

Psalm 137

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 00] Good evening and a warm welcome to the service this evening, those who are watching online, those who are listening in on the telephone.
- Once again it's good for us to be able to come together and to worship God in this way. And we'll begin this time of worship by singing to God's praise from Psalm 137.
- Psalm 137 and we'll sing the whole of the psalm. By Babel's streams we sat and wept, when Zion we thought on. In midst thereof we hanged our harps, the willow trees upon.
- For there a song required they who did us captive bring. Our spoilers called for mirth and said, a song of Zion sing. O how the Lord's song shall we sing within a foreign land, if thee Jerusalem I forgets go part from my right hand.
- And so on we sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise. By Babel's streams we sat and wept, When Zion we thought on.
- [1 : 36] In midst thereof we hanged our harps, the willow trees upon.
- For there a song required they who did us captive bring.
- Our spoilers called for mirth and said, a song of Zion sing.
- O how the Lord's song shall we sing within a foreign land.
- If thee Jerusalem I forget, skill part from my right hand.
- [2 : 49] My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave, if I do thee forget.
- Jerusalem on the above, my chief joy do not set.
- Remember Edom's children, Lord, who in Jerusalem stay.
- Even unto its foundation raise, raise it, quite it say.
- O daughter thou of Babylon, near to destruction.
- [3 : 59] Blessed shall he be that thee rewards, as thou to us hast done.
- Yea, happy surely shall he be thy tender little ones.
- Who shall lay hold upon, and then shall dash against the stones.
- Just as we come to pray, just share one little piece from the magazine Barnabas Aid.
- I was reading in the magazine there about the situation in Egypt for those who are Christians. And I'll just read a couple of lines from the article.
- [5 : 17] It says, And it then quotes the story of this little girl called Emiel.
- And she said, And she said, And she said, I pray to Jesus to have my own Bible, said the 11-year-old Emiel. This, as she held up the Bible, is the best gift ever.
- So let's be mindful of those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ, who are suffering in places like Egypt and many places across the world.
- And let's come to God now in prayer. Lord God, we thank you for the fact that at the end of your day, we are able to come together and worship in this way.

We thank you for the fact that we live in a country where we have the freedom to come to a place of worship. We have the freedom to broadcast openly.

[7 : 15] We have the freedom to gather in the name of Jesus as we did this morning. And we thank you, Lord, for these privileges.

We thank you that we are not those who are suffering the acute persecution that some across the world are suffering. But we are able to come together on your day in worship.

We thank you for the Bibles, which we have before us as well. For the fact that we can sing your praise. We can open your word. That we have the Bible in a language that we can understand many translations of it.

And again, Lord, we recognize that this is a great privilege that sometimes we overlook. And even as we come together this evening, we do so not in need of anything.

We are not hungry. We are not thirsty. We are not fearful of our safety. But we live in an environment which is safe and comfortable.

[8 : 16] And for that, Lord, we pray that you would help us to remember that. We pray for those whom you have allowed to be over this time. Those in authority.

It is possible for us to live quiet lives and godliness without freedom to worship.

And as we have read even one example of brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering. We think of those in Egypt and in many places in the world where it is dangerous to lift up the name of Jesus.

We pray for those like that widow that shared her story. Hungry and fearful for safety. Fearful for the well-being of her children.

We pray for her, Lord, and we thank you that through your people, like Barnabas said, they are able to be reached both practically and spiritually.

[9 : 20] We thank you for the faith that that woman had, recognizing that the Lord is the one who supplied her needs. And for the little girl, like Barnabas said, we thank you for the love of her children.

We thank you that she has a Bible in her hands. We pray that you would speak to her, that you would bless her. And as she grows up, she would know and trust her creator. From the days of her youth onwards, all the days of her life, however long or short that may be.

And we pray for those in countries across the world who long for Bibles but who cannot have them. Places where it is against the law. Places where it is just not possible to read the scriptures in a language that is familiar.

And we ask, Lord, that you would minister to them. We thank you that you are the God who speaks to us through creation. You have put eternity in the hearts of men and women and boys and girls.

