

Psalm 49: A Responsive Reading

(congregation reads text in **bold** print)

Hear this, all peoples;

Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,

Both low and high,

Rich and poor together.

My mouth shall speak wisdom,

And the meditation of my heart shall give understanding.

I will incline my ear to a proverb;

I will disclose my dark saying on the harp.

Why should I fear in the days of evil,

When the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?

Those who trust in their wealth

And boast in the multitude of their riches,

None of them can by any means redeem his brother,

Nor give to God a ransom for him —

For the redemption of their souls is costly,

And it shall cease forever —

That he should continue to live eternally,

And not see the Pit.

For he sees wise men die;

Likewise the fool and the senseless person perish,

And leave their wealth to others.

Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever,

Their dwelling places to all generations;

They call their lands after their own names.

Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain;

He is like the beasts that perish.

This is the way of those who are foolish,

And of their posterity who approve their sayings.

Like sheep they are laid in the grave;

Death shall feed on them;

The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;

And their beauty shall be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling.

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave,

For He shall receive me.

Do not be afraid when one becomes rich,

When the glory of his house is increased;

For when he dies he shall carry nothing away;

His glory shall not descend after him.

Though while he lives he blesses himself

(For men will praise you when you do well for yourself),

He shall go to the generation of his fathers;

They shall never see light.

A man who is in honor, yet does not understand,

Is like the beasts that perish.

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Praying Psalm 49

There are many voices around us proclaiming that success is to be found in riches and material prosperity. Praying Psalm 49 can provide a corrective to such thinking. It can guide you to pray that you would personally resist such temptation and also to pray for those who are succumbing to it. We need regularly to be reminded of the eternal perspective found in this psalm.

Read verses 1-4. Ask the Lord to prepare your heart to receive the wisdom to be found in this psalm and to be transformed by it.

Read verses 5-9. Reflect on any ways you are trusting in wealth rather than in God's grace. Repent as needed. Pray for those entrapped by wealth, that they will realize redemption is not found in riches.

Read verses 10-14. Reflect on how the certainty of death and the grave shows the foolishness of those who trust in wealth and seek their own glory. Pray for the proclamation of the gospel so that many will recognize and turn from their foolish ways to Christ.

Read verse 15. Praise God for delivering you from the fear of death through eternal redemption in Christ.

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