

Psalm 5

In Psalm 5 we have a very clear antithesis. What is the antithesis? The antithesis is a division. The antithesis is a separation between two things. In the Bible there is an antithesis, a division, a separation between God and all of God's enemies. In this psalm that antithesis can be seen. In this psalm, on the one hand, we have the psalmist. He is the one who says in verse 1, "Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation." The psalmist is the one saying, "My" — "my words...my meditation." That was David in the Old Testament, who was a picture of Jesus Christ. Over here on this side we have Jesus Christ; and then in this psalm, on the other side in this separation or division or antithesis, we have the enemies of Christ. He speaks of them in verse 4, for example: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee." Verse 5: "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity."

Throughout this psalm the psalmist keeps coming back to that antithesis, that division and separation, between the psalmist and all his enemies. The psalmist says in verse seven, "But as for me"; and with that word "but" he shows a clear division. He is not like the wicked. He is not like those who seek after iniquity. He is different from them. There is a separation and a division between them and the psalmist. He comes back to the wicked again in verse 8: "Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies." Verse 9: "For there is no faithfulness in their mouth." Verse 10: "Destroy thou them, O God." And then in verses 11–12 he comes back to himself, but now he has some people with him, and we'll see who those are in a little bit. In this psalm there is a constant antithesis between Christ, on the one hand—the psalmist—and all the enemies of the psalmist, on the other hand.

That antithesis is very, very common in the psalms. You will find that division and separation in many of the psalms. That antithesis makes sense because at the very beginning, when man fell into sin, God came to Adam and Eve and to Satan and said to Satan, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." God at the beginning put enmity, warfare, separation between the two seeds. That seed of the woman is Jesus Christ, so that Jesus Christ, when he was born in this world and lived his whole life in this world, was right at the center of that enmity. He was right at the heart of that antithesis. When Jesus in the psalms sings his experience of fellowship with God and sings the truth of who he is, the antithesis constantly comes up. Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent is at war with him. They are constantly after him. During his lifetime they sought to destroy him. Today they seek to destroy his gospel.

There is this antithesis. You will see that, and look for that in the psalms as you read them and as we continue to go through the psalms. That antithesis was introduced right away in Psalm 1. This is not new in Psalm 5. In Psalm 1 we saw the man who is blessed. "Blessed is the man," and there are the ungodly who are not so, who are like the chaff that the wind driveth away. There is that antithesis. Here in Psalm 5 it comes again very clearly. The psalmist keeps returning to it verse after verse and makes that separation very sharp. "But as for me," he says.

What does that antithesis look like in Psalm 5? In this psalm the issue is, who will stand with God, who will worship God, and who may come before God? Verses 1–3: "Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." There you see the psalmist's standing before Jehovah God and before God's throne in the heavens. You see the psalmist's crying unto God as the very first thing he does in the morning. You see the psalmist's looking up to God. The idea is that the psalmist may do all of that. The psalmist may talk to God. The psalmist may pray to God. He may worship God. When the psalmist comes back to that in verse 7, he says, "But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple." He comes into God's house, into his holy place, into his temple and worships before him there. The psalmist says, "I may worship, and I will worship, and I do worship Jehovah God; and he hears me."

The contrast with the psalmist is all of the wicked. What about these wicked? Verses 4–6: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." There is the antithesis. The wicked will not be heard by God, and they may not dwell with him. Instead, God abhors them.

What the psalmist brings up here as the character of their wickedness is quite interesting. The psalmist refers to their "leasing." We use that word *leasing* a little bit differently today, but that word in the King James Version means *lying*. That characterizes them: they speak lying. With their lies they are bloody and deceitful. By their deception they hurt and destroy and kill men. We see that in Jesus' day. They constantly lied about him. "You cast out devils by the prince of the devils," they said. That was a lie. "You said you would destroy this temple and in three days raise it up." That was a lie: Jesus said *they* would destroy the temple, and in three days he would raise it up. They were constantly lying about him. False witnesses at his trials. The crying of the mob to crucify him for his alleged crimes. The Lord's whole life was attended by those lies. That is always the way it is with the wicked. Verse 9: "There is no

faithfulness in their mouth”—no truth—“their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre.” With your throat you speak. Your throat makes the sound that is formed by your tongue and your mouth to speak. The sounds they make with their throats are the sounds of death. They are the sounds of lies, so that the throat of the wicked is like an open grave. When they lie, it is like pushing one into the grave. “They flatter with their tongue.” Flattering is lying too. They flatter themselves and flatter man that he is something.

The psalmist prays, “Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.” As for the psalmist, he may come into God’s house in the multitude of God’s mercies and worship him. But as for all of the wicked, who are divided and separated from the psalmist, they will be destroyed.

What about you and me? Here we come to that beautiful, glorious ending of the psalm, where we find that the psalmist has people with him. Verses 11–12: “But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.” Who are all of the people who are with Christ? They are God’s people, whom he has given to Christ. They are the people who share what Christ has, so that when Christ comes into the holy place of God, the people come with him. He brings them there. They are righteous not because they obeyed anything themselves or did any good themselves. They are righteous because he is righteous, and his righteousness has been counted as theirs. God blesses all of these people. He doesn’t destroy them like he does the wicked, but he blesses them. Verse 12: “For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.”

That is the hope and the trust of the child of God. Though by nature I don’t have any way to get into heaven—God’s holy place, God’s temple—to worship him there, through Jesus Christ I do, for I have what he has for his sake and for the sake of his blood.

Then look at the way the psalm ends. Remember, the psalmist is singing this. Jesus is singing this, so that this is Jesus’ declaration and Jesus’ gospel to his people: “with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.” What a beautiful idea. Here is God’s favor, his love, his compassion, his mercy, his grace. That grace is around you like a shield, so that when all those lies come that work bloody violence and that are meant to destroy, the grace of God through Jesus Christ protects you. Those lies can’t destroy you. You are compassed about with God’s favor as a shield.

That is the gospel and the good news of Psalm 5, where we again see the antithesis between the psalmist and his people, on the one hand, and all of the wicked, on the other hand.