You have given us signs that cause us to look to the God who is behind the beauty of creation. And we pray, Lord, that even in these places that are cut off still from the gospel, we ask that you would be ministering supernaturally in the power of your spirit.

[10 : 32] Lord, that you would be creating a soul of thirst that will be met in Christ as Christ is shared. And as your people seek to reach out to unreached areas, we ask that you would guide them and that you would lead them and that you would open doors that they may find a way through.

So we pray for those who suffer. We ask that you would sustain them. We pray for those who are in countries where the name of Christ is not able to be said. We thank you that in spite of the restrictions placed upon them, in spite of the laws that prohibit the gospel spread, we see so often that the gospel just grows at an even faster rate when the authorities tries to close down.

So we ask, Lord, for the spread of the gospel in this place and the community that we are part of, across the nation and across all nations.

Be at work, Lord, we pray. Build your church. We thank you that that's your promise. And we thank you that the gates of hell will not prevail. So hear our prayers.

Meet with us this evening, we ask, Lord. Draw near to us as we seek to draw near to you. Cleanse us from our sin as we confess it. Fill us with your spirit as we look for the help that comes from above.

[11 : 59] And bless us, we pray. And we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's turn now to the psalm that we sang, Psalm 137.

We'll read the whole of this psalm. By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There in the poplars we hung our harps.

For there our captors asked us for songs. Our tormentors demanded songs of joy. They said, sing us one of the songs of Zion. How can we sing the songs of the Lord while on a foreign land?

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget this skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you. If I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.

Remember, O Lord, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. Tear it down, they cried. Tear it down to its foundations. O daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction.

[13 : 05] Happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us. He who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks. Amen.

And may God give us understanding as we study his word. We'll pray for a moment. Lord God, we do pray for understanding. We pray that as we take some time to think through this psalm, that you would open our minds, open our hearts.

Help us to understand. There are some things in it which we struggle with. But we pray, Lord, that you would help us with our struggles and that you would reveal to us more of who you are and more of what you would have us see.

So open our eyes, we ask. And we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Last week it was Anna's birthday.

She probably won't thank me for telling you that. But although it was her birthday, she was very keen that people wouldn't know. And she especially didn't want Stuart and Joyce to know.

[14 : 14] Stuart and Joyce are some of those who helped lead the YF. And the reason she didn't want them to know is that because at YF, part of the birthday celebration is to dig out old embarrassing photographs from over the years and then put them out on display in some presentation for all to see.

And all of us have these kind of photographs, don't we? These awkward photographs that show us wearing weird clothes which were fashionable. Well, maybe they were fashionable once, but they're certainly not fashionable now.

We all have these photographs where we're caught in one moment in time with this strange contorted expression on our face. And we know they're there. We know they're buried deep in old family albums, but we'd rather they weren't taken out.

We'd rather they weren't on display. And Psalm 137, for some, is a bit like that. It's a bit like that old embarrassing photograph that we'd rather wasn't aired.

It's what's called an imprecatory psalm. It's a prayer, but it's a prayer with curses called down on God's enemies and the enemies of God's people.

[15 : 34] And we know it's in the Psalter. But if truth be told, we struggle with it. And we struggle especially with verses like the last one.

So perhaps we'd rather be buried deep in the album of the Psalter and not take it out. But if that's what we wish for, if that's what we want, if that's what we think, then we're wrong.

Because Psalm 137 didn't find its way into the Psalter by accident. It wasn't an oversight that it's left in somehow. It's been left in very deliberately.

And so if we have a problem with this, the problem's with us. But hopefully as we try to study it this evening for a few minutes, if we try to study it humbly and reverently, remembering that God is the writer of this, we are not the judges of it.

And my prayer is that if we have problems in understanding or accepting this, these problems the Lord will help us to overcome. So that we don't leave it in the archives.

[16 : 55] But we use this Psalm as it was intended to be used, as a Psalm of praise and prayer. So the first point to look at as we come to this Psalm is we see that it's a Psalm of the persecuted.

It's a Psalm of the persecuted. Now, when we are comfortable as we in this place are, when we have the freedom to gather and worship without fear, and without the worry that the doors of the church are going to fly open and terrorists are going to burst in an open fire, when we can meet without the anxiety that government ministers are going to drag us off to work camps, then as we read a Psalm like 137, we may be tempted to say that some of the verses in the Psalm are unnecessary.

They seem a bit hard and a bit sharp. That's our perspective from a place of comfort and safety.

But this Psalm was inspired by the God who saw and who entered into the sufferings of his persecuted people.

This Psalm was penned through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by real people who were really suffering because of their faith in the one true God.

[18 : 29] So it was a Psalm of the persecuted and it was a Psalm for the persecuted. Now, what was going on at the time this Psalm was written? Or what were they reflecting on as this Psalm was written?

Well, it goes back to 587 BC. Jerusalem, the city of God, where God met with his people, it was attacked at that time.

It was destroyed. It was overturned. God's people were captured. They were taken off by force to Babylon, that country which was so anti-God.

They were forced into hard labour. They were thrown into what we would call work camps, I suppose. And the rivers of Babylon that we read of in verse 1, they were not rivers as such, they were canals.

And God's people, under the harsh supervision of the Babylonian authorities, were being forced to dig these canals.

[19 : 37] And so this Psalm, it's a page from the diary of God's people from the Babylon days. It's a Psalm of the persecuted.

Spurgeon, when he writes in his introduction to this Psalm, he addresses those who find fault with the imprecatory nature of the Psalm.

And he says this, he says, let those find fault with it who have never seen their temple burned, their city ruined, their wives ravished, and after their children slain.

They might not perhaps be quite so velvet-mouthed if they had suffered after this fashion. It is one thing to talk of the bitter feeling which moved captive Israelites in Babylon, but quite another thing to be captive ourselves under a savage and remorseless power which knew not how to show mercy, but delighted in barbarities to the defenceless.

The Psalm, says Spurgeon, is a fruit of the captivity in Babylon and has often furnished expression for sorrows which else had been unutterable.

[20 : 58] So that's the context here. God's people were suffering, they were being persecuted, and this was a Psalm for those who were being persecuted.

And let's remember that persecution still happens today. Let me share just a wee bit about Nigeria.

The headline from the Barnabas magazine is Embattled Christians of Nigeria. And the picture that is painted as the article begins is a harrowing one.

It says this, It was an occasion for joy and celebration. when the threat of terrorist attack and COVID could be forgotten for a little while.

Christians gathered in the Nigerian village of Kukumdaji to rejoice in the marriage of a young couple and pray for their happiness at the start of their new life together.

[21 : 58] At around midnight, the laughter stopped and the screaming began. Heavily armed Fulani militants roared into the festivities on motorbikes, gunning down guests at random.

By the time the terrorists sped off into the night, 21 Christians were dead and another 28 were injured. persecuted. It is as if the lives of Christians no longer matter, said the pastor from that church.

Persecution is ongoing. God's people still know the acuteness of suffering in some places in the world and this is a psalm of, it's a psalm for the persecuted, it's a psalm of lament for those who are suffering.

So it's a psalm of the persecuted, that's the first point. The second point we see here is that this is a psalm of pain.

Point number two, this is a psalm of pain. And it's a song, you know, we remember it, it's a prayer but it's a song. And some of the most powerful songs ever written are not these kind of bouncy pop songs that are catchy and go around in your head.

[23 : 20] Some of the most powerful songs that our minds go to are sad songs, they're laments that are pulled from the depths of a painful experience and sometimes these are the songs that we need.

We need these laments. Calvin said since the Lord's people had to endure ignominy for 70 years because this persecution that we're talking about here that they were suffering under was not short term, it was 70 years.

So Calvin said since the Lord's people had to endure ignominy for 70 years, this lament was necessary to bring fortitude to their fainting minds.

