

A prayer of one false accused
July 28, 2013 - Psalm 7

Pastor Tom Anderst

I was simply walking to my lesson. But I suddenly felt like I would was under attack. For about 6 years, my Mom had me in piano lessons. My sister taught me for a while. But after she married & moved away, we had to find another teacher. We ended up going with Mr. Peach. So every week I would walk to Mr. Peach's house.

The path to his place went through some houses where you could see into people's back yards. Sometimes you could see right into their house. So I would often be interested in what I saw. I was only 12 at the time.

Well on this particular night I took my regular path to Mr. Peach's home. But I noticed at this one house, a few people looked out the back window towards the walkway. As I got closer, I noticed they all looked at me. So I'm 12 and feeling a little self-conscious. I keep walking when I notice a man, likely the dad of the family by their sliding patio door to the back yard. He looks really mad. So I begin to pick up my pace.

All of sudden the door flies open. "Hey, hey," he yells at me. So I stop. He takes a step towards me aggressively. But just before he breaks into a full run he turns and asks someone "Is that him?" I look at who he's talking to. It's his teenage daughter looking out from the kitchen window. I see her look at me closely and then shake her head. So the dad steps back inside and continues to watch along the path.

I don't know what happened. Maybe somebody who kind of looked like me bothered her one day when she was in the back yard or worse. But I do know how fast my heart was thumping. And as I continued my journey toward Mr. Peach's place I realized my body had gone into full on defense mode. I was sweating and all tense. I felt all this coursing through me just because I had been falsely accused of something. And the experience lasted less than 1 minute.

But most false accusations go on much longer than that. Most everyone has been on the receiving end of a false accusation. It may have come from your brother or sister when you were kids. When your parents asked who made the mess downstairs, your sister or brother blamed you. Or maybe your parents concluded you made the mess when you didn't.

Someone might accuse you on a social network of being someone you're not or doing something you didn't. A whole class is accused for the actions done by one or two. You make a tough business decision after many meetings and hours of deliberation. Someone accuses you of being uncharitable, unfair and uncaring. You're part of a project at work. One group really failed to deliver their piece. Now everyone on the project is accused of shoddy work. You're child misbehaves or walks away from the Lord and someone accuses you of not doing enough when they have no idea how much you've been doing. Maybe you're part of a particular age group or sub culture. You get accused by association. *Someone vandalized the Lacombe park skate change room. It had to be teenagers. You know those teenagers. They're up to no good.* And as Christians, we can be accused just for being Christians. *You're one of those Bible thumpers. You're intolerant and hate all gay people.* False accusations can pop up in many places. These are just the ones from other people.

We can falsely accuse ourselves. I've seen it happen with people whose health fails. Their weak health weakens their faith. They slowly begin to believe that they're not really saved. They think they just weren't good enough or did enough for God to accept them.

We also face the expert accuser. The devil opposes God and His children. He constantly slanders God's name and wants to damage anyone who worships God. An Old Testament prophet named Zechariah draws a picture of this for us in a vision of Joshua the High Priest. Zechariah writes "Then he (an angel) showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him." In Revelation 12:10 we get a glimpse forward to the ultimate defeat of the devil. John writes "And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before God.'"

Everyone experiences false accusations at times in life. Some of them bother us a lot – sometimes even more than true accusations. One commentator writes *"It is a curious feature of human living, that the public accusation of sins or crimes which we have committed is easier to bear, emotionally and spiritually, than false accusations concerning crimes of which we are innocent."*

When false accusations come, how do we pray? What do we pray? The next Psalm in our summer study deals with this. David, King of Israel around 1000 BC has been falsely accused. So he brings it to the Lord in prayer. Through this Psalm, we will learn how to pray when falsely accused. But we'll also see

the opportunities that arise when this happens for us to step back and look at a bigger picture. I pray God will use this to help you heal from false accusation, to equip you for when those times come and to move through false accusations with an attitude to glorify God through it.

New Living Translation (NLT)

Psalm 7

A psalm of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush of the tribe of Benjamin.

¹ I come to you for protection, O LORD my God.

Save me from my persecutors—rescue me!

² If you don't, they will maul me like a lion,
tearing me to pieces with no one to rescue me.

³ O LORD my God, if I have done wrong
or am guilty of injustice,

⁴ if I have betrayed a friend
or plundered my enemy without cause,

⁵ then let my enemies capture me.
Let them trample me into the ground
and drag my honor in the dust. *Interlude*

⁶ Arise, O LORD, in anger!
Stand up against the fury of my enemies!
Wake up, my God, and bring justice!

