

SCRATCHING IN THE DIRT

Psalm 14:1-7 or (Psalm 53:1-6)

Psalm 14

¹The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

²The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

³They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

⁴Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.

⁵There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.

⁶Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.

⁷Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

Introduction:

When you play in a dirty environment expect to get dirty.

Last week on one of the evenings I had just come out of the bath and was all clean and dressed and ready for dinner.

But as I came down the stairs I looked at a new message on my cell phone which was sent from the local fire control centre which said "you have a big fire on the farm". My heart sank and my thoughts raced. I hope everyone is ok.

I had to quickly change into my fire fighting gear and gumboots and fire beater in hand set off to join the fire crew to beat the fire.

What an experience to face flames licking up at your heels in some places more than 4 meters high. There was no thought for self security, like maybe there are snakes, but only thoughts of this fire needs to be under control.

So destructive is the fire it spares nothing in its path. Old tall grass tinder dry and new grass alike; it tore through it with great speed, fuelling its destructive path as it pushed onwards and outwards, ever widening its flaming path.

With it came the ash, the smoke and black soot, the remainder of its destructive evidence, floating on the winds and blown away. Our eyes were blinded by the dirt, and smoke it produced. We have to continually look up out of the fire to get our bearings because we were slowly losing our direction. Our bearing was the parked bakkies as a reference point.

We pressed on relentlessly, step by step beating the fire, and by this time it was close to 1.00am in the morning when we finally managed to extinguish the blaze. We were exhausted, and the chill of 12 degree evening brought some comfort at least.

- Scripture like in James 3:5 reminded me when it says “behold how a great matter a little fire kindleth” came to mind.
 - Something started ever so small, spread and spread until it was out of control. And that is how sin starts in our life and can end. Out of control in a person’s life.
1. But what a trail of dirt it left on everyone of us who fought the fire.
 2. We truly smelled like the fire itself.
 3. And what a job it was later to try and wash it all off.
 4. But the lesson was this “**if you play in the dirt you going to get dirty**” and it will stick to you like glue; just like sin does. It needs to be washed off.

All the while fighting the fire, I could think of nothing else but how horrible it will be for those who will one day perish eternally in the lake of fire for rejecting God.

- Simply stated: “No Person Can Find God On His Own”.

Turn with me now in your Bibles to Psalm 14:1-7.

- We can also see a parallel to this exact Psalm in Psalm 53:1-6.

Humanity is doomed. – Lets examine 5 Points.

- I. **The Fool has said.**
- II. **They had become filthy.**
- III. **They have no knowledge.**
- IV. **There were they in great fear – only the righteous feared.**
- V. **The Salvation was to come out of Zion.**

I. The Fool has said.

Verse 1. ¹**The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.**

It does not take much to recognise a fool. As soon as a person’s mouth is opened you will know whether he is a fool or not by what he says.

- His mouth and actions will always reveal his heart and by that you will know.
1. A fool is referred to in the Bible as someone who has rejected God.
 2. He has blatantly declared that there is no God, referring to the living God of the Bible.
 3. Verse 1 is a statement from their heart, and it is also statement from their lips.

Just as we see here in our text this morning in verse one.

1. “The fool has said in his heart, **There is no God.**
2. So that statement in his heart will be revealed by his lips sooner or later.

Therefore, as the bible speaks of these people, it follows onto say in the second half of verse 1 that.....

1. Because of their unbelief “**They are corrupt**”.
2. Everything about them is a lie.
3. In evidence to that it says that they have done “**abominable works**”.
4. This means that they have committed the unpardonable sin of unbelief, and for that God cannot forgive them, because they are unbelievers.
5. “**There is none that doeth good.** When the Bible speaks like this in that tone, it means that there is nothing good that the Lord can account for righteousness to him that will save his soul from destruction. (unlike Abraham who believed God and it was account unto him for righteousness.)
6. They are lost in their sins and condemned for it. By the way let us just stop here for a minute and say that this also applies to us here and now, if we have not believed God.

If you compare verse 1 of Psalm 14 to Abraham’s faith in these next three scriptures, you will see a great contrast to the Lords response.

Romans 4:3

For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God**, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Galatians 3:6

Even as **Abraham believed God**, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

James 2:23

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed God**, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of **God**.

In these scriptures we see Gods response by imputing (ascribed or credited) righteousness to Abraham. The Lord even calls Abraham His friend.

So when the Apostle Paul gave his discourse to the Roman audience he extracted the scripture for Romans 3:10-12 from this very same verse here in the Psalm 14 and Psalm 53.

Romans 3:10-12

¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

- Even repeated here in Psalm 14:3, when the Lord looked down out of heaven in Psalm 14:2 upon the children of men.

Verse 2. ²**The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.**

1. What did he see?
2. He saw that there was none that doeth good Psalm 14:1-2 says, and Psalm 53:1-2, and this is what the Apostle Paul echoed in Romans 3:10-12.

There is none that doeth good. There is none that seek after God.

1. This tells us that even as the Lord looked down from heaven himself. He did not see anything worthy in the “children of men”. (verse2).
2. In other words there was nothing there that pleased God.
3. Nothing that he would otherwise want in his presence. (that’s you and I folks before we came to him to be cleansed and washed by him).

The Psalmist revealed to us how it is folks.

1. The Lord does not want anything in His presence that will not please him.
2. And that meant us at the time and may even be for some of us this very moment as he continues to look down upon the children of men.
3. There continues to this day, many who do not understand the Lord, and as thus seek not God.
4. By the sheer blindness of their heart they are lost. Just as the scriptures remind us that in Romans 11:25 Blindness in part is happened to Israel.

Romans 11:25

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness** in **part** is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

II. They had become filthy

As the Lord looked down from heaven.- What did he see?

1. The Lord saw there was none that understood, and that there was none that were seeking God.
2. The result was that they had all become filthy.
3. “They had all gone aside, they had altogether become filthy”.

Verse 3. ³**They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

Psalm 53:3, says that every one of them had gone back. They were fools. The terminology is “gone aside” means that they had now “turned” around, from looking towards God to looking the other way.

1. It is the same principle we see in Exodus 3:3-4 , When Moses said “I will now turn aside to “See”.

Exodus 3:3-4 ³And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

2. And he turned to see the great sight” out of the midst of the burning bush.
3. Moses turned to hear God, the Psalm 14:3 tells us they turned away from seeing God.

There’s the difference. One turned to the Lord, the other turned away.

- Many people do that even today “they have turned their back on the Lord”. Turned away from His presence. (Unrepentant sin causes that).

Psalm 53:3 ³Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

1. As you turn your back on the Lord, you will become as unbelievers, you will become filthy again.
2. They had gone back to their own ways, they had gone back to their own beliefs, they had gone back to their own gods, they had gone back to their own lifestyle.
3. They had now totally rejected that there is a God of the Bible.

Without God we cannot do good. Remember that.

On our own we cannot turn to God. We need the Lord to reveal himself to us through His Word; so that we can know who he is.

III. They have no knowledge.

Verse 4. ⁴**Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.**

- The question asked here in Psalm 14:4, is “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?”
 - Now the knowledge referred to here is the knowledge of God.
 - And that knowledge is best described here in scripture.
1. They may have intelligence, but certainly not knowledge.
 2. You may find this difficult to believe.
 3. But the answer is pretty straight forward if you believe what the Bible says about true knowledge.
- **Proverbs 1:7**
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **knowledge**: but fools despise **wisdom** and instruction.
 - **Proverbs 9:10**
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**: and the **knowledge** of the holy is understanding.
 - **Isaiah 11:2**
And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of **wisdom**

and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of **knowledge** and of the fear of the LORD;

➤ **Isaiah 33:6**

And **wisdom** and **knowledge** shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.

1. The focal point of knowledge is the fear of the Lord.
2. Fools despise this wisdom and instruction which comes from the Lord.
3. Just as our text in Psalm 14:1 tells us that the fool has said there is no God.
4. Isaiah reminds us again in the following scripture that those who think that they have wisdom or knowledge but not of God, find themselves in a position of perverting themselves.
5. They have said that there is none greater than what they are. Check it out. **Isaiah 47:10**

Isaiah 47:10

For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy **wisdom** and thy **knowledge**, it **hath perverted thee**; and thou hast said in thine heart, **I am**, and none else beside me.

1. This statement of "**I am**" is saying that you are replacing God in your life with yourself. Saying there is no one else beside me.
 2. Remember in the scriptures where the Lord used these words to represent himself. (Exodus 3:14), (John 8:58), (Rev 1:8, Rev 4:8)
- **Exodus 3:14** ¹⁴And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM**: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.
3. This is what Isaiah is warning you of. Trying to become or trying to replace God in your life with yourself.
- Look at what the verse says "**no knowledge**". In other words they do not have the understanding of God. No biblical knowledge of God.
- And certainly no heart knowledge of God either.

Romans 10:4-15 tells us.

1. How can we call on him in whom we do not know. Isn't that a great statement?
2. It was for this reason as the Lord looked down from Heaven that he would bring to us a Saviour who would redeem the world.
3. A Saviour by whom we could know through the holy prophets of God as they delivered His faithful message in the OT and as did the Apostles in the NT.
4. That out of Zion the deliver would come. And so he did.
5. God sent forth His only Son.

Galatians 4:4

But when the fulness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son**, made of a woman, made under the law,

Paul quotes again from Psalm 14 and Psalm 53. Those very verses we see in Romans 3:10-12.

1. That Salvation is through the Lord.

IV. “There were they in great fear” – only the righteous feared.

Verse 5-6. ⁵**There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.** ⁶**Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.**

1. The ungodly do not fear the Lord. Because they have no wisdom or knowledge of Him in their heart.
2. It may be in their head but it certainly is not in their heart.
3. On the other hand the “righteous” have a fear of the Lord. The Lord has brought wisdom and knowledge to them, because they have had a heart which is sensitive to the Lords Word, and through it he has called them.

The great fear, is to know that the Lord is the keeper of our soul.

- Yet those unbelievers; They know what it will be like not to obey God.
- With comfort the scripture tells us that God is in the generation that obeys him. The generation of the righteous referred to here in the text.

We see in the beatitudes of the Matthew chapter 5:3 the same theme.

Matthew 5:3 ³Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

1. “Blessed is the poor in Spirit”.
2. Those are the ones that God is looking out for.
3. Those that seek him early whilst he can still be found.
4. Because just as here in the text, the “Lord is his refuge”.
5. The “poor in spirit” are those who believe. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

V. The Salvation was to come out of Zion

Verse 7. ⁷**Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.**

1. It was an expectancy.
2. The prophets new that God was going to send a deliverer.
3. And they knew he was going to come again.
4. The tense of the text suggests it and the rest of the Bible proves it.
5. In other words “Oh that the Lord would come” and so come quickly Oh Lord like Revelation 22:20 talks about.

Joel 3:16 ¹⁶The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

1. The Lord is returning, the Psalmist knew that and proclaimed it to all.
2. What are you doing about the Lords return. Are you ready?
 - The prophets spoke about the coming Messiah all though the OT such as was written in (Isaiah 9:6).
 - The Apostles witnessed Jesus the Messiah, and Jesus spoke many times to them about His return, and Judgment.
 - We have the NT Apostles bearing witness of Jesus.
3. No person can find God unless he turns to the scriptures.

I leave you with this thought.....

Jesus said to the Jews.

John 5:46

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

PRAYER.....