This is a psalm of pain. Kidner, the commentator, says every line within it is alive with pain whose intensity grows with each strophe to the appalling climax.

And so we hear in this psalm, especially as it begins, well as it goes all the way through, we hear that note of pain. Verse 1, By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.

[24 : 31] There on the poplars, these trees, willow trees, we hung our harps. For there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy.

They said, sing us one of the songs of Zion. How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?

We hear pain in these words and actually before even we hear anything in terms of an expression of the pain that God's people were going through, we see pain in their posture as they sit.

Weersby tells us that sitting was the official position for mourning and the Jewish exiles felt and acted like mourners at a funeral.

So as we look in at God's people, they're sitting in that posture of mourning, they're grieving, they're in pain. We can see it from a distance even as we look in. It's what we see, but what do we hear from God's people?

[25 : 39] Well, the first thing in verse 1 we hear is weeping. as they remember better days in Zion, when they were able to come together in worship and praise of the one true God, when they were able to come together in fellowship and freedom, they think back on these days, they recall these days fondly, and as they remember them and the blessing that was in them, they weep when they consider where they're at now.

That was what was causing the pain. weeping. Lane, the commentator says, it was not the hardness of the work and the bitterness of slavery for which they wept, but their separation from Zion and the place where they met God.

That's what they most missed as they wept as the psalm begins. That's what caused the weeping. And I wonder just if I pause for a moment to apply this point.

Is that what we've most missed in the last few months? When we've been under restriction, albeit much more comfortable than anything they knew. Is this what we've most missed in the last few months?

Not the travel, the freedom to travel. Not the shops and the variety that we would get in the cities when we went there. Not the holidays that we would go and enjoy, but have we missed above everything else the separation that we've had to endure from God's house and from God's people?

[27 : 19] That's what they missed. And so we hear weeping that expresses something of the pain that that had caused in their experience.

And then what do we hear after the weeping in verse one? Well, the next thing we hear is nothing. We hear nothing. The musical instruments, the harps which once they used to praise the Lord with, they're now hanging up on the trees.

Verse 2. And there is this deep, heavy silence. till we hear weeping and then we hear nothing.

We hear silence. And then the silence is broken with the taunts and the mocking of their captors as they laughed at God's people.

And they said to God's people, go on, sing us one of your happy clappy songs. sing us one of your songs about how your Lord gives you joy.

[28 : 31] Sing us one of your songs about how great your God is, about how he protects you and how he rescues you and how he's your refuge and how he's your strength, how he's your helper.

Sing us one of these songs about your God being your shield and your protector. Some protection he's given you. Eves in the commentator says their request was sarcastic and for God's people to humor them would be like rubbing salt into open wounds as well as encouraging the enemy to continue in their blasphemous activity.

Their musical instruments would remain hung up on the trees. To God's people, we see them sitting there in silence.

They refuse to play. They refuse to sing. They will not allow God's name to be blasphemed. There's this prolonged silent protest.

And so that's the context here. And when we think about that and when we try and put ourselves in some way in their shoes, we can understand how this would have been painful.

[29 : 48] painful. It would have been painful for them to have been dragged away from their homes and watched their homes burn as they've been dragged away.

It would have been painful for them to be treated in this way, painful for them to be kept as prisoners against their will, painful to have to work from dawn till dusk in these work camps, digging canals.

But actually the real pain they felt, the real pain that caused the psalm to be written was the pain of hearing the name of their God being mocked and blasphemed.

That was the root of the pain that they were going through. God's name was being trampled. We see the same kind of thing actually in David.

That was his outlook. Remember in 1 Samuel 17, Goliath the giant, the Philistine, he's shouting the odds. He's trashing the name of God.

[31 : 00] And God's people, all these mighty warriors, they're shrinking back fearfully. And then up comes David. Young lad, small, but he's wild.

And he's ready to fight this giant. He's ready to put himself in the place of danger. Now, why is he ready to do that when nobody else would? Well, he was ready to fight because what he could hear was Goliath speaking against the name of his Lord.