⁷ Gather the nations before you.
Rule over them from on high.

⁸ The LORD judges the nations.
Declare me righteous, O LORD,
for I am innocent, O Most High!

⁹ End the evil of those who are wicked,
and defend the righteous.

For you look deep within the mind and heart,
O righteous God.

¹⁰ God is my shield,
saving those whose hearts are true and right.

- ¹¹ God is an honest judge.
He is angry with the wicked every day.
- ¹² If a person does not repent,
God will sharpen his sword;
he will bend and string his bow.
- ¹³ He will prepare his deadly weapons
and shoot his flaming arrows.
- ¹⁴ The wicked conceive evil;
they are pregnant with trouble
and give birth to lies.
- ¹⁵ They dig a deep pit to trap others,
then fall into it themselves.
- ¹⁶ The trouble they make for others backfires on them.
The violence they plan falls on their own heads.
- ¹⁷ I will thank the LORD because he is just;
I will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

In You Do I Take Refuge

A SHIGGAION OF DAVID, WHICH HE SANG TO THE LORD CONCERNING THE WORDS OF CUSH, A BENJAMINITE.

7 O LORD my God, in you do I take refuge;
save me from all my pursuers and deliver me,
² lest like a lion they tear my soul apart,
rending it in pieces, with none to deliver.

³ O LORD my God, if I have done this,
if there is wrong in my hands,
⁴ if I have repaid my friend with evil
or plundered my enemy without cause,
⁵ let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it,
and let him trample my life to the ground
and lay my glory in the dust. Selah

6 Arise, O LORD, in your anger;
lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies;
awake for me; you have appointed a judgment.
7 Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you;
over it return on high.

8 The LORD judges the peoples;
judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness
and according to the integrity that is in me.
9 Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end,
and may you establish the righteous—
you who test the minds and hearts,
O righteous God!
10 My shield is with God,
who saves the upright in heart.
11 God is a righteous judge,
and a God who feels indignation every day.
12 If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword;
he has bent and readied his bow;
13 he has prepared for him his deadly weapons,
making his arrows fiery shafts.
14 Behold, the wicked man conceives evil
and is pregnant with mischief
and gives birth to lies.
15 He makes a pit, digging it out,
and falls into the hole that he has made.
16 His mischief returns upon his own head,
and on his own skull his violence descends.

17 I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness,
and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High.

The title of the Psalm reveals David's problem. A Shiggaion of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush, a Benjaminite. So this is all about what someone said. Words are powerful. They can be powerfully motivating or powerfully destructive. We don't know anything more about this Cush person. But we do know that he came from the Israelite tribe of Benjamin. This is very significant. Saul, the previous king of Israel, was from this tribe. Saul ended up hating David and pursued him as an enemy. So when Saul and his sons died in battle, David took over the throne. Members of Benjamin carried grudges and remembered that one from their tribe once ruled. If you were with us when we went through Psalm 3, you remember when David's son Absalom rebelled against him. David and his supporters flee Jerusalem. On their way a member of the Benjaminites comes out to curse David. Here we have someone named Cush accusing David. In the first part of the Psalm, we see David's approach to the Lord amidst this false accusation.

How do we pray when falsely accused?

1. Appeal to the Lord for help.

David may have tried to address this accusation in a formal way. He may have confronted Cush. He may have called a council to address these charges. Or he may simply have heard the words or had someone pass them on to him. They pierced David deeply. He now cries to the Lord for help. What kind of help?

First he asks the Lord for refuge from the turmoil caused by the accusations. O Lord, my God, in you do I take refuge. A refuge is a sanctuary, shelter or harbor. It offers protection from something threatening, harmful and unpleasant. These words struck David deeply. They hurt and damaged him. So he turns to the Lord where he finds protection. Someone who knows the bigger picture, who will be on his side.

Second, he asks for deliverance from those accusing him. "Save me from all my pursuers and deliver me." David pictures his accusers as pursuers. They have gone from a single accuser in the title to many in just 2 phrases. Perhaps the words of Cush had been taken up and expressed by others.

If we think this was just some minor irritant to David, he graphically describes the threat in verse 2. "Lest like a lion, they tear my soul apart, rending it to pieces, with none to deliver." David was pretty familiar with lions. He killed one when it threatened his sheep. He must have seen the remains of sheep that

fell to lions. The lion would grab its victim and drag it away from possible rescuers. Then the lion tore it apart to eat it. David feels like a sheep in that desperate state. Yet a real lion does not threaten him. It's the words of false accusation.

