nor believes in the judgment of the Lord upon the world.

But today's text verse 2 says: **"At the set time that I appoint I will judge with equity."**

This verse tells us that the time of judgment appointed by the Lord will surely come. That is why those who believe in the Lord should pray in difficult times. If sometimes the Lord does not answer our prayers immediately, we should not be discouraged. If our prayers are not answered, it is because the Lord's time has not yet come. In fact, we do not know when the Lord's time is. Therefore, the time of suffering and trials we are going through may be prolonged. But the Lord comforts those who pray in times of trouble, promising the judgment of the wicked.

Please don't forget the delay of the Lord's judgment is to give the wicked an opportunity to repent.

If the wicked do not repent and act arrogantly during this period, they will be severely punished at the time of judgment. The Lord must fulfill the justice of the world.

But why do people become arrogant? It is because they consider themselves to be great beings. Arrogant people think that nothing in the world is impossible because they are overconfident in their power. So, arrogance is a characteristic that can be seen a lot in people who are strong and capable, and successful people in the world. In that sense, it can be said that those who do not have worldly possessions and are not educated are rather safe from the sin of pride. This is not to criticize the socially successful, nor is it to advocate for the poor.

Nevertheless, those who consider themselves capable should be especially careful not to become arrogant. Therefore, the more powerful and capable people are, the more they should be grateful and humble, knowing that their strength and ability are not from themselves but from the Lord.

Sometimes, we think our talents and abilities can make us high in the world, but that is not true. It is the Lord, not our talents and abilities, who determines the highs and lows of our lives.

In fact, most people like to be recognized and appreciated. So, we work hard for it and live busily. But if we try to exalt ourselves before the Lord exalts us, we will fall. There are fewer people in the world who depend on the Lord, and more and more people rely on their own strength and ability. But please don't forget. Even though the world is overflowing with arrogant people and the moral order of the world seems to be crumbling, the Lord is ruling the world.

Conclusion: The Lord humbles and exalts

Now let's summarize today's sermon. **Psalm 81:13-16 says: "If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes! Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their punishment would last forever. But you would be fed with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."**

We must not be arrogant before the Lord. The Lord will exalt the humble in due time. We must be exalted by the Lord. May everyone be recognized by the Lord. Amen!

