

## **PARADOX OF FAITH**

Tuesday, April 17

Reading: Psalm 52

**Psalm 52:7** *"Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!"* **8** *But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever.*

The story behind this psalm is recorded in 1 Samuel 21-22. After King Saul tried several times to kill him, David fled from the palace. Hungry and unarmed, David went to the city of Nob where the priests who served at God's Tabernacle lived. They gave him bread and the sword of Goliath and sent him on his way. However, David lied and told the priests that he was on the king's business.

Doeg the Edomite had been at the Tabernacle that day. In order to gain favor with King Saul, he reported on David's presence and the help the priests had given him. Enraged, Saul took his troops and accused the priests of treason. Although they protested their innocence, King Saul ordered them to be executed. When his soldiers would not do the job, Doeg drew his sword and slaughtered the defenseless priests. Then he killed every man, woman, child, and animal in Nob. Only one man survived and reported to David all that had happened.

We can now understand David's harsh words in Psalm 52. David grieved over his part in this tragedy (see 1 Samuel 22:20-23). But he also knew that Doeg would not escape God's judgment. The villain's true love was for evil and deceit (52:3-4). His trust was in the wealth Saul could give him by destroying the lives of others (52:7).

In describing Doeg's ruin, David uses the imagery of a tree: God would snatch him up, pluck him out, and uproot him from the land of the living (52:5). By contrast, David is like "an olive tree flourishing in the house of God" (52:8). The olive tree can live for centuries and was often used as a picture of prosperity and well-being.

Here is a paradox of faith. Doeg seemed to be prospering from being in the king's favor while David was on the run and hunted. Doeg was rewarded for his wickedness while the innocent David was hiding in desert caves. Yet David is the one who is flourishing because of his trust in God's unfailing love (52:8). Doeg will be brought down "to everlasting ruin" (52:5).

Have you experienced this paradox in your life? Do you wonder why you are struggling while those around you who reject God are prospering? Let David's final words in Psalm 52 be your hope and prayer.

"I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever. For what You have done  
I will always praise You in the presence of Your faithful people. And I  
will hope in Your name, for Your name is good" (52:8-9)

**THRU THE BIBLE Reading: Ruth 1-4; John 9**