

My Cry

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[0 : 00] One question that I haven't asked any of you today, to my shame actually, is how many Psalms you've read. So out of the 150 Psalms, I wonder how many of them you've read, and how often you've read them.

Arguably the Psalms are the most read part of the Bible, and they definitely are the most read part of the Old Testament. And the reason for this is that the Psalms wrestle with every form of human emotion.

They wrestle with the same questions that we often wrestle with. So you have times where the writer is soaring, and he is content as he praises his God. You have times where he is speaking about the greatness of creation, and the greatness of God, and for creating such beauty.

We can resonate with those, can't we? Those times, we love to call them mountaintop times. But the Psalms also talk of valley experiences. So you have some Psalms where the writer is crying out to God in anger.

He's crying out in pain, and he's troubled by the things that he sees around him. And like this evening in Psalm 10, the writer is crying out to God, lamenting and questioning why God appears absent.

[1 : 12] So the big question of this Psalm, the big theme that the writer of the Psalm is doing in this Psalm, is he's crying out to God. And he's saying, God, why are you allowing injustice?

He's saying, God, I am being oppressed. I'm being persecuted. My enemy is winning. God, why are you letting this happen to me? Now, history is filled with stories of people who've cried out to God in the same way.

And if we're honest, we've probably cried out to God with the same question, haven't we? I recently read *The Hiding Place*, which is the testimony book of Corrie ten Boom, *Mars on Holiday*.

If you don't know the story, I will summarize it very, very briefly for you. Corrie ten Boom lived during World War II in Holland. She was a Christian woman. And to cut a long story short, she was running an underground network, which was responsible for hiding and keeping Jews safe during World War II.

But it wasn't long before they were discovered by the SS. Corrie's house was raided and her and her whole family were arrested. They were taken to prison. And then eventually, Corrie and her sister were moved to a concentration camp for women in Germany.

[2 : 30] The book is filled with a horrible story of how Corrie lost her father and her sister because they tried to save the lives of innocent people.

It describes horrible but true stories of people starving in concentration camps, being executed, being beaten to death and being worked to death. It's not an enjoyable read, really.

Let me just read one section of the book for you. This is Corrie. She's writing as she's in the concentration camp in Germany. The loud speaker in the men's camp was sounding the signal for roll call.

But no order was given here. And so we drifted around aimlessly. Listening, we scarcely knew for what. Names were being read on the men's speaker, though it was too far away to make them out. And suddenly an insane fear gripped the waiting women. A death-like silence now hung over both sides of this vast camp.

[3 : 33] The loud speaker had fallen silent. We feared to even breathe. We exchanged wordless looks. Then rifle fire split the air.

Around us women began to weep. A second volley, a third. For two hours the executions went on and on. Somebody counted.

More than 700 male prisoners died that day. So reading that book on holiday absolutely broke my heart.

It made me ask God the question, God, why would you let that happen? Why would you let those people die? They didn't do anything to deserve that death. God, why did you hide yourself? You can almost guarantee that people in those camps asked the very same question. In their desperation, they cried out to God, why? We are being oppressed, God. Why aren't you helping us?

[4 : 41] What have we done to deserve this? We are innocent. God, where is our justice? Injustice is horrible. When justice isn't served, we get angry and frustrated.

It's a raw emotion. God, why? That's the question that people asked on 9-11 as the planes hit the Twin Towers. God, why?

Why? Is the question that has been asked all over the UK this week in light of the Manchester Arena attack. God, why would you let an 8-year-old girl die?

God, why would you let a man be born who would do such a horrible thing? Why was a bus carrying Syrian evacuees allowed to explode, killing 126 people?

68 of whom were innocent children. It is all overwhelming. And we ask the question, God, why?

Why? But we also know injustice in our own lives too, don't we?

[5 : 47] Maybe on a smaller scale. Think about that work colleague who bullies everybody but gets away with it. Or that boss who treats everybody else like a lesser person and kind of looks down on the people that he should be leading and training.

Or what about that group project at university that we all love, where we do all the work and everybody else is relaxing, but they get all the credit in the end. And the stories go on and on of how injustice rules, where people are being oppressed because sadly this is not uncommon in our world. But let's look at Psalm 10 together. And we will see a believer lamenting and questioning God over injustice. And how after considering who God is, he comes to a complete confidence in God.

Let's read Psalm chapter 10 together. So Psalm chapter 10. Why, Lord, do you stand far off?

Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In his arrogance, the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. He boasts about the cravings of his heart.

[6 : 59] He blesses the greedy and he reviles the Lord. In his pride, the wicked man does not seek him. In all his thoughts, there is no room for God. His ways are always prosperous.

Your laws are rejected by him. He sneers at all his enemies and he says to himself, nothing will shake me. He swears no one will ever do me harm. His mouth is full of lies and threats.

Trouble and evil are under his tongue. He lies in wait near the villages. From ambush, he murders the innocent. His eyes watch in secret for his victims. Like a lion in cover, he lies in wait.

He lies in wait to catch the helpless. He catches the helpless and drags them off in his net. His victims are crushed. They collapse. They fall under his strength.

