

Preaching the Psalms Series

(22)

Psalm 5

How to Deal with Lies and Slander,

Psalm 5:1-12

Psalm 5:1-12 (NASB)

¹“Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning.

²Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

³In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch.

⁴For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

⁵The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.

⁶You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

⁷But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.

⁸O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

⁹There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.

¹¹But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

¹²For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”

(Psalm 5:1-12) Introduction: since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan) on August 6 and 9, 1945, the world has lived in fear of nuclear destruction. The most dangerous weapon known to humanity, however, is far simpler and more common than sophisticated nuclear warheads. It has damaged and destroyed far more people than all the collective weapons of war in world history.

It is extremely deadly and each of us possesses it:

James 3:5-8 (NASB)

⁵“So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and *yet* it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!

⁶And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.

⁷ For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.

⁸ But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison.”

Sinful and self-centered people use words to ruthlessly destroy others. When we are stabbed by slander and lies, we usually feel helpless to defend ourselves. It is just impossible to know everybody who has heard an untrue rumor or story about us. It is even more impossible to control whether they believe it. Sinners enjoy a juicy morsel of gossip and are prone to believe the worst without caring to verify its truth. What can we do when others slander and lie about us?

In this prayer of David, the Holy Spirit, the great Inspirer of Scripture, shows us what to do when we are lied about and slandered. It stands as a timeless pattern for us to follow as long as we live in a wicked, sin-cursed world. **This is, *How to Deal with Lies and Slander*, [Psalm 5:1-12](#)**

1. Turn to the Lord for help (vv. 1-3).

2. Confess God’s holiness: Five facts (vv. 4-6).

3. Make a renewed commitment to be faithful in prayer and worship (v. 7).

4. Pray for three major things (vv. 8-12).

4. ([Psalm 5:8-12](#)) Pray for three major things.

[Psalm 5:8-12 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ “O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

⁹ There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰ Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.

¹¹ But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

¹² For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”

Although David realized that God could allow his defeat, he fervently prayed for God to deliver him and his loyal followers from Absalom’s armies. In these verses, David charges his enemies with being guilty of many sins, sins that God despises ([vv. 9-10 cp. v. 4-6](#)).

[Psalm 5:8-9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ “O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

⁹ There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”

[Psalm 5:4-6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

⁵ The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.
⁶ You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.”

a. Pray for God’s guidance: That He lead you in righteousness (vv. 8-9).

Psalm 5:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ “O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

⁹ There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”

When facing overwhelming trouble, some major decisions always have to be made. David knew this, and he feared making a wrong decision ([v. 8](#)).

Psalm 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ “O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.”

Therefore, he earnestly asked God to lead him according to His righteousness. The king realized that God had a *way* ([derek](#))—a path or road—for him to travel through this crisis. He needed God to *make that way straight*, to clear it of all obstacles. He wanted nothing to prevent him from seeing the way clearly and following it ([Proverbs 3:6](#); [Isaiah 40:3](#); [Isaiah 45:2](#)).

Proverbs 3:6 (NASB)

⁶ “In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.”

Isaiah 40:3 (NASB)

³ “A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.”

Isaiah 45:2 (NASB)

² “I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars.”

These obstacles included his own desires, emotions, and any ungodly counsel he might receive from others.

King David, like a prosecuting attorney, presented his closing argument against his enemies ([v. 9](#)).

Psalm 5:9 (NASB)

⁹ “There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”

He employed four physical terms that describe the entire process of their lying.

David paints a crude picture, but it accurately presents the sin of slander:

⇒Every word that proceeded from their *mouth* was a lie. Nothing they said was *faithful*—true, reliable, or trustworthy.

⇒They were *inwardly* corrupt. *Inward part* or *heart* (**qereb**) refers to the internal organs. Their destructive lies proceeded from hearts that overflowed with deadly poison.

⇒These poisonous lies traveled up their *throat* into their mouths. Their throat is described as an open or unsealed tomb or grave—one that is foul and allows the stench and decay of death to be released into the air.

⇒When this putrid poison reached their mouth, their smooth *tongue* deceptively twisted it into flattery. This was Absalom’s method of gaining support and turning the people away from David (**2 Samuel 15:1-6**).

2 Samuel 15:1-6 (NASB)

¹“Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him.

² Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, “From what city are you?” And he would say, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.”

³ Then Absalom would say to him, “See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king.”

⁴ Moreover, Absalom would say, “Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice.”

⁵ And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

⁶ In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so, Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.”

b. Pray for God’s justice: That God declare the wicked guilty—let them fall and banish them (vv. 10).

Psalm 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.”

David called upon *God* (**Elohim**—the all-powerful, almighty one) to return a guilty verdict against his wicked foes. *Destroy* (**asham**) is better translated as guilty. “*The primary meaning of the word `asham seems to center on guilt, but moves from the act which brings guilt to the condition of guilt to the act of punishment.*”

David specifically prayed for God’s retribution, that He execute justice by allowing his foes to perish by their own *counsels*—their own evil plans and devices.

He prayed that they would fall into the trap they had set for him, that they would hang on their own gallows, that they would perish by their own swords. God sometimes executes this form of ironic justice, as in the case of wicked Haman who sought to exterminate the Jews (**Esther 8:7**).

Esther 8:7 (NASB)

7 “So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, “Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and him they have hanged on the gallows because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews.”

