



Psalm 10

WHY DOES GOD HIDE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE?

*One could object that it is not worthy of God to wield the sword. Is God not love, longsuffering, and all-powerful love? A counter-question could go something like this: Is it not a bit too arrogant to presume that our contemporary sensibilities about what is compatible with God's love are so much healthier than those of the people of God throughout the whole history of Judaism and Christianity? ...One could further argue that in a world of violence it would not be worthy of God **not to wield** the sword; if God were not angry at injustice and deception and did not make the final end to violence, God would not be worthy of our worship. ...I suggest imagining that you are delivering a lecture in a war zone. Among your listeners are people whose cities and villages have been first plundered, then burned and leveled to the ground, whose daughters and sisters have been raped, whose fathers and brothers have had their throats slit. ...Soon you would discover that it takes the quiet of a suburban home for the birth of the thesis that human non-violence corresponds to God's refusal to judge. In a scorched land, soaked in the blood of the innocent, it will invariably die. And as one watches it die, one will do well to reflect about many other pleasant captivities of the liberal mind.* —Miroslav Volf

Psalm 10 is often coupled with Psalm 9 in ancient texts. Both were written by David and together they form a “broken” acrostic poem.

THE PROBLEM (10:1-11)

God is good, all-powerful, compassionate, and just (9:9-12) but...
 Why does He seem to _____ in times of trouble?
 Why does He seem to be _____ with ongoing violence?

David saw the effects of crime and violence in his nation as the wicked, in their arrogant pride, willfully and callously preyed on and crushed the weak and vulnerable...and seemed to prosper.

The Description of the Wicked:

His Thoughts:

His Mouth:

His Heart:



His Actions:

A unifying element of this early collection of psalms may be identified as David's constant struggle with his enemies to establish the messianic kingdom of righteousness and peace.

—O. Palmer Robertson

Wicked. Hebrew, *rasha*, “one who is actively bad; a criminal.” From a root verb, “to make a noise or tumult; to agitate.”

Pride is the mother of all wrongs; for if a man did magnify himself above his neighbors and through an overweening conceit of himself despise them, even common humanity would teach us with what humility and justice we ought to conduct ourselves towards each other. —John Calvin

“There is no God” is the sum of all his devices. ...Everything the wicked schemes is based on the idea that there is no God to bring him to justice. —Allen P. Ross

If there is no God, everything is permitted. —Fyodor Dostoevsky

THE PRAYER (10:12-15)

_____ and take action!

_____ the humble and vulnerable!

_____ the evildoer!

It is a prayer for justice, prayed with passion, urgency, and anger.

A Few Biblical Principles on Anger:

1. Evil, injustice, and suffering exist in the world, often caused by evil, willfully destructive people (Gen. 3-4; Rom. 3:10-18).
2. Anger is a natural, even godly, response to evil and injustice (cf. Psalms 5, 11, 35, 52, 58, 59, 69, 83, 94, 109, 137, 139, 143).
3. Anger that is not properly dealt with is sinful and destructive (cf. Ps. 37:8; Prov. 14:17; 22:24-25; 29:22; Eph. 4:26; Heb. 12:15).
4. Our anger is not to be denied, downplayed, or stuffed... nor is it to be fed, nurtured, or vented out on others (cf. Prov. 29:11).
5. Our anger is to be expressed to God, handed over to Him, and replaced by His grace and peace (Rom. 12:17-21; Eph. 4:31-32).

THE PEACE (10:16-18)

David finds peace, comfort, and stability in one great truth:

_____ (10:16a).

God's eyes see the sin, injustice, and suffering in the world (10:14).

God's ears hear the prayer of the humble and the weak (10:17).

God's hand will judge sin, removing evil from the earth (10:16b, 18).

God Himself experienced the greatest injustice and extended the greatest grace at the _____. Therefore we can trust Him!

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever felt like God was absent at a critical point in your life? If so, what questions and emotions did you wrestle with? How have you processed those emotions since then or have you?
- What do you typically do when you get angry? Deny it? Stuff it? Vent it? Grow resentful? Have you ever expressed it to God?
- How can faith in God's sovereignty and justice give you peace?

Ancient cultures, apart from Israel, completely lacked any sense that the poor or the weak might have the slightest intrinsic value. —Tom Holland

The Psalms mirror every human emotion and help us articulate them in prayer to God. God invites our honest prayers. When we are deeply harmed and our anger boils, it would be both fruitless (God reads our hearts) and dangerous to suppress those emotions rather than turning them over to God.

—Tremper Longman III

By placing his enemies in the hands of God, David acknowledges that revenge is His alone. Perhaps these psalms were the only thing that stood between David and the revenge he would have taken. ...We are a people in perpetual denial of the hidden hate we have for our enemies. Jesus showed us that hatred is a wound that must be healed, that denial is a paralysis only He can heal. Without lament these wounds continue to fester.

—Michael Card

For the followers of the crucified Messiah, the main message of the imprecatory Psalms is this: rage belongs before God. ...By placing unattended rage before God we place both our unjust enemy and our own vengeful self face-to-face with a God who loves and does justice. Hidden in the dark chambers of our hearts and nourished by the system of darkness, hate grows and seeks to infest everything with its hellish will to exclusion. In the light of the justice and love of God, however, hate recedes and the seed is planted for the miracle of forgiveness. —Miroslav Volf