

Psalm 10—God’s Delayed Justice is not Justice Denied

Read the Text

Some of you—maybe many of you—need to break the silence. You need to deal with that issue you have been avoiding. A first step is to ask God why he is hiding himself in your time of trouble.

I am going to pray for us to meet with the Lord in the moments we have together. But before I pray, I want you to give you the opportunity to pray verse 1 of Psalm 10 in the quietness of your soul. God has stepped back for some reason and you need to realize this has happened for a reason. God wants you to talk to him about what is bothering you. He wants you to find yourself saying what the Psalmist ends with—The LORD is king forever and ever and you will strengthen our hearts.

But for some of you, to get there you must begin by asking the question why and then you must wrestle with the expectation you have of God that he is not meeting. My guess is that you do not want to. But you need to. You need to open that box...tear down those walls...deal with that anger you have with God, an anger that has caused you to go silent and withdraw...that mistrust you have has numbed you and you stopped feeling years ago and **today is the day of healing for you.**

A moment of silence

Prayer

I. Introduction

- A. Several years ago when we were living in west Tennessee, we came to Nashville to do some after Christmas shopping at Opry Mills. If you have ever been there during those sales, you know how crowded it is. When you step out of a store, you step into a river of people flowing steadily through the mall.
- B. As we finished shopping in the Lego Store, we joined the throng of people to go on to our next adventure. But before we even got to the next door, we noticed that Joshua was not with us and panic set in.
- C. We immediately disrupted the flow of traffic to retrace our steps and there he was standing in front of the Lego Store with busy shoppers just walking around him. He had never moved.
- D. The point of that story is this: Where is the Lord? Have you left him? Did you even notice that he wasn't nearby?
- E. Whatever the case may be, God wants to be noticed and he want to you to talk to him with honesty. There is purpose to all of this. May we see and believe.

II. Main Point

- A. I believe the main point is: God’s delayed justice is not justice denied

III. Outline

- A. Why, Lord? —Justice seems delayed
- B. See, Lord! —God see the wicked’s arrogance
- C. Yes, Lord. —Justice will surely come

IV. Exposition

- A. Why, Lord? Where are you in our time of trouble?
 - 1. As we consider Psalm 10 this morning, I want to mention something unique about this group of psalms 8-14.

- a) Psalm 8 sounds like the product of a long, slow walk through the Garden of Eden on a beautiful day seeing and savoring God's glory displayed in every direction. There's no question and no lack of faith. Just joyful confidence in who God is!
- b) Psalm 9 has the feel of a worship service full of praise with unshakable trust in the Lord to be a stronghold in times of trouble.
- c) Psalms 10-14 take a very different tone. That joyful confidence in the previous psalms must now be fought for through laments.
 - (1) The Psalms have songs of praise and songs of lament.
 - (a) A lament—like Psalm 10—means to mourn. It is to bewail with deep sorrow.
 - i) You might wonder, is lamenting a form of complaining?
 - (1) Lamenting is bringing your pain to God
 - (2) Complaining accuses God
 - ii) The fact that the psalmist is talking to God in our psalm today, is a very good sign that he trusting in the Lord.
 - (1) Silence, anger, withdrawal may very well have proceeded this psalm, but he's now broken the silence.
- d) Seasons of life are different and so are the psalms. They help us continue trusting the Lord to the end which is necessary and a work of God's grace.
 - (1) We need Psalms of praise like that of 8 and 9 but we also need Psalms of lament like that of 10-14.
 - (2) Whatever season you are in, may you be strengthened in your resolve to press on, looking to Jesus!
 - (3) Practically speaking, our worship services have a variety of songs that do the very same thing.
 - (a) Some of us need to sing "It is well with my soul" while others need "Victory in Jesus."
 - i) Those two songs have very different tones. Both are true and both are needed.

2. Now **let's be helped by learning to question God.**

- a) Let me ask the obvious question: May we speak to God like this: Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
 - (1) I was taught never to question God. My guess is that some of you were too.
 - (a) What I think they meant was, do not question God's character nor his motives. But it should be very normal for us to speak to God in this relational way.
 - (b) (Psalm 13:1 ESV) How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?
 - (c) If I come home from work and Kimberly keeps her distance from me, I will naturally ask her what's going on.
 - i) I love her. We are in a marriage relationship. It is normal and right to do this. And I am not going pull out the marriage license either. I am going to simply ask her why is she avoiding me.
 - ii) But is it okay to do this with God?
 - iii) The simple answer is, yes.
 - (1) But we usually want to qualify it. We must first affirm that God is God. He is sovereign and good. His righteousness is as high as the mountains.
 - (2) All of that is true but the psalmist doesn't say that.
 - (3) He just speaks as though he is in a covenant relationship with God.
 - (2) Let me illustrate this with a story:

- (a) In 2016, my lifelong friend named Jerry lost his few month old grandson, Jack. He was a healthy baby boy but suddenly his life was taken away for no obvious reason while sleeping in his crib. I stopped by to check on he and his wife a few days after this happened.
- (b) I asked them both how they were doing and I got exactly what I expected. Before I arrived I had planned to press the issue. I loved them very much and I wanted to see how they felt about God in all of this.
- (c) After asking a few more times, I finally asked them directly how they were processing these times of trouble. “Are you angry with God?”
- (d) Then they began to open up. I encouraged them to ask God the hard questions they were wrestling with. I assured them that God could handle their questions. Their frustrations. Their anger. Their confusion.
- (e) They both began asking why, Lord, and it was part of their healing but more importantly it was means for them both to continue trusting the Lord and they are.
- (f) They are coming up on 10 years and I recall even a few years after the loss of saying to my friend, I believe we are getting to see some of the good things God has done through this tragedy. In other words, we are seeing some of the why play out before us.
 - i) But there were things deeper still that God was doing that all of us were likely not even aware of.
 - ii) One thing we know that God is doing for his people is the testing of their faith.
 - iii) How will you know if your faith is genuine?
 - (1) One purpose behind the delayed injustice of God in Psalm 10 is quite possibly the testing of their faith.(1 Peter 1:6-7 ESV) ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - (2) At the resurrection when we behold Christ, those who have endured to the end will no longer be asking why. We will understand that Christ kept us in the faith through various trials of this life.
 - (3) Indeed, we will rejoice but for now, (1 Peter 4:12-13 ESV) ¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

- B. So we have observed the asking of why God is hidden in times of trouble but the psalmist goes further by drawing God’s attention to those unjust acts done by the wicked. **See, Lord!**
- 1. The psalmist exposes the heart of the wicked.
 - a) If I were to expand the illustration from earlier, it would be normal for Kimberly to expose what I had done so that I would see and respond.
 - b) Verses 2-11 do that very thing.
 - 2. There in verse 2, in arrogance the wicked hunts down the humble.
 - a) The psalmist points out that the evildoer’s actions say very clearly that he has nothing to worry about because no one is higher and more exalted than himself. He arrogantly takes what he wants.

- b) In fact, verse 3 says he not only thinks this way but also boasts out loud.
 - (1) He laughs because he continually away with it.
 - (2) Everyone is needy but the fool decidedly takes what he needs by taking advantage of the humble. He seeks gain dishonestly.
 - (a) This has the flavor of those annoying scammers that call and prey on the elderly to gain access to their bank account.
 - (b) But this isn't merely the work of scammers but all of us.
 - i) Timecards get padded.
 - ii) Taking supplies that won't be missed
 - iii) Doing less than what we are paid to do
 - iv) Overcharging
 - v) Selling something while withholding information that something is wrong with it.
 - vi) I see this everyday.
 - (c) Do we use people only for what we can get out of them? May we see our own arrogance and humble ourselves before the Lord.
 - (d) May we not be found like the one in Psalm 10 who by his actions and his prideful boasts curse and deny YHWH.
 - i) If you find yourself compromised, repent and turn to Jesus. Judge your sin now not later.
 - ii) I'm saying this to all of us. But let me speak directly to those who have never professed faith in Christ.
 - (1) We believe that God sent his Son into the world to pay for our sins himself on the cross.
 - (2) And if you will turn from those sins and receive the gift of forgiveness by faith in Christ you will be forgiven and counted righteous in him.
 - (3) For the Christian who is living in sin, do not think that you will not be held accountable. This may be a merciful warning to turn back. If you confess your sins he is faithful and just to forgive. Pause right now and do that.
3. Interestingly, that is what the wicked man thinks there in verse 4.
 - a) Not only does he think that he has and will continue to avoid any consequences for his actions, he has also concluded that God doesn't even exist.
 - (1) What does the evidence say about you unbeliever?
 - (2) You have an opportunity today to believe that God does exist and there will be consequences but if you will make Christ your treasure then your consequences are swallowed up in the cross of Christ.
 - (a) You are now free to work for honest gain instead of greed.
4. The extent to which we have the capacity to think so highly as human beings shows itself in verse 6.
 - a) The wicked says to himself—I will never be shaken! I will not be in adversity! I will never be inconvenienced! I will *a/ways* be positive and in the positive.
 - (1) Do you see what the wicked say? From generation to generation, I will not be moved.
 - (2) Does he believe that he will even escape death? Or does he mean that he will pass on his abilities and beliefs to his kids?
 - b) Are you invincible? Untouchable? Do you sound like the wicked man who thinks this way and believes this is a true reality or is it just an illusion?
 - (1) Verse 7 reveals his narcissistic beliefs.

