

Psalms Session 6 – Psalms of Imprecation

Welcome/Prayer

Imprecatory Psalms (or Psalms of Wrath) are those that cry out to God for vengeance or destruction of an enemy.

Examples of these include Psalms 35; 36; 37; 94; 109; 137; 139

Read Psalm 35 as a focus scripture:

Questions for Reflection

1. What feelings did this psalm evoke for you?
2. How do you deal with the tension between God's wrath and God love?
3. What makes a text like Psalm 35 so difficult for you to hear and understand?

Reading and Discussion

Read the following psalms and the scriptures that go with them.

Psalms 36; 37; Exodus 13 – 15

Psalms 137; 139; Matthew 7; 11; 12

Consider the following questions:

1. In what ways are the psalms of imprecation consistent with the assigned biblical text? In what ways are the psalms of imprecation in tension with the biblical text?
2. Some Christians would prefer to believe that God is never wrathful, that God's love is pure affirmation. From the perspective of the Psalms, what is lost if God is only a God of love and not also a God of wrath? What are the dangers you see in confusing our anger with God's?
3. The enemies of which the Psalms speak are ordinarily human adversaries seeking to ridicule, harm, or kill the psalmist. What enemies do you have that are not human adversaries? Temptations? Aspects of our culture? Possessions? Objects of false worship? How do you bring them to God in prayer?
4. What's sentiments in the psalms of imprecation did you find most difficult to reconcile with the teaching of Jesus Christ?

Closing/Prayer