

SBC – Dec. 3, 2023
Psalm 10 (NKJV)
“A Plea For Justice”

Intro: Psalm 10 has neither a title nor a stated author.

Some think Psalm 10 was originally part of Psalm 9, which would make it a Psalm of David, but that is uncertain, and some would argue that the differences between the two argue for two completely different Psalms. The writer uses an acrostic based on the second half of the Hebrew alphabet in the writing of this Psalm.

Psalm 9 addresses an enemy from outside the nation; while Psalm 10 addresses abuses from within. Psalm 10 is another “Lament Psalm”. The psalms of lament are poems or hymns expressing human struggles with the powers of oppression and evil. Psalm 10 is a Psalm of lament regarding the seeming prosperity of the abusive wicked, but then at the end of the Psalm, the writer expresses confidence that God in due time will judge and turn the situation around.

Slide # 1
Psalm 10

A Plea for Justice

- v. 1 – WHY does God hide in times of trouble?
- vv. 2-11 – Description of the Wicked
- vv. 12-13 – A Call for Judgment
- vv. 14-15 – Confident that God will Judge
- vv. 16-18 – Praise to God for Vindication

Psalm 10 (NKJV)

1 Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide in times of trouble?

Here is the age-old proverbial question that is so common to people when they are hurting and going through a hard time – WHY? Where is God at a time like this? Twice in verse one the WHY question is raised. Why doesn't God do something about this situation? Often God seems to be distant and uninvolved – and therefore hidden in that sense.

When you have feelings like this you are not the first to feel this way. It is a common experience. At times, we sense the closeness of God, but at other times, it feels like He is distant.

And that is really hard when you are going through a hard time. Spurgeon said, "It's not the trouble, but the hiding of the Father's face, which cuts us to the quick."

It is easy to walk by faith in the light, but when the darkness settles in that is where the challenge lies.

2 The wicked in his pride persecutes the poor; Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

Pride is the besetting sin of mankind and it is especially prominent in the lives of the wicked. Pride defies God and it shows in their mistreatment of the vulnerable. Pride takes advantage of people. The writer prays, "Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised." He is calling for what we call "poetic justice" where what they are sinfully plotting comes back on their own heads. "Lord cause their evil plotting to backfire on them."

Slide # 2

"There are none who will dispute the justice of God, when he shall hang every Haman on his own gallows, and cast all the enemies of his Daniels into their own den of lions." (**Charles Spurgeon**)

3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire; He blesses the greedy and renounces the LORD.

Depravity is astounding in his bold audacity. The wicked here are full of themselves. They boast about their evil desires and what they are going to do. He blesses the greedy, and then on top of it all he "renounces the LORD".

The first part of the verse was BAD but the last part about renouncing the LORD is unthinkable BAD. These people in their arrogance are so bold as to despise the LORD Himself. To renounce the LORD is to openly spurn and abandon Him. It is to cast Him off as if He has no say in your life. Amazingly God puts up with it for some time.

When Robert Ingersoll (the famous atheist) was lecturing, - he once took out his watch and declared, "I will give God five minutes to strike me dead for the things I have said." When the five minutes were up, Ingersoll put the watch into his pocket claiming that he had proven that God doesn't exist.

When that incident reached the ears of a certain preacher named Joseph Parker he responded by asking: **“And did the gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of the Eternal God in five minutes?”**

4 The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.

The wicked have a proud countenance. Pride is a matter of the heart but it also shows in the face. Here is the crux of pride – it is an attitude of independence from God. Pride thinks it does not need God and therefore does not seek or rely upon God. It doesn't humble self before God – thinking self is self-sufficient. Pride rejects God's Lordship authority. God is in none of this person's thoughts. They have completely dismissed God from their thinking.

Not thinking about God is indicative of PRIDE and it is great sin!

Slide # 3

The Wicked Have a PRIDE problem:

- v. 2 The wicked in **pride** persecutes...
- v. 3 For the wicked **boasts** of his heart's desire...
- v. 4 The wicked in his **proud** countenance...

And here is WHY he carries on as he does. It seems (for a time) that he totally gets away with it.

5 His ways are always prospering; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight; As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.

In his wickedness, he seems to always be prospering. He really gets ahead. The judgments of God that are coming are far above his head – out of his sight, and therefore he doesn't see them coming. And therefore, he carries on as he does. He has no regard for his enemies. He sneers at them as one who is superior. This man thinks he is invincible.

Pride is a very blinding and deceiving thing in which one thinks himself higher than he really is.

6 He has said in his heart, “I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity.”

Oh the depravity! In his heart he says to himself, “I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity.” Wow!

The only place for this person to go is down, but they don't think so.