God's love. And that was painful for David to hear and it moved him to action. And I want to ask myself the question before I ask it of any of you.

How often do we feel this kind of pain? Because the reality is we live in modern day Babylon. much of what we saw in Babylon we see around us.

We meet many versions of Goliath in our own experience day to day who curse and who mock the name of God almost constantly. On a daily basis we can see God's word being disregarded.

[32 : 23] We can see his laws being trampled. So we actually have plenty of opportunity in the context that we live in to feel the pain that the psalmist felt.

But I think the truth often is that we feel more pain when our name is not treated with respect. I think if we're honest we often feel more pain when our desires are not granted.

When we are not given the recognition and the approval and the affirmation that we feel that we are due. And as long as we are more interested in our name and our little kingdoms and our comfort and our security then a psalm like this psalm 137 will seem very extreme to us.

We find it hard to enter into. So in part this psalm actually is a diagnostic tool. It helps us to gauge how much we really care about the name of God and the honour of God.

God how much are we pained when God's name is taken in vain? How much are we pained when God's word is set aside?

[34 : 01] These are questions to wrestle with. This is a psalm of persecution. It's a psalm of the persecuted. It's a psalm secondly of pain.

The third thing here is it's a psalm of perseverance. And we see that from verse 5 into verse 6. The psalmist says, If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.

The right hand was the hand that the psalmist would have used to play the harp. So he's saying, if I forget you, there's going to be no tunes to play. There'll be no music to make.

verse 6. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy. Again, the tongue obviously is what the psalmist used to sing.

So he's saying, if I forget you, if I forget Jerusalem, there'll be no songs to sing. There'll be no real joy in my life.

[35 : 06] And it's from that pool of joy that songs rise up. And essentially what the psalmist is doing here is he's preaching to his own soul. And he's saying to his own soul, remember God.

Remember Jerusalem. Remember that place where God met with his people. Remember that place where God made atonement for sin. Remember to persevere, he said, to his own soul.

Remember that my highest joy is not found in things, it's not found in experiences, is, but it's found in going on with the Lord. That's what he's saying, that's what he's preaching to his own soul.

Now, why is he saying that? Well, the reason he's saying that is because he knew that many of God's people who were taken into Babylon, they did forget Jerusalem.

They did forget God, they did not remember. Some of God's people, they forgot the Lord very quickly and they pursued joy in other things and other places.

[36 : 19] They didn't persevere, they went back. And that was the easiest thing to do. See, for the committed and devoted follower of God, Babylon was a hard place to live.

It was a painful place to be. But if one just gave up and stopped following the Lord and turned back into the ways of the world, there was plenty of things in Babylon to keep you occupied.

There were good jobs to be had, there was great education, fine dining, there was the arts, there was entertainment. And these are the kind of things which if we make them the ultimate thing, they can very quickly cause us to forget God and stop persevering.

And many did back then. Many of God's people, they forgot God. Remember from our studies in Zechariah going back I don't know, a year or so.

Remember when we saw in Zechariah's day when the door of Babylon which had been locked opened back up. Many of God's people who now had the opportunity to go back to Jerusalem, they didn't go.

[37 : 50] Only a small proportion of God's people left Babylon when they could to go back to the place that God would have them be because over the years they hadn't been persevering with the Lord. They hadn't been keeping on, keeping on.

And I want to ask the question of us all, are we persevering? Are we keeping on, keeping on with the Lord?

Because I fear that for many this season may be a Babylon season season. Because no one really sees if we are in worship on the Lord's day.

And no one in this particular season in life, in COVID time, really knows how anyone else is properly doing. Because for a long time we haven't been able to meet together.

We haven't been able to encourage each other. We haven't been able to hold each other to account when we see a brother drift off, as we do. We're those who are prone to wander, we often sing it, don't we?

[39 : 02] And so at the moment, I think this is a season where there's a battle going on. A battle that's raging against us, keeping on, keeping on.

And this is something that the psalmist felt in Babylon back in that day. He felt the pull of Babylon. He felt the temptation to pull on the handbrake and park up in the world for a while.