David used the same descriptive word of his enemies’ sins, *multitude* (**rōb**), that he used of God’s mercy (**v. 7**).

Psalm 5:7 (NASB)

7 “But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.”

Psalm 5:7 (NASB)

7 “But as for me, by Your abundant **lovingkindness** I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.”

Psalm 5:7 (KJV)

7 “But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the **multitude** of thy **mercy**; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”

It is only through God’s mercy that we have access to Him. *Mercy* (**chesed**) is God’s unfailing, steadfast love, His unmerited favor and devotion to us. This trait stirs God to offer His covenant to us, and to unfaithfully keep His covenant with us. We may fail the Lord, but He never fails us. Mercy is one of His attributes, one of the qualities that reveals His unparalleled character. God is not stingy with His mercy; His house is filled with His steadfast love.

It is more than sufficient to cover our sin.

David used the same descriptive word of his enemies’ sins, *multitude* (**rōb**), that he used of God’s mercy (**v. 7**).

Psalm 5:7 (NASB)

7 “But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.”

He beseeched God to *cast them out* or *banish them* from the kingdom of Israel and from His presence. Their transgressions and rebellion were not against him as king but against the Lord and His eternal plan. That is, the Lord had appointed David to the throne of Israel, and He had also determined that the Messiah would one day establish His kingdom and rule from David’s throne (**2 Samuel 7**). Absalom’s revolt against his father was a revolt against God and His sacred plan.

c. Pray for God’s protection and blessing (vv. 11-12**).**

Psalm 5:11-12 (NASB)

11 “But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

12 For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”

David concluded his prayer by interceding for the faithful people of Israel who were unswayed by Absalom's charm and charisma. They were not relying on their own strength or weapons, for they were severely outnumbered and stood no chance against such insurmountable odds. But they had one resource that could deliver and save them—the Lord.

This small band of faithful followers were totally depending upon the Lord to protect them ([v. 11^a](#)).

Psalm 5:11 (NASB)

¹¹“But let all who **take refuge** in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.”

Psalm 5:11 (KJV)

¹¹“But let all those that **put their trust** in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.”

The words **Put their trust** (**chasah**) mean to take refuge or flee for protection (see **previous outline and notes—2:12 for more discussion**). They had no shelter in the wilderness; only God could protect and deliver them.

These were the people who loved the Lord's great and holy name ([v. 11^b](#)).

Psalm 5:11 (NASB)

¹¹“But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, **That those who love Your name may exult in You.**”

They stood in distinct contrast to those who were rebelling against the Lord ([v. 10](#)).

Psalm 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.”

The Lord's name represents His character: **Jehovah** is the God who makes and keeps covenant, the one who is faithful to His Word. The rebels had risen up against God's covenant with David.

The embattled king entreated the Lord for **three blessings** upon these faithful people:

First, that God would let them *rejoice* and *be glad*.

Second, that He would allow them to *sing for joy* because He had personally risen to their defense.

Third, that they would have cause to rejoice, not in their victory, but in Him, the God whose great name they loved.

Note the king's confidence in the midst of his crisis: **He was sure the Lord would be true to His character** ([v. 12](#)).

Psalm 5:12 (NASB)

¹²“For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”

He would surely bless those who stood in righteousness. His **favor** would cover them like a **shield** (**tsinnah**). This is not the small, handheld shield to which David refers in [Psalm 3:3](#);

Psalm 3:3 (NASB)

³“But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head.”

It is the large rectangular shield which warriors crouched behind in protection of their entire bodies. The Lord would completely surround them and protect them from their enemies.

Thought 1: We must not miss the message of this great psalm. It provides a pattern for us to follow when we are lied about and slandered:

(1) Seek the Lord’s guidance. Do not stray from the path of righteousness by reacting wrongly against your enemies. Ask the Lord to lead you every step of the way. Submit your will and emotions to the control of His Spirit.

(2) Do not seek to retaliate against your enemies, but commit the carrying out of justice to the Lord. God can be trusted to take care of them.

Bible teacher and commentator **Warren Wiersbe** writes:

David didn't issue orders to his officers to go out and slaughter his enemies; instead, he turned them over to the Lord. During that tragic battle in which Absalom was slain, “the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured” (2 Sam. 18:8). David's prayer was answered: “let them fall by their own counsels” (v. 10).

Psalm 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.”

(3) Examine your own heart and life, your faithfulness to the Lord and His commands. If you are unfaithful in any area of life, confess it to God and repent of it. The righteous will be blessed and favored by the Lord. Be sure your life is one that He can bless, then trust Him to protect you and vindicate you.

The victory may not come immediately, but in God’s timing our lying enemies will be exposed and defeated. They will often fall by their own hands: the hypocrisy and wickedness of their lives will be eventually displayed and seen by all. We must trust in the Lord, rest in Him, and continue to do good. It is often the process of time that tells the truth. Over the long term, the faithful and their families are established and blessed, and the ungodly are fully exposed and driven away in God’s justice.

Romans 12:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.

²⁰“BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Galatians 6:7-8 (NASB)

⁷“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

Psalms 1:3-6 (NASB)

³“He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

⁴The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.”

Psalms 115:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹“You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

¹²The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless *us*; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.

¹³He will bless those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great.”

Isaiah 65:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“You will leave your name for a curse to My chosen ones, And the Lord GOD will slay you. But My servants will be called by another name.”