They think in their high place they won't be moved – trouble is not going to bring them down.

This person is extremely COCKY! Their trust is totally in SELF! And again the reason they get away with it (for a time) is because God is longsuffering.

But because God is patient, they come to have a false sense of security thinking they will get away with it forever.

Slide # 4

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (NKJV)

11 Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

How true this is! The Bible constantly rings true to life. We see it in our society. When the criminals are not dealt with in a timely manner crime only gets worse and worse. Sinners don't get better if left unchecked!

7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.

Verse 6 emphasizes a HEART problem – verse 7 emphasizes a MOUTH problem. And they go together. The mouth of the wicked is FULL of cursing, deceit and oppression. Their tongue is all about trouble and iniquity (wickedness/malice).

Jesus said, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt. 12:34). The mouth tells on the heart!

“Cursing, lying, threatening, and troubling and evil speech are all destructive. They flow from one who does not believe that God will hold him or her accountable.” - **James Montgomery Boice**

This verse is quoted by Paul in recounting the depravity of man in Romans 3:14.

Slide # 5

Romans 3:14 (NKJV)

14 “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

And these wicked people are sneaky wicked creeps.

8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the secret places he murders the innocent; His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless.

9 He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; He lies in wait to catch the poor; He catches the poor when he draws him into his net.

10 So he crouches, he lies low, That the helpless may fall by his strength.

Note the word “secret” or “secretly” is used 3 times in these verses. These wicked people think nothing of taking advantage of the weak and helpless who don’t even see what’s coming. They lurk about secretly looking for an opportunity to ambush the helpless in a deadly manner. They murder the innocent. Their victims are the innocent, the helpless, the poor. It doesn’t get much lower than this.

11 He has said in his heart, “God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see.”

How does this person sleep at night? Well, in their heart they think God has forgotten. Since God has allowed them for an extended period to get away with it they interpret this as God has overlooked it and moved on.

This reflects a very LOW view of God. They are clueless and delusional in their wickedness. But this is how they cope. They convince themselves in their heart that God will not hold them accountable. Well, you can give yourself this false “self-talk” all day but it doesn’t change reality.

However, note that while verse 4 says, “**God is in none of his thoughts,**” verse 11 says that in his heart, he says, “**God has forgotten**”. Try as hard as he may, he just can’t quite keep God out of all his thoughts.

The wicked suppress the truth of God but they are never quite totally successful. The long arm of the conscience still gets in there and they have to try and deal with it somehow. And one way they do this is to say to themselves God has forgotten and that they have gotten away with it. And they think this because for a long time it seems they have in fact gotten away with it. But that is deceitful!

Slide # 6

Romans 3:18 (NKJV)

18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Psalms 10:11 is what having no fear of God looks like. They are not concerned about God’s judgment. They think they can sin with immunity. That is a terrible place to be and yet the depravity of mankind takes them there.

12 Arise, O LORD! O God, lift up Your hand! Do not forget the humble.

This recalls Numbers 10:35.

Slide # 7

Numbers 10:35 (NKJV)

35 So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: “**Rise up, O LORD!** Let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You.”

This amounted to a “battle cry” in which Moses called on God to rise up and go before them defeating the enemy. This, in effect, is what the writer, at this point, is doing. He is calling on God to arise and intervene and thereby defeat the enemy.

Verse 12 is a call for God to arise in judgment and at the same time a plea for Him to do so – “Do not forget the humble.”

13 Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, “You will not require an account.”

For being one who does not have God in his thoughts he has a lot of thoughts about God in his heart. In verse 12 he says, “God has forgotten” – in verse 13 he says God “will not require an account.” The idea then is that although he does have thoughts about God, he dismisses them as irrelevant.

Thus the wicked try their hardest to convince themselves that they will not be held accountable for their wicked doings. And in their pride, they do, in self-deception, convince themselves of this, and therefore, they renounce God as insignificant. They convince themselves that God does not really matter – and this shows in their life. But they are overlooking one thing:

Slide # 8

Numbers 32:23 (NKJV)

23 ... be sure your sin will find you out.

The wicked in their pride convince themselves that God will not hold them accountable – that He really doesn't even see it. In the words of verse 11, "He will never see" and therefore He will "not require account" (v. 13).

But.... Aw, here is the all-important over-looked reality...

14 But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief, To repay it by Your hand. The helpless commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless.

But in truth God has seen. He has seen it all. And He has been taking notes: He observes trouble and grief that the wicked have afflicted upon His people. He has not forgotten! It has not been overlooked – even though for a time it might seem that way.

In due time God will repay. As the old preacher said, "**Pay day some day!**" The wages of sin is death and pay day is coming! It's not a matter of IF, but a matter of WHEN. The only exception is if the wicked come to repentance.