But he determines, and there's real determination in this point, he determines, in verses 5 and 6, as he preaches this psalm within his own soul, he determines that he will not forget God, but he will remember the Lord.

Yes, he may be living in Babylon, but he will remember Jerusalem. And let's be encouraged to take this psalm and to use it as a song that we sing and preach to our own souls often.

We must not forget Jerusalem. We must not forget that place where Jesus went to a cross for us. that place where Jesus made atonement for our sin, that place where he made it possible for us to know the joy, the highest joy of our salvation.

[40 : 30] We live in a world, we live in a place a lot like Babylon that would cause us through a thousand different techniques to forget God. So let's, with the psalmist, say, I will not forget, but I will remember the Lord.

It's a psalm of perseverance. Fourthly, it's a psalm of punishment. Verse 7, the psalmist is speaking to the Lord and he says, Remember, O Lord, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell.

Tear it down, they cried. Tear it down to its foundation. Now, what's the psalmist doing here? Well, he's going back in his mind to the time when Jerusalem was destroyed.

He's remembering the Edomites. He's remembering these people from Edom, how they allied themselves with God's enemies, Babylon. And when God's people were being savagely attacked, when Jerusalem was under siege, they were watching gleefully.

If you want an insight into the horror of all that, you can read about it in Numbers 20 or Amos 1, Ezekiel 35, or the Weebook of Obadiah.

[41 : 49] I'm not going to any of these tonight, but you can do that and get insight if you want to see the picture that's been painted here. The people of Edom, they were very much against God's people.

They gloated over the destruction of Judah. As Jerusalem fell, they're shouting gleefully like diabolical cheerleaders, tear it down, tear it down.

And so the psalmist says to the Lord, remember what they did. The psalmist takes these charges against Edom and he presents them to the Lord.

He takes this to the Lord in prayer, rather than let these thoughts embitter his own heart, rather than let these thoughts mutate into something that will drive him to violence.

He takes these things to the Lord in prayer. He doesn't gather an army of vigilantes to seek revenge. He remembers that vengeance is mine, says the Lord.

[42 : 57] So he hands them over in prayer to the Lord, who would punish those who don't repent. And we might read verse 7 and be slightly uneasy about it.

We might ask the question, this prayer against their enemies, is this not a wrong prayer? Is it a wrong prayer to pray that God will bring justice to those who will not repent?

Well, no, I don't think it's a wrong prayer. It's definitely not a wrong prayer. It's a right prayer. God is a God of justice. And he sees all things.

And when there is sin and cruelty, and cases like this that the psalmist is presenting, where there is no repentance, then God will not forget.

But he will remember and he will punish sin. That's why there is a real place called hell, for those who will not repent, but who determine to hang on and boast about the sin.

[44 : 14] That's within them. So the psalmist, he calls to God and he cries to God for punishment for these people.

Does that make you think badly of God? If it does, then let me say the problem is with you, not with God. Think about it.

Would a God who didn't care about justice be worthy of worship? No, he wouldn't. Would a judge that had no concern that the law be upheld and punishment be given to those who commit offenses, would that judge be a good judge?

Well, no, he wouldn't. So this prayer is a right prayer. It's a prayer that's in keeping with the character and the will, the justice of God.

So it's a psalm of punishment for those who will not repent. The final thing here is we see it's a psalm of prophecy.

[45 : 26] As we look on the psalm, we see the hostility of Babylon as they persecute the people of God.

That's so clear within the psalm. We might ask the question, well, this is a moment in time, but what happened of Babylon? Did they ever repent? And the answer is no, they never repented, not ever.

And so what comes next where there's no repentance? repentance. Well, God didn't leave his people guessing. He spoke continually through the prophets, making clear that where there is no repentance, there will be judgment.

That's a general principle and it's specific to Babylon also. And if you go to Isaiah 13 or Isaiah 21 or Isaiah 27, we can read about how God speaks about the downfall of Babylon.

who did not repent. Now that downfall hadn't hit yet at the time this psalm was written. God is a God of great patience.

