



# SOJOURNER PSALMS

“Shalom”  
Psalm 98  
April 7, 2019

**1. Sunday Summary:** This morning we continued our sermon series for Lent that we’re calling *Sojourner Psalms*. Why a series on the Psalms? Because the Psalms train us well in essential Lenten practices, and especially in prayer. This morning we examined Psalm 98 and explored the puzzle and problem of God’s judgment, and how on the one hand we need it (and even, if we’re honest, want it), and yet on the other hand how we fear it. This Psalm outlines...

- a) The joyful promise of judgment (vs. 4-9) – When we look at this Psalm (especially with it’s companion Psalms: Psalm 96 & 97) what comes clear is that what we want and yearn for is a true King who will come to set the whole world right. All the best stories we read also point us in that direction. And in fact that’s exactly what this Psalm promises. But that “setting things right” happens through judgment, which is actually a problem for us.
- b) The problem of judgment – When God enters into covenants with people, there are always promises made on both sides of the covenant. Along with those promises there were blessings for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking them. So here’s the problem: we (just like Old Testament) Israel, always break the covenant (sin), so what is God to do? Does he abandon us, or mete out punishment? If so, what about his faithfulness and love? Or does he just let the covenant breaking (sin) go and accept us anyway? If, so what about his justice, and his holiness? In other words, if God chooses to simply let sin go, what hope is there in the world for justice to happen and things to be put right again. But, if he doesn’t simply let sin go, what hope is there for us? We’d all be destroyed.
- c) God’s provision for us – This puzzle, this problem never really gets dealt with until we get to the New Testament. We deserve the punishment of the covenant curses, because we’ve “all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) But on the cross God solves the problem. On the cross the judge pronounces judgment, but then pays the penalty himself. Therefore, the love and justice of God are perfectly satisfied.

**2. Connecting Questions:** (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- Talk about a time in your life when you felt particularly judged. What was that like? How did it feel? Was it helpful? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- When you think of **God’s** judgment, what do you think/feel? What’s your primary picture of God? Is he a judge? A friend? Talk about how your picture of God shapes the way you live your life.

- We often don't like to think of God as an angry God. What did you think of the quote from Miroslav Volf in the sermon, that he would rebel against a God that wasn't angry? Is an angry God necessary? Is anger a necessary part of love?
- What insights from today's message were most helpful for you?

**3. Truth Questions:** (What does the Bible say?)

- Think together about some other passages that deal with the topic of God's judgment. Can you think of any? What might they add to the conversation?
- Read Genesis 1:28-31. This section on Scripture is often referred to as the "cultural mandate." What might this have to do with the topic of judgment and God's anger? Why does God seem to get so angry in the Old Testament? What clues might this passage give as to what we are saved for?
- Read Romans 8:1-2. What does this passage add to the conversation? What might knowing that there's no judgment and condemnation do for the way you live?

**4. Formation Questions:** (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the gospel truth that we dealt with today deeper into your life throughout this week? What will you do about the message you heard today?
- How will you remind yourself this week that your judgment day has passed?
- How will today's learning help you to live out your call to living a holy life this week?

**5. Resources for Further Study:**

1. Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms As Tools For Prayer*. (Harper One: New York, NY. 1989).
2. Brueggemann, Walter. *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, MN. 1995).