

The Lord, Avenger of His People

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's sovereignty and having a right attitude to experience the joy of the Lord, which is our strength and protection in times of trouble.

Duration: 33:37

Scripture: Psalm 35:1

Topics: "God's Justice", "Trusting in God's Sovereignty"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the theme of God as the avenger of His people in his sermon based on Psalms 35, addressing the current societal challenges and moral decline. He highlights the importance of prayer and trusting in God's sovereignty amidst rising persecution and confusion in the nation. Idleman encourages believers to maintain a righteous attitude, reminding them that while they may feel frustrated, God is aware of their struggles and will ultimately vindicate them. He stresses the need for humility and joy in the Lord, urging the congregation to focus on God's goodness and to speak of His righteousness daily. The sermon concludes with a call to action for believers to rise above negativity and to trust in God's plan for justice and restoration.

Transcript

Going through Psalm 35, because we're going through a lot right now, aren't we? As a nation, the title is The Lord, the Avenger of His People. I don't know how much you've been following different things, but they're getting ready to probably codify gay marriage. And even though the Supreme Court ruled that it's okay, permissible, that they acknowledge marriage between two women or two men, the Senate and Congress really didn't do anything about it.

And what they're getting ready to is vote on that. If they have enough approval, then what concerns people on that is then it becomes law. And that's where persecution could come in a little bit more if churches, hey, this is the law, you're breaking the law.

So it's one thing for the courts to say, we acknowledge same-sex marriage. It's another thing for it to become law and how it affects the schools, how it affects parenting, where you couldn't tell your kids that they can't date such and such, or that you're not agreeing with such and such. So there's just so much going on.

We look at the agenda, we look at the false narratives out there. Many people are living in fear. I know just so many people even recently with, well, obviously with Donald Trump announced last night, that just sends shockwaves as well.

And as much as I didn't really want to tie in a lot of this in, it's where we live. It's where the schools, I don't know if you've been watching some of the things in the school districts, the books they're allowing in some of the schools. Disgusting is a good word.

And how did this happen? And you can get so frustrated, especially when you're pastoring or ministering, you're putting in all this effort, and then for every step forward, it seems like there's steps back. But I believe as a church, praying and making a difference through God and His sovereignty, I truly believe that God can tilt the scale back in the other direction. You look at, I don't know how many of you knew this, but Carrie Lake was not a Christian years ago, a Buddhist, a very active feminist.

And look at where she's changed. The same with Tulsi, her last name out of Gabbard, yeah, from Hawaii. And again, not that these things, I'm not trying to be political, but I am trying to show you how leadership matters in the direction of our country.

Now we can see that this is a big deal when you're indoctrinating children and really perverting them, and child abuse, mental child abuse, and the sex education they're trying to push, and transgenderism, and transitioning, for kids to transition at 12 years old, and being able to change your sex, which actually is not possible. They live with pretty terrible ramifications for the rest of their life. You can't switch that order.

And then now if you say that you're a homophobe, or you hate people, and when did love become hate speech? And so there's a righteous indignation. There's a, Lord, hello, would you avenge your people? And that's why I like Psalm 85, 85, 35, we're getting there at some point. But if you have your Bibles, you can turn to Psalm 35.

What I like to do with psalms is meditate on them, kind of saturate your mind on them, because how it works, at least for me, it's not like reading a book. Say, okay, I got through it this week. Today I did my reading, my six chapters.

And you check it off, but for me, I like to just stop sometimes and really contemplate and really meditate. That's what that word in the Hebrew, when it talks about meditating on the word of God, blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, sit in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in it he meditates. It's not just reading.

It's pondering. It's contemplating. Chewing on it.

And as you chew on food, it becomes digestible. And that's what reading the Bible is to be for us. It's a time where we refocus and reevaluate.

And so, it was David going through a difficult season, so he said, I plead my cause. I plead my cause, O Lord. It's okay to be honest with God.