[46 : 36] We saw that this morning. He's a God who wants, who doesn't want any to perish. He wants all to be brought to repentance. But because Babylon would not repent, there would be judgment, there would be destruction.

So this final section is a word of prophecy. Verses 8 and 9. O daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us.

He who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks. Now when we read that last verse in particular, we cringe.

And we might say, as we reflect on it, what kind of brutal, bloodthirsty punishment is this? Who thought this up? That might be our question at this point, and the answer to that question is that it was none of God's people that thought this up.

This is not God's cruel, vindictive design. This is what was happening on the ground. This is what God's people had suffered through.

[47 : 55] This is what Babylon did to the infants of the people of God. Their children literally were being dashed against the rocks so that another generation of God's people would not rise up.

God's And as we look at that crime, as we investigate that crime, as we look for fingerprints on these atrocities that God's people had to bear, whose do we see?

Well, we see Satan's fingerprints all over this. Think back to Genesis 4 even, that the first attempt of Satan is seen in Genesis 4 to wipe out the godly seed through which the saviour would come.

So he uses Cain to murder his younger brother Abel in an attempt to wipe out the next generation.

And we see this repeated over and over again. Satan is constantly trying to wipe out God's people. evil. We see even in the Christmas story as Satan uses Herod to kill all the babies, to try to wipe out Jesus, the infant.

[49 : 19] But we know that he was unsuccessful. He was unable to seize the infant Jesus. He was unable to dash him against the rocks. But think about this. Think about this.

at Calvary, Jesus, he was not seized against his will, but he allowed himself to be seized by evil men.

He went willingly at Calvary to be dashed against the cross to suffer. God the Son to suffer, even to die for our salvation.

you know, for the Babylonians, horrific as it is, for the Babylonians to have to suffer such destruction, it wouldn't be disproportionate vindictiveness, it would actually be justice, it would be repayment to them for what they had done.

and on the cross, as Jesus was pierced, as Jesus was crushed, as Jesus was punished, as Jesus was wounded, as Jesus died, it was justice, it was proportional punishment, not for the sin that he had done, but for the sin that we have done.

[50 : 58] Isaiah 53, verse 5 says, but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

for a dark moment, Satan must have thought that he succeeded in wiping out the Son of God, and the hope of the people of God as Jesus died on that cross, and yet as Jesus rose, it was seen that Satan was the one who would be crushed eternally under the judgment of God.

Satan is the one that Babylon represents, and we can actually be thankful as we fast forward from Psalm 137 to Revelation 20, we're not going there but you can go there yourselves later, if we fast forward from Psalm 137 to Revelation 20, we see that Satan is doomed to destruction, he will be repaid for all that he has done to God's people over the ages, as he is cast into the lake of fire, the eternal punishment that is prepared for him.

that's God's revealed will to us in his word and we should pray for it. As John McSween, one of our elders often does, I can hear his prayer as he prays that the kingdom of God would be extended, built up, and that the kingdom of Satan would be destroyed.

That's a prayer that follows in the tracks of Psalm 137. It's a prayer that shouldn't embarrass us. It's a prayer that shouldn't be filed away in the archives.

[53 : 15] But this psalm, this prayer, is one that we should sing, it's one that we should pray. In Jesus' name. And for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Here is love as vast as the ocean, loving kindness as the flood, when the prince of life a ransom shed for us, his precious blood.

Whose love cannot remember, who can cease to sing his praise, he can never be forgotten through our time's eternal days.

grace. On the mount of crucifixion, phantoms open deep and wide, to the floodgates of God's mercy, flood a vast and gracious tide.

Grace and love like mighty rivers, poured in places and from above. And heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love.

[55 : 00] love. Here is love vast as the ocean, loving kindness as the flood, when the prince of life a ransom shed for us his precious blood.

Who his love will not remember, who can cease to sing his praise, he can never be forgotten through our time's eternal days.

And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore.

Amen.