After crying for the Lord initially for help, David moves on to proclaim his innocence in the next verses. Still addressing the Lord, he declares his willingness to submit himself to his enemy if he is in fact guilty. Here we gain a little insight to the nature of the accusations. "If I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, then hand me over to my enemy." he states in verse 4. The accusations relate to betraying a friend and unjust plundering. This fits well into David's relationship with Saul's family, when a new king from a different tribe takes over the throne. Despite David's best efforts to treat them well, some still accused him of wrongdoing. But David takes a solemn vow of innocence through verses 3-5.

Yet this does not remedy the situation. One commentator notes the helplessness felt by those falsely accused. "There is seemingly no escape from the consequences. We can't repent of something we didn't do. We can't make restoration. By their nature, these false accusations do not easily depart from us or leave us in peace. They violate our sense of justice."

David asks for righteous judgment proclaiming his innocence in verses 6 and 7, David appeals to the ultimate judge. "Arise, O Lord, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies; awake for me; you have appointed judgment." David calls on the Lord to rise up in judgment on his behalf.

Now when we think of judgment, we most often associate it with condemning someone. But in the Psalms, judgment mostly involves rescue. God rises as a rescuing judge on behalf of the innocent and oppressed. David is one of the oppressed. So he calls upon the Lord to rise up and take His position as righteous judge over the world.

When the Lord does that, David is confident of his acquittal. Verse 8 – The Lord judges the peoples; judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and according to my integrity that is in me." Now David is not claiming that he is sinless or perfect. But in this particular case, he is innocent of the charges. So he calls for the Lord to help by judging him which is more a rescue of David from these charges.

So David first responds to false accusation by turning to the Lord for help. He specifically asks for the Lord's refuge, deliverance and righteous judgment on his behalf.

But all this will not happen in 20 minutes. David could immediately go to the Lord as a refuge. But it would take time for deliverance and maybe more time for the Lord's righteous judgment to vindicate him. But we don't know if these specific false accusations were ever dealt with. Sometimes this is the case. Some false accusers get away with it for many years. Some die before they have been confronted with justice. So what can a falsely accused Christian do while they wait for the Lord's righteous justice?

2. Rest in the Lord's spotless character

David spends the rest of the Psalm reminding himself OF and glorifying the Lord FOR His spotless character. The Bible refers to it as the Lord's righteousness. It describes God is perfectly just, true, and upright, without blemish or corruption of any kind. David may not see a resolution of these false accusations any time soon. But he can rest in the spotless character of God that He will ultimately deal with it. David mentions several glorious parts of God's character. We need to reflect upon and rest in these when we're falsely accused.

So **David remembers that God tests minds and hearts of everyone** in verse 9. This is good news for the falsely accused. It means God is not fooled by external appearances or smooth talkers. He tests and knows what's inside people. No one gets away with anything before God. No one can sweet talk God or twist things to excuse themselves from a false accusation. God tests minds and hearts. He knows motives. He knows what was really meant.

David remembers the Lord is his shield in verse 10. *My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart.* Remember Psalm 3 where David declared "You O Lord are a shield about me." So no matter what the road ahead looks like, David knows he won't walk it alone. The Lord, his protector and defender walks with him. It's almost like David draws for us a picture of a courtroom stacked in his favor. You've got the prosecutor who makes these false accusations. But the Lord is David's defense lawyer. And the Lord is the Judge. So David expresses confidence that in the end his innocence will be revealed.

David also notes that God is a righteous judge who feels indignation every day – verse 11. If we ever think that God does not pay attention or has forgotten about the injustices in this world, we need to go back to this verse. 7-11 why is there suffering – God doesn't cave. Every day the world exists, God feels anger and wrath towards injustice and wrongdoing. It's not like God has a lot of files to look after and every once in a while focuses on the injustice question once a month. He experiences this holy wrath every day in multiple ways. He knows that his full and just wrath will come on judgment day. But He

holds the fullness of it back right now so that more may be saved. He doesn't want anyone to perish but all to come to repentance. So each day the world goes on, He shows mercy yet feels wrath for the wrongdoing that is done.

And David recognizes that the Lord is getting His weapons ready to go against the unrepentant. If verses 12 and 13 don't unsettle you in some way, perhaps you should spend some time really thinking about them. Would you like to be the man or woman talked about in those verses? For those who don't repent, the Lord whets or readies his sword, strings his bow, prepares his deadly weapons and lights his arrows on fire. God is ready to make war against the unrepentant.