He says to himself, God will never notice. He covers his face and never sees. Arise, Lord, lift up your hand, O God.

[8 : 00] Do not forget the helpless. Why, God, does the wicked man, why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, he won't call me to account?

But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted. You consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you. You are the helper to the fatherless.

Break the arm of the wicked man. Call the evildoer to account for his wickedness that would not otherwise be found out. The Lord is king forever and ever.

The nations will perish from his land. You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted. You encourage them and you listen to their cry. Defending the fatherless and the oppressed so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

Let's pray as we look at this psalm together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the encouragement that it is to us, but also for the challenge that it often brings.

[9 : 10] Help us learn from this psalm that we can come to you in our pain asking the question why. But how ultimately we need to be asking the more important question of who.

Help us to focus on you and learn from your word this evening. And we ask this in the strong and precious name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen. It will be really helpful as we look through this psalm for you to have the Bible open in front of you.

We'll be diving in at little bits throughout. But I think that there are three things that we can see from this psalm. So we see a believer who is perplexed by injustice. And we see a hopeful plea to God for justice.

And then we see a confidence in the king. So we see a believer perplexed by injustice. In verse 1 to 11. The writer of this psalm knows that God is there.

And he knows the promises of God written down in the Old Testament. But all he sees surrounding him at the moment is injustice. All he sees at the moment is a wicked man running around wreaking havoc.

[10:18] Now the writer of this psalm is probably David, King David. Psalm 9 and 10 are closely connected. So Psalm 10 is also attributed to David. But from the first reading of this psalm, we can see that David isn't standing outside of a troubled situation looking in.

He's not being untouched by this injustice. But he is writing the psalm as someone who is personally wrestling and struggling with the question of why God isn't doing anything.

And just from a brief reading of that psalm, we can understand why he's crying out to God, asking why, can't we? David is asking why, because the poor are being oppressed.

People are being exploited. People are being persecuted. And people are being killed. Isn't this relevant for us today? Aren't these the same problems that we face in our world?

All you have to do is turn on the news, open a newspaper in the morning, sometimes just look out the window and we see the same problems. And David sees all of this injustice and it leads him to cry out to God in verse 1.

[11:29] God, why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? David cries to God because he knows that God is the only one who can solve this problem. But it is important to notice that David isn't crying to God as someone who has lost his faith.

But he is crying out to God because there's just so much injustice going on around him and he doesn't get it. It's almost as if he can't understand why God isn't stepping in.

And so David is crying from a broken heart as the God whom he loves and serves seems to be absent. The God who has previously helped him and protected him now allows evil to prevail.

It doesn't make sense. We get that feeling, don't we? Maybe when we lose a loved one. When we or a loved one gets sick.

Maybe when we're facing loneliness. We cry out to God in pain and we say, God, why would you let this happen? We cry out like Job did.

[12:36] A man who knew suffering. A man who lost everything. We cry out saying, I cry to you God, but you do not answer. God, where are you? But David's trouble all seems to come from a particular individual.

And he uses a number of characteristics to describe this man to us. Firstly, as verse 2 very obviously states, he is a wicked man. Someone who hunts down the weak.

Or a better translation might be someone who pursues the poor. So this person is described as an oppressor. Is this concept of an oppressor something difficult for us to grasp in today's world?

Well, I don't think it is. Look at some of the things happening. We have people being forced to leave their homes. People being subject to torture or death unless they conform to a certain faith.

Or a certain lifestyle. And the wicked man is proud. He boasts about the cravings of his heart. He praises those who are greedy. And he blesses those who gather resources to themselves in a bad way.

[13:44] And in his prize, this wicked man reviles God. So this is not just a mild rejection of God. But he is purposefully going against God and mocking him in the process.

He is openly criticizing God in an abusive and angry way. In his mind, there is no room for God. As the Austrian philosopher Martin Buber said, There is no room for God in him who is full of himself.

The only thing on this man's mind is himself and how he can be number one. And the strange thing is, is that he appears to be prosperous.

He isn't being persecuted. He isn't being oppressed. God isn't judging him. And to his proud mind, all of this makes him think that he is above God. And you see that in verse 6 where he says, Nothing can shake me.

He says, No one will ever do me harm. He thinks he is untouchable. Nicolai Ceaușescu was the Romanian dictator for 24 years.

[14:52] And he also thought he was untouchable. Now if you were here this morning, you have probably heard that I lived in Romania for a number of years. So I first heard firsthand some of the stories of Nicolai Ceaușescu's pride.

And the things that he did as a result of that pride. All of the things that Ceaușescu did were an attempt to make himself to be the biggest and best man that Romania had ever seen.

And so on December 25th, 1989, as he was arrested and tried in court, he screamed and shouted at the people saying, You should be ashamed of yourselves.

I'm a great man. I've loved Romania like a father loves a child. Even as he sat through the court process, he couldn't believe it was happening because he thought he was untouchable, like this man in Psalm 10.

Look at verses 7 to 10 and look at some of the words that David uses to describe how this wicked man treats people. He lies and uses threats.

