

## Psalm 10

### Dealing with Disillusionment

**Introduction:** Psalm 9 and 10 can be taken as one Psalm - this is the way the Septuagint has it and a few christian traditions follow this pattern for two reasons the flow is seamless between the two and there is no title to Psalm 10.

These two Psalms follow the pattern of many other Psalms in that what is being reflected on is the reality of two worlds, or two kingdoms. The Kingdom of God, and the kingdom of man and how we make sense out of God being God (- All Loving, All just, All Knowing, All powerful) and the world being in the state that it is in.

Psalm 9 celebrates God as Judge and King, whereas Psalm 10 focuses on Mankind as predator and prey - showing the brutality of the world around us..

The question we face is how does one handle this sort of world, and not become so jaded, removed or complicit in the evil around us?

The answer is - by deep contemplation and prayer upon Yahweh the Judge and the true King of the World.

Eugene Peterson writes - "Our habit is to talk about God, not to him. We love discussing God. The Psalms resist these discussions. They are not provided to teach us about God (these people knew God, through the teaching of the Law (Torah)) but to train us in responding to him. We don't learn the Psalms in until we are praying them."

So this is what we are doing for the next number of Sundays. We are learning to be still before God, to think on his word, to mull it over, to allow it to hit us where God intends to hit us - right in the heart. Then to respond. Our initial reactions to God's word are not always the right reaction..sometimes we are angry with God, frustrated, afraid, bitter, flippant - somber when we should be jovial, jovial when we should be somber.. In the Psalms we find a myriad of human emotions: Delight, Fear, Anger, Joy, Grief, Depression, Gladness, Loneliness, Love, and Loss. But while the Psalms allow us to express our

raw emotions they simultaneously seek to shape them into righteous ones. With the Psalms we can approach God with brutal honesty, seeking to be rooted in truth and ready to submit to him.

But why do this? Why is prayer important? Prayer is important for so many reasons; but the reason we are taking time to meditate and pray together is because -“Prayer is the way that all the things we believe in and that Christ has won for us actually become our strength. Prayer is the way that truth is worked into your heart to create new instincts, reflexes, and dispositions.” - Tim Keller

Prayer is the way God works his word and the new life in the Spirit into us..

### **So let's contemplate and pray together through Psalm 10:**

1. As I mentioned last week in Psalm 9 we have the thanksgiving, praise, trust and assurance that God is King and Judge; he is present and acting; but in Psalm 10 God is distant..(at least it feels that way) and Mankind is the one present and acting as Predator and Prey.
2. We mentioned last week how David had built a healthy rhythm of inhaling thanksgiving, recounting God's grace mercy and salvation, and exhaling renewed trust in God. Now we come to the moment that all that discipline is put to the test.
  1. **The characteristics of the wicked** -David list out many characteristics of the wicked he - Arrogance, renouncing the LORD, Denial of God's presence, care or judgement. The wicked are prosperous, their mouth is filled with cursing, lies and oppression, he murders the innocent, takes advantage of the helpless, takes advantage of the poor, he crushes the helpless... Again he says, there is no God, he doesn't care, I'll never be judged.. the World and those around him is his for the plundering and the taking.
    1. David isn't necessarily shocked by the evil in the world, he's seen his fair share of it. What troubles David is that God - The God of Israel who loves, justice and mercy, who cares for the poor and needy, who is the judge and the king of the universe seems indifferent at worst, and absent at best.
    2. David's biggest question is "Why?" **"Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?"** Why indeed?

2. Who hasn't felt this way? Maybe you feel this way even now - Where is God, doesn't he see what is happening in the world - Because of greed people are starving, and being blown to pieces. Because of hate and racism families and neighborhoods are being ripped apart.. Because of radical false religion people are being hacked to pieces, raped and displaced.. where is God, why does he hide from trouble? I'm overwhelmed by my finances, my marriage is killing me, my kids are breaking my heart, my boss is a heartless jerk and I hate her, my sins or my addiction is overwhelming me...where is God?
3. Listen to this Psalm. The Psalmist is approaching God with brutal honesty, He's upset, he's angry at the injustices that he sees; he's angry about the way the world is, often he's even angry at the way he is, angry with his own sins, moral failures, inconsistencies and brokenness. But these don't drive him from God, they drive him to God. While his emotions are raw and wild, he seeks to be rooted in truth and ready to submit to God's wisdom and God's ways. While the Psalms allow us to express our raw emotions to God they simultaneously seek to shape them into righteous ones.
  1. "The Psalms, in a sense, give you the permission to pour out your complaints in a way that we might think inappropriate, if it wasn't there in the Scriptures. But on the other hand, the Psalms demand that you bow in the end to the sovereignty of God in a way that modern culture wouldn't lead you to believe." - Tim Keller
    1. I bring this point up because many of us take a cursory reading of the scripture and think or say, "well I got nothing from that reading" Really? (Bart Ehrman's question)
    2. Did you stop and actually think about your life in any deep significant way, or think about the world around you in any deep significant way. I challenge you to take what is burdening you, what is causing you to pull away from those around you, what is causing you to pull away from God, what is causing you to doubt God's goodness, what is causing you to be indifferent or hard hearted towards the way of the world and to bring it before God, and wait and listen to his word and to what he will say to you. Remember -The need for Counter Formation. As much time as you read the news, take in social media, or whatever median of culture and influence - you should spend twice that amount countering it all with God's

truth, and in God's presence. I don't say this as a rule for godliness, but as a life giving, heart protecting, mind fixing tool for your spiritual health and well being.