I get a little frustrated sometimes. I tell him, I'm a little ticked off right now. What's going on here? And Lord, I plead my cause with those who strive with me.

They fight against me. Those who fight against me, they take hold of shield and buckler. And those terms, a shield was something that you would block, of course, and then a buckler was a large shield that you could actually hide behind.

And that's why the Bible talks about the Lord being a shield and a buckler. We don't really understand it, but they understood it perfectly then, because you would get behind Him, and He would be your shield. You would hide behind Him, your buckler.

And so, he goes on to say, and stand up, Lord. Take hold of my shield and my buckler. He's saying, Lord, would You be my protection? You take my shield, because if You take it, nobody's gonna take that from You.

You hold me in place, and then stand up for me, for my help, because ultimately, nobody's going to stand up for You like God can. You don't trust in your church. Don't trust in me.

Don't trust in the church at large. I think we can see that now. You're gonna have to ask God to stand up for you, Lord.

Fight on my behalf, because He's the only one that will never leave you, never forsake you. Also, draw out the spear and stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, I am your salvation.

Basically, Lord, remind me how good You are. Remind me that You're my salvation. You're my strength.

You're my comfort. Grab hold of my sword and throw it at my enemies and take revenge upon them, because I can do nothing. David realized, as should we, that without God's help, without God's help, I don't have a lot of confidence in anything at all.

Many of you saw in the news that big crypto company that just went under. And so many people had life savings and trusting in this and just gone and trusting in the election that just happened, the red wave, came to a ripple. You know, and so many people are distraught.

And just today, I asked her this question. I said, you've gotta start trusting in God. His sovereignty is your sanity.

He knows what's best. And so he goes on to say, let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor. Something back in David's time, especially Bible times, dishonor was huge.

And it still is in China and places like that where there's honor. You know, your name means a lot, your character. And that's why with contracts, they wouldn't use that a lot in the Middle East.

It would be a blood covenant or a contract or my word is my honor. And people would really uphold their word above anything else. I've shared before many times with you guys.

I remember when my dad signed his first contract with the city of Palmdale. I think it was the 1980s. We drilled retention basins and put in these big dry wells for storm drains and different things.

And that was the first time he'd ever, in 12 years of business, never signed a contract. And I could tell you why, because if he said it, it was gonna happen. Even when he lost money, I saw him lose money on jobs.

He said, we're not gonna make anything on this, but that's the price I gave them. And so we don't understand as much now, but especially when David is writing, Lord, bring them to dishonor. Dishonor them, embarrass them, shame them.

Those who seek after my life. Let those people be turned back and brought to confusion who plot my hurt. God, I want you to confuse these people.

And God will often do that even now. The enemy brings in confusion, but you'll see one of the ways that God is disrupting the whole system when He's moving is confusion. You've got political parties fighting each other.

You've got this person fighting this person. You can't, and you just sit back and kind of laugh because God is up to something. God confused them.

Those who plot my hurt. And this is interesting because David wasn't taking vengeance. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

I do not like that verse. Can some of you remember old school? What would you do? Vengeance is mine, saith me. I'm gonna get them back.

I'm gonna slander. I mean, I just showed Abram, I think you and Tim, I just showed these websites out there calling me false prophets and stuff. And I wanna go on and get our attorneys on them.

And it's just like, avenge them and avenge them. It's just so ridiculous. And I wanna go get them.

And Lord, let me fix this. But that really, number one, it's the wrong spirit. It's the wrong heart.

God wants me to love them first, pray for them. And then when He avenges, it's very, very clean and quick often. And I've had Him just remove people completely that were poking fun at me weekly and doing these things and never hear from them again.

I don't know what happened to them. Maybe God got to them and showed them, hey, leave this guy alone. Please, God, fight my battles.

Let them be like chaff before the wind. And if you've ever farmed or have worked in the field, you know that the chaff is what blows away and that the wheat that they would use would fall to the ground. And so basically, Lord, blow them away.