The helpless who have no strength commit themselves to God. They have no strength within themselves so they look to God to help them – to intervene.

And the writer reminds himself that indeed, God is "the helper of the fatherless."

He is there for those vulnerable who are helpless – that is those who commit themselves to Him – trusting in God to help them.

And with this through the writer breaks forth with an imprecatory prayer.

15 Break the arm of the wicked and the evil man; Seek out his wickedness until You find none.

“Break the arm” is a way of calling on God to destroy their strength. “Seek out his wickedness until you find none” is a way of calling on God to deal with his wicked ways until he is reduced to nothing.

And with confidence that God will judge the writer says...

16 The LORD is King forever and ever; The nations have perished out of His land.

YHWH is King forever and ever. Eternally He sits on His throne as sovereign over all.

No matter what circumstances may look like at the moment, it is good to remember that God is still on the throne, and that He has everything under His control.

The Psalm began with almost a sense of despair regarding the “times of trouble” (v 1), but he ends with great confidence that the LORD (YHWH) is King forever. He rules!

After the Israelites were delivered from Egypt at the destruction of Pharaohs’ army they sang this song.

Slide # 9

Exodus 15:18 (NKJV)

18 “The LORD shall reign forever and ever.”

The writer then recalls that nations have perished out of His land – which is to say the Promised Land of Israel.

God in the past had given great victories over the cruel enemies of God’s people; namely the Canaanites who occupied the land of promise.

Recalling this reality bolstered the confidence of the psalmist concerning the present situation.

17 LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear,

In faith, the psalmist says the LORD has heard the desire of the humble. Note it doesn't say He heard their prayer, but their desire.

Sometimes, we have desires that we cannot express; they are too big, too deep; we cannot clothe them in language.

– Charles Spurgeon

But God knows what in effect is the prayers of our heart.

Slide # 10

Romans 8:26 (NKJV)

26 Likewise the **Spirit also helps** in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The LORD hears even the quiet prayers of the oppressed and He strengthens their heart for whatever He calls them to endure and go through. And in the end, He answers prayer in a way that vindicates His people.

18 To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, That the man of the earth may oppress no more.

One day God is going to right the wrongs. The helpless and the oppressed will no longer be taken advantage of. The man of the earth, meaning the man who lives for this life - who physically are mere dust. Ten times in the book of Revelation the rebel unbelievers are technically referred to as "Earth Dwellers" (Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; and 17:8).

The proud strut their stuff on the earth today taking advantage of and oppressing God's people. But that is not the end of the story. God has not forgotten. He hears the prayer of the humble. He sees! And one day He will act.

But I want to take you back to verse one. WHY? Why does God at times not intervene – standing afar off – just watching as it seems? WHY does He hide in times of trouble?

I want you to note that the WHY question is not really answered in the Psalm.

Sometimes we just don't know the WHY. Job wanted to know WHY, but when God revealed Himself to Job, He never really told him why. He just gave Job a greater vision of Himself and the sufficed. This is also where Psalm 10 goes. The psalmist came back to the reality of God and that in His timing, He will deal with the wicked, and He will vindicate the righteous. And that is where he rests.

When we are faced with the WHY questions we must come back to faith and God's promises.

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Not everything is good, but God is always good, and He is ever working the greater scheme of all things together for the good of those who love Him. This is a matter of faith. If you just look at your circumstances that will mess with you. You have to look at God and His promises. This is what faith is all about.

The other thing I would say is that God has a GRACE plan and He is dealing with depraved rebels. And in this space He gives space for them to rebel as well as repent.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

In our WHY questions about the wicked and WHY God doesn't bring the hammer down on them. The answer is He is waiting for more to come to repentance. It's not just all about us – it's about what God is doing in relation to the lost.

So what is the antidote to the troublesome WHY questions. It is trust in God. He is still King! In due time He will judge – in the meantime, He is still calling people to repentance. And in all of this, we can TRUST HIM!

In the end, God's people are going to rule with Christ. Indeed, then all will know that the LORD is King forever and ever. And we will all marvel at His eternal plan in which He indeed sovereignly worked all things together for the eternal good of His people and for His own eternal glory – and He often did it in ways that are past finding out in this life.

Ecclesiastes is the most philosophical book we have in the Bible and trying to figure out God's ways from an "under the sun" perspective is shown to be impossible.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NKJV)

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

Ecclesiastes 3:14 (NKJV)

14 I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him.

God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart."

— **Charles Spurgeon**

In the end there are many WHY questions in life and God asks us to TRUST Him.

When we can't trace His hand, God help us to TRUST HIM!