4. Even in this Psalm, though David lays out this complaint to the LORD, and never get's his "why" question answered - he ends the Psalm with these words of total confidence - **"The Lord is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land. 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."**

1. How did David know that God would hear the afflicted, that he would strengthen their heart, that God would bring justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, that God would remove all terror from the earth?? How can we know God hears our cries and sees our distresses? How can we know that he will remove all sin and evil from the earth?
2. David knew the stories of God's faithfulness, he constantly recounted them to himself and those around him. He had experienced God's gracious rescue time and time again. - Now as much as David knew this, we know to an even greater degree that God hears the cry of the afflicted, strengthens our hearts, brings justice to all who are oppressed, and that God has and will finally deal with all sin and evil because of the work of Jesus!
3. All of God's justice and mercy is manifest in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What does God think of the way the world is? Look at Jesus, as he denounces the rich and self sufficient, look at Jesus as he denounces the religious and self righteous; look at Jesus as he has compassion on the motley crew of the outcasts of Israel - women, children, tax collectors, prostitutes, sinners, the lower class, gentiles..Look at how he hears the cry of the afflicted healing his wounds and his sins, see how lifts the demonic oppression from off Mary of Magdala. See how he welcomes the children. See how Jesus exalts what is despised in the world and despises what is exalted...

4. Ultimately we see that the Cross is the greatest demonstration of God's hearing those in distress, of strengthening our hearts, of bringing justice to all, and removing all sin and evil from the earth.
5. We know God so loves and hears the helpless, the afflicted, and the oppressed that he literally became one of them, **“by oppression and judgment he was taken away.”** -Isaiah 53:3-8 says, **“He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all. He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people. He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone.”**
  1. “I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the One Nietzsche ridiculed as 'God on the cross.' In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time after a while I have had to turn away. And in imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs

wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in Godforsaken darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross that symbolizes divine suffering. 'The cross of Christ ... is God's only self-justification in such a world" as ours....' 'The other gods were strong; but thou wast weak; they rode, but thou didst stumble to a throne; But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak, And not a god has wounds, but thou alone.'" - John Stott

2. How do we know God hates evil and judges sin and injustice? Look at the cross! How do we know he cares about our afflictions - look at the cross! How do we know he loves us - Look at the Cross! When God, the King and judge of the universe, came to earth he did not bring wrath and judgment but instead he bore all the wrath and judgment that everyone of us deserves on the cross. The cross is not only the place where God empathizes with the radical pain, suffering, and injustices of humanity but where he destroys the power of sin, and death that have cause all of this to take place. This means now when God makes all things new he can judge and destroy all sin and evil without destroying us...because our sins have already been judged and paid for at the cross.
5. But again why does God often feel so distant in times of trouble? And what if we never get our "Why" question answered?
  1. I have become more and more convinced that God allows us to see trouble, to experience trials, to become disillusioned with life so that we would let go of whatever false hopes we might have in order to hope in him, in order that we might go to him, and cultivate a greater trust and dependence on him, that we might deepen our relationship. Though God might feel distant in these circumstances we know because of the work of the cross that God cannot actually be distant from us - The all sufficient work of

Jesus' death on the cross has removed any and all barriers to God's presence.

2. Paul said that he had a situation while doing ministry in Asia that caused him to despair of life itself - but he said that this happened in order that he would not rely on himself (Or anything else) but in God who raises the dead. He says, He delivered us from such a deadly peril and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”
  1. Plain and simple, if we didn't have trials and troubles in our life we wouldn't cry out to God, we wouldn't pour over his Word, or wait on him - we would not cultivate a relationship at all. And yet God created us for himself, that we might be in relationship with him, that we might know him, in order that we might trust in him with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding, but that in all our ways we would acknowledge him and that he like a loving Father would teach us and direct our steps. So like David don't let your anger and confusion at the way of the world drive you from God, let it drive you to him, as a child would to their father or mother and see what he will answer you.

### **3. Contemplation #2**

#### **1. Thought**

1. Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? Why do you feel so distant? Where are You; don't you see; don't you care? - What thoughts or situations come to your mind when you hear these words?

#### **2. Confession**

1. LORD, God, when we see evil running rampant. When we see disease killing our loved ones. When we experience our own lives falling apart physically and emotionally. When we see injustices taking place from broken down legal systems, to ISIS and other terrorist organizations, to the evils and abuse of power of our own government, to global hunger, to homelessness and refugees, to rape and sex trafficking, from corporate greed to each individual trashing God's creation, from hate crimes to racism - we doubt

your goodness, we doubt your justice, we doubt your presence and your love.

### 3. Repentance

1. Forgive us, O God - How can we ever doubt your love, your care and your presence. You are the only true God who came to this earth to bear our guilt, shame, sin and judgment in order that we might be forgiven, that we might be healed, that we might be part of a new creation - Your kingdom where righteousness dwells forever.
2. Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### 4. Scripture

1. **“Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” - Romans 8:35-39**

### 5. Prayer -

1. Holy and Beloved God, it is hard to hope when all seems lost. The darkness in the world has a way of blurring our vision, of taking our eyes off of your goodness and promises. It’s hardest to see your light when our eyes are shut – shut to you, shut to each other, and shut to the suffering that is just barely disguised by thin smiles and haunted eyes. Yet, your light shines through the cross of Christ. Your hope abides with us, awakening us to your love,

and calling us to share your light with each other. Help us prepare a way for you in our hearts, that your love might open our hearts to see you fully in the world. Lord you have brought us safely out of a slavery greater than Egypt and prepared a table for us in the presence of our enemies. Have mercy on us today that we might not be overwhelmed by evil but that we would overwhelm evil with good, humbling trusting in your power to save.

2. King of heaven and earth, you make all things new through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Open our senses, minds, and hearts to the good news of your kingdom. Transform and empower our lives by this word, so that our lives might help bring your heavenly kingdom to earth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen