

## Of Mercy and Judgement

### Psalm 101

- Today, a Psalm of David
- David begins the chapter singing
- Then he makes some declarations about himself
- Asks a question
- Tells us more about how he will behave
- Reveals his feelings
- And finally, says more about what he will do
  
- Some of the Psalms are like this
- They are songs with a variety of ingredients
- Psalms of David are often quite personal
- We get a glimpse of David's relationship with God
- As he reveals his weaknesses
- His fears
- And sometimes his commitments
  
- We're more on the commitments side of things in Psalm 101
- But there's also some praise to God
- As David sings "Of mercy and judgment"
- Which is our theme today
  
- It might be good for us to read the entire Psalm first
- Then we'll take a closer, verse-by-verse look...

### Psalm 101

1 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.  
2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.  
3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.  
4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.  
5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.  
6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.  
7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.  
8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

- There's a good variety of ideas to explore in this Psalm of David
- Beginning in Psalm 101:1 next...

## Psalm101:1

1 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

- God's mercy or lovingkindness would make the top of nearly any list of praise topics
- Whether it is the fact that He rescues us from a punishment we deserve
- Or it is the fact that He treats us better, in every circumstance, than we deserve
- Singing of His mercy makes sense
- He is a God rich in mercy
  
- But David also sings of His judgement or His justice
- That is, He declares a verdict
- And it is always the right verdict
  
- He has no bias that gets in the way
- He sees everything perfectly - no need for a witness
- And He knows our thoughts and intentions
- Injustice is not possible with Him
  
- These are definitely attributes worth singing about
  
- David then has something to say about himself...

## Psalm 101:2

2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

- David will be circumspect
- The first line here could be re-stated this way: "I will ponder the way that is blameless"
- We know he is talking about integrity of heart an action as the verse goes on
- But the passage is broken up with a question
- "...when will you come to me?"
  
- One commentary had this to say about the question...

"Perhaps this would be better rendered, 'When thou dost come unto me;' that is, When thou dost visit me and my dwelling, thou shalt find that these are the principles which regulate and govern me in my house."

- David will be circumspect
- And walk with integrity in his house
- If the Lord visits, he will find this is the case
  
- And remember, David understands the Lord's judgement
- That it is never wrong
- So, it is quite a commitment

- But there's more...

Psalm 101:3

3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

- David will not look upon those things that are wicked or worthless
- Things that are not worthy to be looked upon
- He will do this because he hates the work of those that fall away or turn aside
- This could be those that turn to idolatry
- They ascribe ultimate value to that which is worthless
- David hates that
- He won't do it
- He doesn't want this attitude or this perspective to cling to him
- That's why he will steer clear, with his eyes, and based on what has come before, his actions
- This commitment is one that hits home in our culture
- I wonder how many worthless things pass in front of our eyes?
- In this visually-driven society, there is much our eyes should avoid
- And many running after idols, both literal and figurative
- Now something about David's heart...

Psalm 101:4

4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.

- Another reading might bring more clarity
- From the ESV...

"A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil."

- This declaration is not unlike the previous verse
- It is a commitment to stay away from evil
- Because it can affect our hearts
- Evil influences can pervert and distort our perspective
- We could go back and use the word circumspect
- To be clear-eyed and diligent to guard our hearts and our steps
- Devoting ourselves only to good - to that which God approves
- Loving it so profoundly as to leave wicked things far behind
- There are people that influence us...

Psalm 101:5

5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

- David takes a very dim view of those who slander a neighbor
- This is a person that makes everything in society worse
- They will often do so out of pride and arrogance
- Pride destroys relationships, small communities, and eventually more
  
- This is behavior David simply can't endure
  
- With that being said, remember the mercy in our first verse
- God is filled with mercy
- Even this person is not cut off from mercy
  
- But there are others about as well...

Psalm 101:6

6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

- David looked with favor on the faithful of the land
- Those following God were a ministry to him
- Their behavior was exactly the opposite of those previously mentioned
- Society was better because of their character
- And their influence encouraged David
  
- Others discussed in the next verse...

Psalm 101:7

7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

- Now David discussed those who lie and deceive others
- He takes a hard line on this behavior
- A king may take this position for obvious reasons
- People often seek to lead astray those who have authority
  
- David will not allow this to continue in his sight
  
- One more verse today...

Psalm 101:8

8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

- I found the text of one commentary really helpful with this verse

- Here's what David was likely saying...

"I will use my utmost diligence to reform the whole nation; but especially the place of my peculiar residence, which ought to be an example to the rest of my kingdom: taking care that all offenders be severely punished in the courts of justice; and, if there be no other remedy, cutting off those evil members, who have got an incurable habit of acting wickedly."

- In all this, David is seeking right and opposing wrong
- He commits to follow God's way, not his own
- As he declares an intention to live with righteousness and integrity in his house
- And in Israel

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2023*