Get them out of my life and away from me. And let the angel of the Lord chase them. Here we see another interesting calling in of the angel of the Lord, or the angel of the Lord's army, or that's where we get the word guardian angel sometimes from.

And it's actually pretty biblical to have angelic beings fight on your behalf, biblically speaking. That's God's warring. I don't think it's God in heaven often, it's His angels that are doing His bidding.

It's the angels that are warring. When Daniel was praying, they saw the angelic fights taking place. And I don't know exactly how it works.

I'm just glad they're on my side. But he's asking, Lord, let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery.

Boy, he's getting a lot out here, isn't he? He's pretty fed up. Dark and slippery. In other words, they can't see what they're doing.

Nothing is taking footing. Nothing is holding. They're falling upon themselves.

And let the angel of the Lord pursue them. For without cause, see, for without cause. That's one thing the Bible was clear on often, that without cause, that's someone you're persecuting or punishing the innocent.

And the Bible has a lot to say about that. God even says, I hate hands that shed innocent blood. And when the children of Israel, they began to give their children over to Molech, it was a hot idol, this metal idol.

The arms were like glowing. It was searing hot. And they would sacrifice their children on these hot arms of Molech.

And God would say, what you're doing has not even entered my mind. You're doing things that are so evil and debased that it's never even entered my mind. And so without cause, they have hidden their net from me.

In other words, it's talking about like how you would catch a bird or how you would catch an animal. They're trickery. They're deceit.

They're trying to stop certain people from doing God's will. For without a cause, they have no cause against me. They want to put me in a pit, which they have dug without cause.

Again, see, for my life. When the innocent goes before God and pleads His case, God listens. God listens to the cries of the innocent.

He is their avenger. He is the one who will see them through. Sometimes though, I mean, things get more difficult.

Sometimes things get more challenging. That's what I was thinking about when you heard, I don't know how many of you heard Sister Sarah's testimony. Listen to it on YouTube if you can.

Saturday, I think it was November 5th. And the whole time sitting there going, how did she put up with that for so long? You know, to be in a Chinese prison? There's no reason for her to be in there other than she wasn't following what the Chinese mandated a Christian, not really Christian, but churches should teach and what they should say. She was telling people what the Bible said.

And so she was pleading her cause month after month let destruction come upon Him unexpectedly and let His net that He has hidden to catch me, let it catch Himself. Into that very destruction, let Him fall. And you see also, when we get into Esther, the man who built the gallows, Haman built these gallows, this huge place to hang Mordecai.

Cause the Jew, he goes, I'm gonna hang him from these. And God reversed the plan. Esther went into a three-day fast and prayed for such a time as this, if I perish, I perish.

And the same gallows that he made to hang Mordecai, he himself was hung on. God will do that. God will do that.

And if things aren't happening in your time, doesn't mean God's not moving. Anybody wanna push God quickly through things? Just me? Lord, come on, what's going on here? And we might see it, I've said this before, we might see our nation continue to plummet down, get deeper into the moral cesspool. But it doesn't mean we give up.

It means we trust God and His sovereignty. We've also read the end of the book. We know how things obviously getting worse.

But I also believe that God can bring His revival fires from time to time and awakening and we're contending for those things. And that's what God will often do is to tilt that scale back into the favor of the light and people contending for the truth. And what concerns me a little bit about this topic is a Christian can have a good cause or have righteous indignation, but then they have a bad attitude.

And the grumbling and complaining will overshadow the other areas. For example, okay, I'm ticked off with what's going on, you fill in the blank, okay? I mean, where do you wanna start this list? Everything from, I better not say the jab, I'll get, YouTube will remove another video. So they must have people that go through these things.

Anything from that, let's call it something in the future, I'll let you know. From that to politics to the LGBTQ issues to, I mean, or in your workplace, whatever it is, but if you have a bad attitude, grumbling, complaining, it's gonna be really hard to get God to move on your behalf until you deal with that. And I see it a lot.

