

Psalm 10

Introduction – We live in a world where, optimistic as we are called to be, sin and the horrible results of sin, are a living, ongoing reality. We are tempted at times to think that God does not care. Quite the opposite, He teaches us in Psalm 10 how to pray against it and how to complain properly before Him. *“To the Church of God during times of persecution and to individual saints who are smarting under the hand of the proud sinner, this Psalm furnishes suitable language both for prayer and praise.”* – Spurgeon.

Sanctified Complaint (v1) – In God’s providence, it sometimes appears from our vantage point as if God is aloof to our concerns and needs. And yet, here we see that God has composed a prayer for us in just such times. Spurgeon again – *“The refiner is never far from the mouth of the furnace when his gold is in the fire, and the Son of God is always walking in the midst of the flames when his holy children are cast into them.”* And there are dozens of reasons that our heavenly Father has placed us in such flames: past sins, strengthening of faith, discovering our depravity, life-instruction – these may be why God appears at times to hide His face. One obvious reason in this Psalm’s context is to instruct the godly to turn and cry out to God to put down the wicked.

The Character of the Ungodly (vv2-11) – Part of our singing to God is to include a long description of what characterizes the wicked which should increase our hatred of our own sin and drive us to the choruses of verses like 12, 15, and 17 – *“Arise, O God...Break their arms...cause Your ear to hear...”*

Arrogance (vv2-4) – When a man puts a premium on his own desires, when he thinks that people ought to be more concerned about him, when he acts hurt because others are not caring for him first, when he acts in his own behalf at the expense of the poor or the weak, this man is full of pride, self-exaltation, arrogance. And the more full of himself he becomes, the less room there is in his life for God.

Prosperity (v5) – One would think that arrogance would always lead to a great fall. But in this life, sometimes the arrogant brag all the way to the top. Instead of experiencing God’s judgment, the wicked man prospers. Prosperity is a means of testing how little a man trusts in God.

False Security (v6) – Arrogance and great possessions gone to seed bloom into false security as though such a man were fully insulated from any harm upon this earth.

Vile Speech (v7) – Not only is the wicked man a malicious thief; his vain speech is full of vile cursing. And this matters to God as well, so much so that Paul will quote this verse in Rom 3:14 to describe the nature of all the ungodly.

Bully-Violence (vv8-10) – Men are supposed to be warriors, and this means that there will be times of violence in the lives of the righteous. But the wicked man crouches in hiding, waiting like a lion for the moment to strike out at the weak, the helpless, and the poor. His violence is never for the protection of others, but for his own gain alone.

Arrogance (v11) – Pride can be so subtle, but arrogance truly bookends the man who does not humble himself and trust the Lord. Instead, he creates a ‘new’ theology where he remembers things God has forgotten and he knows things God has never known.

Beseeking God to Act (vv12-18) – God’s apparent toleration of the wicked can bring suspicions to His saints that the boasts about God not seeing or not caring are true. It is easy to repeat again the true character of God in some technical or catechetical fashion, but the words sometimes ring hollow when the empirical reality of suffering or persecution or unending trials brought on by the wicked indicate precisely the opposite. What the psalmist wants is action – and so he prays.

Arise, O Lord (vv12-15) – The wicked say that God has forgotten and so the humble beseech God to not forget. They know His hand is great and so they call on Him to lift up His hand and break the arm of the wicked (v15). He is Father to the fatherless and the strength to the helpless, and He has seen what has befallen us (v14). Sometimes it takes the sustaining trial to cause us to realize how much we need to depend upon God Almighty. Calvin warns that it is very difficult to apply these generalities about God to our particular situations, but we are to learn from the Psalm and the psalmist that this is exactly what he was doing. It may seem for a time that God is not taking notice; it is precisely in those times that we should have this psalm upon our tongue and heart.

Preparing Hearts and Ears (vv16-18) – In the midst of the petition, the psalmist does declare the character of God. The Lord is king and the (heathen) nations have been put down (v16). Our prayers for the reformation of the church and for His grace to grant us to be salt and light once again on this earth are prayers He has prepared in our hearts and is prepared to hear. Our prayers that He would remove the wicked from the Supreme and other Federal Courts and from the Congress, and that the God-hating education system imposed upon our land would be broken are prayers He has prepared for us to pray and for Himself hear.

From Wicked To Righteous – The characteristics of the wicked come far too close to each one of us to simply think that we are not in that camp; at least not in and of ourselves. In Romans 3 (where he will quote Psalm 10:7 in Romans 3:14), Paul is making the point that *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* To sing this psalm against the wicked requires faith, and that faith must be in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus. And that faith must be in His finished work for you upon the cross. And if you have that faith, it is a faith to sing, for *“the Lord is King forever and ever; the nations have perished out of His land.”* And here we remain, safe in the strong arms of the One who has and will put down all of His enemies.