- (2) Paul Tripp said this one time:
- (a) Proud people are
 - i) Defensive
 - ii) Entitled (they deserve things that other people don't deserve)
 - iii) Use people instead of serve people
 - iv) Pride allows me to convince myself that I can step over God's boundaries without any consequences
 - v) Long before a fall, the proud person has lost his functional fear of God and so he's not afraid anymore to write his own rules
 - (b) Where are you, my friend?
 - i) Have you drifted to a place that is not recognizable?
 - ii) The wicked in Psalm 10 did not wake up one day become this arrogant and evil.
 - (1) For sure, like all of us, we are born with a sin nature.
 - (2) But it was the small compromises that led to such depravity.
 - (3) Is there a way back?
 - (4) **Absolutely! You have today. Today is the day of salvation.**
5. Verse 11—(Psalm 10:11 ESV) He says in his heart, "God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it."
 - a) I guess he did not consider that someone would write a song about him to be sang over and over again that is calling attention to his actions.
 - b) His posture is the opposite of my point where the psalmist is saying—SEE, LORD!
 6. In fact, the songwriter breaks away from his focus on the wicked to call for action from the Lord there in verse 12.
 - a) In poetry, this is called an apostrophe.
 - b) The abrupt switch is intentional and forceful.
 - c) He moved from observation to petition.
 - d) If he were playing basketball, we would call this a pivot.
 7. The why in verse 1 and the observations in 2-11 have led to this turning point.
 - a) As we began this morning, I asked you to walk the path of this psalmist that you too might have such a turning point.
 - b) The circumstances have not changed but he is beginning to get back to what the psalmist sounded like in Psalm 9.
 - c) If I could encourage you at this point in the message with some practical ways to get here.
 - (1) Set aside some unhurried time to think deeply about your heart.
 - (a) To give it a spiritual discipline category, it is called silence and solitude.
 - (b) Go rent a cabin. Come stay in our bonus room. Find a place where you can hear God's word, examine your heart, meditate on Scripture and commune with the Lord.
 - (c) If you all have access to such places, maybe you should make your church family aware of them and offer them when it is convenient for both of you.
 8. Well, the psalmists pivots back in verse 13 and 14 to which the text says—But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation.
 - a) Or to say it another way: you always see the one who inflicts pain and suffering.
 - b) This is where the psalmist needed to return. Like Psalm 73 when Asaph with holy wrath looks upon the prosperity of the wicked he finally stops drifting towards unbelief when he considers their end.

- (1) We must remember that God's justice delayed is not justice denied.
- (2) The end is coming for us all and we will have to give an account before the Judge who will make all things right.

C. Well, we have considered the why and we have watched the psalmist draw attention to the wicked's actions and now we hear the resolve of a struggling but trusting believer in our last point—Yes, Lord.

- 1. I don't think this has been a selfish diatribe but rather a sorrowful lament over the disregard of God's glory and name as injustices continue to fall on the downtrodden and helpless.
- 2. We haven't talked much about the poor and afflicted but they too could have walked away from the Lord and took up the same ways as the wicked to have what they needed.
 - a) However, it seems clear that by God's grace they continued to entrust themselves to the Lord.
 - (1) Imagine their situation: lurking behind every bush there seemed to be this cowardly evildoer setting a trap for the oppressed.
 - (2) It's hard to understand why this is happening when you are hungry and helpless.
 - (3) Doubts pop up in your mind. Plans start being formulated. Plans B and C and D are ready to go.
 - (4) And yet, you look back and see God's faithfulness getting you through those days and those well thought out plans are long forgotten.
- 3. The psalmist petitions the Lord again to do justice on the wicked.
- 4. He makes a confession of YES, LORD: Verse 16—The LORD is king forever and ever.
 - a) He is saying, I am content to wait for your justice because it will come someday.
 - b) But he goes on to ask while he waits—verse 17—O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.
- 5. Is there any hope for the wicked though? I hope so because we are all wicked.
 - a) There is none righteous, no not one.
 - b) I think mentioning the Apostle Paul who was a terrorist is fitting here.
 - (1) (1 Timothy 1:12-17 ESV) ¹² I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

V. Conclusion

- A. The fact is, this psalm and many others have built a category for the suffering of the righteous like Job but more importantly it was pointing us to the ultimate injustice on a cross of Christ in the place of wicked sinners like us.
- B. He took the just penalty that he might justify us by his grace.
- C. I hope very much that you will receive this amazing gift offered to you.

- D. And I hope for those of you who are struggling with the unjust circumstances of life that you will follow the psalmist here and be resolved to press on until justice is served completely and rightly someday soon.
- E. Maybe you are living in Psalm 8 and 9 and I am so happy that you are but tuck this psalm away because you never know when the shoe may fall and you need a way to fight the good fight of faith to the end.
- F. Justice delayed is not justice denied.