I have people come in, it's actually sad, it really is. I leave sometimes, I'm just, Lord, I don't know what to do. And they come in the prayer room and you can just tell they're ticked off.

Yeah, but, you know, I know, yeah, but, their attitude's wrong. I'm just telling you, telling you, because I love you. If anybody can have a critical attitude, it's me.

I know, I've struggled with it daily sometimes. Oh, and you just get cynical, you get negative. Watch the polls and you see Herschel Walker and you watch what's going on, you're like, oh, God, help me, what is going on here? But the attitude, that's what tilts the scale, because I can have a right cause but a wrong attitude and I have to deal with my attitude first.

So if God has been convicting you about a critical heart, an overbearing heart, a fearful heart, always conspiracy theories, unfearful, and always down and always being negative, I would encourage you to repent to that and change that and allow the fruit of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to come in and fill you with love and joy and peace and contentment, gentleness and kindness, because that's how you make a difference. I was asked today, I don't know how many of you heard of Victor Marks? Somehow I ended up on his podcast today and we were talking about this very topic on pastors that are not saying anything or people, Christians, are getting bitter and resentful and we're angry but we're not humble. God doesn't bless anger, He blesses humility and then from that can come righteous indignation.

Because what I do and what you do comes often from anger, correct? I mean, if things are going great, political things are going great, everybody's coming to know the Lord and things are going great, there's not a lot of anger, righteous indignation to make a difference and Martin Luther was angry in 1517 in Wittenberg, Germany. John Calvin was angry. Wesley was ticked off.

Whitefield was kicked out of churches. Did you know these guys that we read and we like were not allowed to preach in churches? They got so ticked off they went and preached in open fields but their attitudes were right. Amy Carmichael, you should read her story on the mission field, her attitude, getting her attitude right.

And so we can have these right causes but wrong attitudes and that's where it's gonna be, is God's gonna say, hey, until you get that right, in personal testimony, I know He's held me back many times until my attitude's right, especially preaching. Lord, I don't wanna go up there in anger. I'm gonna have Pastor Abram preach this Sunday because I'm a little too upset, right? And so I've had to deal with those things because it's normal to feel those things but you don't wanna hold on to them.

Then they begin to define you and then you're critical to your spouse, you're mean-spirited to your children, you're negative and you're toxic. Toxic, toxic, toxic. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord.

Let's go back, let's go back, let's put this in context. He's ticked off this whole tirade here. Okay, then you can switch to the next screen.

Then it's about, it's like, okay, I released it all. I feel better now. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord.

Well, he really switched. But see, that's how it works with praying and meditating. You let God have you throw up, basically, verbally.

You let God, Lord, here's how I'm feeling. Here's what I'm going through. Here's the challenges.

I don't understand, I don't know what to do. Would you avenge them? Would you be my rear guard? Would you be my protection? I don't know what to do with these jokers that are putting me down or these people coming against us. God, I don't know what to do.

And after you get that out and God begins to rebuild you from the inside out and redefine your thinking and get you on the right path, then the joy will follow. The joy of the Lord. David goes on to say, the joy of the Lord is my strength.

The joy of the Lord is my strong tower. The joy of the Lord is my buckler that I hide behind there. There's something about the joy.

When somebody has the joy of the Lord, it's pretty hard to put out their fire. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord. And I also, this could get real creative because how we read these often, if you look at the Hebrew, exactly the Hebrew layout of the sentence structure and different things, sometimes they're saying things a little bit differently.

And it's almost like he's commanding himself. My soul shall be joyful. He's basically telling himself what he's going to do.

It's like, Shane, you're going to be filled with joy towards the Lord. I'm telling myself, self, flesh, shut your mouth. Be quiet in the negative, Nellie.

You go home. Judgmental Jerry, you go sit in the car and wait till services are over. I'm telling my soul to be joyful.

Joyful in the Lord. And because of that, it's going to rejoice in His salvation. I love that song Natalie sang about the salvation and rejoicing in that.

