

Sermon Outline

GOD OF THE DEFENSELESS (PSALM 68:5)

- I. Introduction
- II. The Wicked Melt before the Lord (Ps 68:1, 2)
 - A. Verses 1-2 offer us a vision of God as warrior and judge of his enemies.
 - Psalm 68:1-2: ¹ God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him!
² As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!
 - B. God is the Warrior King and Judge who destroys the wicked.
 - C. Those who hate God shall be driven away from him and dissolve before him (v 2).
 - D. This is a frightening picture of divine judgment, reminding us that God is strong, and powerful, and scary to his enemies. God is the consummate warrior.
 - E. All those who hate God and do not align with him will be destroyed, because God is absolute Truth, Life, and Wholeness.
- III. The Righteous Rejoice in the Lord (Ps 68:3, 4)
 - A. But to those who are righteous, clothed in the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ through faith, God manifests himself very differently.
 - B. Instead of melting away from God, the righteous rejoice in him and are absolutely enthralled by him.
 - Psalm 68:3: “But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!”
 - C. The righteous express their joy by singing praises to God.
 - Psalm 68:4: “Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him!”
 - D. From the viewpoint of the child of God, from the stand point of the sinner who has been saved by God’s grace and made righteous in Jesus Christ, God is the great Hero of his people.
- IV. This Is Our God! (Ps 68:5)
 - A. We come to verse 5 enters the picture. Let these words open the heart of God to you:
 - Psalm 68:5: “Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”
 - B. This verse presents us with yet another vision of God.

1. Unlike the vision of God as the powerful, unstoppable warrior who decimates his enemies, God manifests himself to his beloved people as “Father of the fatherless and protector of widows.”
 2. The Lord God wants his people to know him as Father of the fatherless, protector of widows, healing of the sick, guardian of the defenseless.
- C. What we have here is a theological statement, better yet, vision of what is in God’s own heart. This is how God wants his people to know him, to experience him.

V. Father of the Fatherless (Ps 68:5)

- A. First: The LORD God is “Father of the fatherless.”
- B. This statement is very relevant in patriarchal societies.
- C. Fathers are the points of reference for their households, the main providers and protectors.
- D. If the father was removed from the picture (through death or desertion), the family’s universe would be shaken.
- E. God wants his people to know him as “Father of the fatherless.”
—God desires to step into the void and be the Central Point of Reference to those who have lost their fathers, whether literally or metaphorically.
- F. If you are such a person, God is speaking to you today: *God delights to be your Father.*
 - God is the Father of the fatherless.
 - God is the Abba of those whose parents have died.
 - God is the Papa of the child whose own daddy or mommy have no time for her.
 - God is the Father of the believer who feels lost and without direction in life.

VI. Protector of Widows (Ps 68:5)

- A. Second: The LORD God is the “protector of widows.”
- B. In patriarchal societies like ancient Israel, the loss of a husband would leave the widow in a very vulnerable position.
- C. Although women enjoy more protections today, losing a spouse is not any easier.
- D. While some of us may have spouses that are still alive, we just might as well be widows and widowers because our spouses are abusive.
- E. If you are someone who has lost your spouse, either because he died, walked out on you, or beat up on you, God promises to you: “I am the protector of widows.”

VII. God of the Defenseless

- A. Is God only Protector of widows and Father of the fatherless? Is he not also the Healer of the sick, the Life of the dead?
- B. The reality underlying all these truths about God is that he is the *God of the defenseless*, he is *God for the defenseless*.

VIII. An Invitation to Defend

- A. If God is the God of the defenseless, his people must also be the protectors of the defenseless.

- The child who lives in absolute dread of his harsh parents
 - The child who is in despair because of great pressure from her parents to perform academically
 - The spouse whose husband or wife has become manipulative and abusive
 - The person who has a hard time finding employment
 - The person who is harassed at his or her place of employment
 - The church member who is lonely and has no friends
 - The church member who feels that he or she is not good enough to be accepted
 - The guilt-ridden church member who dares not show up in church
- B. Works of mercy are evidence of faith.
- James 2:15-17: “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,
¹⁶ and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”
- C. If we believe that...
1. Jesus died for our sins and continues to love us while we are still sinful;
 2. God will save us from bodily death,
 —we would grow in showing more concern for others.
- D. The Gospel frees us to love the defenseless with a love that embraces and cherishes the entire person, spirit and body (and everything in between).

IX. Fathered by God

In order to become merciful and protective people like God, we ourselves must first know mercy. We must first receive the mercy of the Father. We must know God for ourselves as Father of the fatherless, Protector of widows, and Savior of sinners. This requires us to acknowledge our own spiritual poverty, our own sinfulness, our own wretchedness and helplessness, our own loneliness—and then cry out to God for mercy. When we do, God will respond from his holy habitation. And he will give himself to us as Father and Protector in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today’s sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. What is God’s disposition to the unrepentant wicked?
4. Who are the righteous ones of God? How are they made righteous?
5. What is God’s disposition to his poor righteous ones? How does God want them to experience him?
6. Who are the defenseless that we look out for?
7. How do we become merciful people ourselves?
8. How does Ps 68:5 speak to you in this moment of your life?
9. Meditate on this verse. Memorize it. Pray through it.

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION VOWS FOR DEACONS¹

Questions for the Ordination of a Deacon

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice? If so, say, “I do.”

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow? If so, say, “I do and I will.”

(3) Do you accept the office of deacon in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the Church of which God has made you an officer? If so, say, “I do.”

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord? If so, say, “I do.”

(5) Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church? If so, say, “I do.”

Questions for the Congregation

Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a deacon, and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him? If so, say, “We do.”

¹ Vows are adapted from the PCA *Book of Church Order* 24-5.