Here's where our understanding of God may need to broaden. God is certainly love. But He's also a divine warrior. His just character will not allow Him to let people and spiritual beings to get away with their sin. God is going to make all things right. God would have been completely within His rights and justice to make war against everyone – for we all sinned. Yet by His mercy He provided a way through Jesus for us to move out of verses 12 and 13. But those who make false accusations and don't repent from them face this divine warrior who is ready to strike.

All this reflection on the spotless character of God seems to comfort David. In fact, by the end of this Psalm, he's in teaching mode. He gives a little parable in verses 14-16 about the wicked man. Did you notice the image David uses to describe the wicked man's activities? Verse 14 – Behold the wicked man *conceives* evil and is *pregnant* with mischief and *gives birth* to lies. It's an image of child birth applied to a male. Yet it describes the mechanics of sin. Some evil is conceived within. It grows inside until it comes out with lies or false accusation or some other sin. But it won't ultimately succeed. The wicked man digs a pit or trap for another. But then he falls into it himself. Or the mischief he gave birth to comes around like a boomerang. It strikes him on his own head and skull.

So by the end of the Psalm David is able to rejoice in the Lord. "I will give to the Lord, the thanks due to his righteousness." He celebrates that God has spotless character. It is good that we can trust Him to make all things right one day. So we can sing praise to the Lord, the Most High.

The Bigger Picture of False Accusations

Friends, it is not pleasant when we're falsely accused. But it is a fact of life living in this fallen world. When this happens, we first turn to the Lord in prayer for help and rest in His spotless character, we have an opportunity for us to step back and consider the bigger picture. When falsely accused, we need to

remember that **our individual conflicts against such evils are part of a cosmic conflict.** We fight as trusted lambs against ferocious lions. Yet, we have the Lord. When we pray in these circumstances, we invite Him into our battle. Waltke says “Spiritual War is won by fervent prayer that God rouse himself and mete out justice.” So seeking refuge in God is not a retreat into passivity but an advance into spiritual warfare.

When we experience false accusations **we can rejoice that God dealt with the true allegations leveled against us.** We are justly accused by God’s holy law of our sin. We did it. We by nature were children of wrath. But God did not only accuse. He himself offered the solution and paid the price so we could be declared not guilty forever. “There is therefore NOW no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1).

When falsely accused, we get to taste a little of Jesus’ suffering on our behalf. He was falsely accused throughout his ministry. Matthew 12:10 And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse him. He was falsely accused so much that his arresters had trouble arresting him, the Sanhedrin had trouble convicting him and Pilate could find no guilt in Him. Yet He endured all the false accusation and mocking so that we might be saved. So when falsely accused, we can praise Jesus for enduring false accusations on our behalf.

When falsely accused, we also get to enjoy Jesus’ intimate and close caring presence. Jesus has promised to be with us always to the very end of the age. We are united to Him when we receive Him. He is intimately aware of every detail of our lives. He walks with us through all we face and experience. He desires to transform us in the way we respond to false accusation and recover from it. You can turn to one who knows what it is like to walk through the fires of false accusation.

When falsely accused any pride and over dependence on other’s opinions is exposed. Peter Craigie writes - The genuine anxiety evoked by false accusations, whether of a subtle and personal nature or an open and legal nature, is partly legitimate and partly illegitimate. It is legitimate in the sense that false accusations can do real damage, whether to reputation, family, or means of livelihood. But it may be an illegitimate anxiety if it is tied too intimately to pride, for such anxiety assumes that the opinion of other persons is of more significance than the opinion of God. False accusations may deceive and convince our fellow human beings, but cannot deceive God. False accusation never undermines a person’s standing in the sight of God, though it may provide a testing ground for our strength of character.

When falsely accused, Jesus provided weapons to withstand the greatest false accuser we will ever face – the devil. Ephesians 6:10-18. Our weapons include the shield of faith in the righteous judge; the belt of truth; the helmet of our salvation; and the sword of the Spirit. On top of all these, the Lord rises up to defend His people – He does this with our individual enemies. But ultimately He rose up by providing Christ so that we could be protected from His wrath and the accusations of sin and the devil.

Jesus is a righteous judge. If you have suffered some wrong because of a false accusation, he will one day make it right. Or Jesus' blood will pay to forgive that person. Yes the Lord came to bring justice and commands us to seek it and work for it. But He also will make all things perfectly right on Judgment Day. So appeal for His help and rest in His spotless character. Walk through in the Lord's strength by looking at the bigger picture.

If you don't know Christ, you live in verses 12 and 13. Don't stay there. Turn to Christ now to receive His rescue from God's holy and just wrath. Be declared not guilty forever and begin that pursuit of life under Jesus' lordship and leadership.