Why are we so bored during worship, many people? God has set us free. His Son has died for us. And we might as well just be sitting, watching a boring movie because it doesn't register.

Sometimes you have to tell yourself to be joyful, filled with joy. Rejoice in His salvation. All my bones, basically all of my being, it was the same David who said, blessed are the bones that you have broken that they would rejoice in you when he was caught with Bathsheba and God confronted him.

And even my bones hurt. My bones are weak. Blessed are is the name of the Lord.

It's the same type of imagery here. All of my bones shall say, Lord, who is like you? All of my body is, I'm getting excited. I'm encouraging myself in the Lord.

David would encourage himself in the Lord often, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him. The Lord is your Redeemer. The Lord will set you free.

The Lord will go to court on your behalf. Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him. So God will be the strength in these difficult times.

And poverty often, it's not just poor financially, although it could be. It's also a person could have wealth but be taken advantage of others. People could come and just walk all over them, steamroll them.

And God said, God is gonna still guard those and guide those who are poor, probably financially, of course, but also poor in spirit. We already know from the Bible that God blesses those who are poor in spirit. Fierce witnesses rise up.

Here he goes again. He's upset. Does that sound like you ever? Get off your chest, but then you get upset again.

Fierce witnesses rise up. They ask me things that I do not know. Oh, that challenging, that challenging.

They're asking me things I do not know. They're coming against me. They're attacking me.

I don't even know how to answer them. Any of you been there before? If not, get into the ministry. They reward me evil for good.

So I give them good. They reward me for evil. To the sorrow of my own soul.

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. And in other words, I mourned for them. When they were sick, I mourned for them.

I prayed for them. And it sounds like he's been hurt by somebody he was close to. Anybody relate to that in the church? Actually, those who hurt us the most are often those closest to us.

Those in the church. That's where that term backstabbing comes from. With an enemy, you're ready.

You know, you get stabbed. Okay, I was expecting that. That didn't hurt too bad.

But when it comes from within, when those you trust the most, because those you trust the most, that's why it hurts the most. Because there's more to lose there. And instead, they reward me evil for good to the sorrow of my own soul.

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I humbled myself with fasting. And see, that's a key thing with fasting that a lot of people don't realize.

It's not works-based. It's not trying to be spiritual. It's recognizing, God, I need to humble myself.

And one of the best ways to do that is through prayer and fasting. And my prayer would return to my own heart. In other words, as he was praying for these people, as he was reconciling this relationship, strength returned to his own heart.

I paced about as though he was my friend or my brother. I bowed down heavily as one who mourns for his own mother. And so again, he's filling here the pain.

Probably betrayal. Probably somebody just really was trying to take him out. I mean, the Old Testament was brutal.

We think we have a bad now, but go live back then. It was bloody, it was brutal. And he recognizes here that somebody has turned on him.

But in my adversity, they rejoiced and they gathered together. Attackers gathered against me and I did not know it. They tore at me and did not cease.

With ungodly mockers at feast, they gnashed at me with their teeth. So see, we find out what he's talking about here. How did they come against him? They came against him with mocking.

And that's one thing we wanna get across to our young adults and our teens in Ignite is prepare for mocking as you get older. We need to pray for them because it's not like when I was younger, or you, or even some of you who aren't too old, in your 30s, how in high school, the mocking now that it's getting even worse with the TikTok and Instagram and Twitter, they're mocking your looks, mocking this, everything's poking fun at. Bowling's getting huge, suicide rate is alarming on the young adults because of the mockery.

And there's so much at a young age, you're just learning who you are at 14, 15, 16, and that you need encouragement and not belittling. And that's why the mocking is so difficult because they put so much emphasis on the words of others. And not a lot has changed in some adults.

They can't handle a lot of mocking. They get hurt too easily. They gnashed at me with their teeth.

Oh Lord, how long? How long will you look? God, have you ever said that? I'm saying it right now. How long will you look upon what's going on? Lord, look at this. Can't you act on our behalf? Can't you do something massive and cataclysmic? So have any of you been here before? How long? And you know, if we stop and think about it, I know we can get really negative on what's going on, but there's a lot of positives too.

You know, I've talked about before, I don't want to get into a lot of that now, but it seems like the people I mentioned at the beginning of this service, you know, coming to know the Lord, standing up for things that are right, you can see what maybe is going on with Twitter now, at least my posts aren't getting banned

and shut down and things. And God's raising up voices and raising up movements and young adults and others. And you see that there is some things to be rejoicing in.

And I hope you realize that our hope is not in those people, but it is good to see that God is raising up certain people that will help fight in these areas. So Lord, how long will you look on? Rescue me. Rescue me from what? Their destructions.

My precious life from the lions. I will give you thanks in the great assembly. I will praise you among many people.

In other words, he's saying no matter what happens, I will praise your holy name. I will lift you up and you alone. Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies, nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause, for they do not speak peace, but they devise deceitful matters against the quiet ones in the land.

Now be encouraged, if people are devising things against you, God knows. God might allow it for a little while. God might even allow it to look like they're prevailing.

God might even maybe have them think that he's not doing anything and you feel the pressure of this. But in the end, God will get the last laugh. God is the avenger of his people.

God is working behind the scenes. And that's why it's so important to keep the right attitude, to keep the right focus, to keep persevering until we see that through. But they devise deceitful matters against the quiet ones in the land.

They also open up their mouth wide against me and they said, aha, aha, our eyes have seen it. In other words, they're trying to falsely accuse him of things he didn't do. And we're seeing that play out in our culture as well.

This you have seen, oh Lord. Do not keep silent, oh Lord. In other words, hey God, did you see that? Did you see what's going on? Let me remind you, I need you.

Do not be far from me. Lord, stir up yourself and awake to my vindication. Come on God, hurry up a little bit.

To my cause, my God and my Lord, vindicate me. Oh Lord, my God, according to your righteousness and let them not rejoice over me. Let them not say in their hearts, ah.

Just like basically, we got our way basically, so we would have it. Let them not say we have swallowed him up. In other words, don't let their fear, don't let their intimidation intimidate me.

Don't let their plans come to fruition. Don't let them be successful in this area of attacking me. And I think he goes on to say, let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who rejoice in my hurt.

And let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who exalt themselves against me. Let them shout for joy and be glad who favor my righteous cause. And let them say continually, let the Lord be magnified.

Boy, if we could say that every day, let the Lord be magnified. Who has pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. Did you know that's biblical? God has pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

But for just a minute, remove the dollar signs. That word has a much fuller meaning. The Lord takes pleasure in seeing his servants flourish or their children prosper, or what he does have significant results, have fruit.

It's not necessarily bling bling. But I believe also God will bless his people financially from time to time too. It's a whole nother teaching of course, but that prosperity is God's people are prosperous.

Their children are honored. Even though there's difficulties and challenges, the kids are raised in a godly home and there's favor upon their life. Have you ever had the favor of God? It's amazing when you have the favor of God.

Again, it doesn't mean life is perfect, but there's a prosperity there. What you're doing has benefits and there's fruit and it's very rewarding. And he said, my tongue shall speak of your righteousness and of your praise all the day long.

And that's what I want to challenge you with tonight. Even maybe for some of you beginning tonight, but wake up in the morning and my tongue shall speak of your righteousness, how good you are Lord, and praise you all the day long. And start to push out the negative with the positive.

I'm not being positive thinking right now. I'm just saying, it's so negative right now, but Lord, I will praise you. You are good, Lord.

You are a good God. Look how blessed we still are in our nation. Look at what you're doing.

You're raising up godly leaders and good churches and families. You're making a difference in this darkness. Lord, show me how I can make a difference.

Get rid of my critical spirit and my negative attitude and Lord, begin to just bless me as I bless others. And Lord, I want to lift you up and I want you to be exalted in my life today.

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