[15:53] Trouble and evil are under his tongue. He murders the innocent. He waits for his victims like a lion hunts its prey. He catches the helpless and drags them off. His victims collapse under his strength.

Now when we read those few verses, we can understand why David is crying out to God, can't we? This is a nasty guy. It's an outrage what he's doing.

We understand why David is crying out to God, saying, God, why are you letting this happen? We feel David's pain. Why hasn't God stopped this man in his tracks?

But the thing that David points out to be worst of all is that first and foremost, this wicked man is a man without God. In verse 11, he even mocks God by saying that God will never notice.

God covers his face. He never sees. Now the question that's probably running through your mind at the moment is that surely I am not saying that all people without God are like this.

[16:56] I mean, we probably don't think we're anything like this wicked man, do we? I don't think any of us in this room have had desires to oppress the poor. But like this wicked man in verse 4, every person in the world has had a desire to reject God at one point or another.

So no, I am not saying that everyone in the world is like this wicked man, but I am saying that this wicked man at the core is similar to everybody in this world because we all want to reject God.

It's natural. So often we remove God from the rightful place that he has in our hearts and we put ourselves as ultimate authority over our lives.

Our sin and pride are not conscious, well thought through decisions. Often we sin before we even realize we're doing it because it's natural to us. Although we are able to see the sins of others with clarity, we tend to be blind to our own.

Our desire is for money or to have the acceptance of others and the list can go on and on. And before we know it, we have replaced God's place in our heart with the desires of the flesh.

[18:18] In light of injustice, it's really easy for us to relate to David here, isn't it? We see injustice all around us and we want to know the answer to the question, why?

We want to know why God allows horrible things to happen, often to innocent people. Because that's what we want. We want justice. We want God to punish evil.

And so as Christians, when we face injustice, we cry out to God because he is the only one who can resolve it. And he is the only one who can bring real justice. And so that is what David does.

He turns to God with a hopeful plea for justice in verses 12 to 15. David now shifts as he is writing this psalm. And he is no longer asking the question, why?

But he is focusing instead on the who. He is focusing on God. So he sees the injustice that is around him. And because his confidence is in God, he turns to God for help.

[19:21] Look at how he pleads with God in verse 12. Arise, Lord, lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless. David is begging God.

Arise, Lord, lift up your hand. Can you feel the emotions with which he pens these words? Please, God, I am begging you, do something. Don't stand idle as the wicked man hurts and oppresses people all over the place.

It's painful. God, lift up your hand. The language or phrase of a lifting up a hand in the Old Testament is usually referenced to someone's power or strength.

So David is asking God to step in and help. He's asking God to help the oppressed and the poor and the helpless. But he is not crying out to God without hope.

And you see that from verse 13. Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, he won't call me to account? Do you see how David is holding on to the truth that he knows about God?

[20 : 30] It's like David is saying, regardless of the injustice that I see around me, I know that God has not left me. I know that God has not abandoned me. David is thinking, why on earth does this person think that he can get away with wreaking all the havoc that he's causing without punishment?

Because David knows that God will not let that happen. He knows that God sees everything and that God knows everything. And he knows that God does not take the mistreatment of the poor lightly.

David has confidence in God, the father to the helpless. The helper to the fatherless. We want justice, don't we? We want people to face the consequences for their actions.

We find hope in the fact that God sees the horrific acts that the Islamic State is doing and that one day, on that final day, as God comes back, justice will be given.

We find hope in the fact that the man who took a bomb into a pop concert of children and young people this week will be brought to justice as he stands before God.

[21 : 39] We find hope in the fact that God is just. It means that I don't have to seek out revenge.

It means that I don't have to worry about whether that person is going to get called to justice here on earth or not. Because I know that God will not let the wicked go unpunished.

The psalm is saying that God's justice, God is just. And the fact that he sees all things is really good news. Do you see how that's a good thing? Do you understand how David now has confidence in God?

He is pleading with God, but as he does so, he realizes that God has seen all the injustice. And God will bring justice. And because David's confidence is in God, he pleads with God and he finds comfort and he finds hope.

And we can find that same comfort and hope today because we trust in the same God. If you're here tonight and you're not a Christian, I want to ask you, what do you put your confidence in?

[22 : 52] When you ask the why question in light of injustice, who is it that you cry to? Who do you trust and have confidence in to bring justice?

Is it the judicial system? They can and are used by God to bring punishment on the wicked. Romans 13 makes that very clear.

But what about the times that the courts can't bring justice? I want you to know that the only person who can bring real justice, the only person you can have real confidence in is God.

The creator and sustainer of this world who sees all things and who will judge all things. But there's a sobering thought here as well.

Because when God comes to bring justice, he has to deal with our corrupt hearts. In Romans 3, Paul uses verse 7 of Psalm 10 as part of his argument that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[23 : 53] So if you stand in this psalm with David in light of injustice, if you stand with the rest of humanity in light of injustice and you cry out to God because evil needs to be punished.

The question that I want you to think about is what should God do with you? What should God do with your heart? Because at the very basic level, we are just like this wicked man and we naturally reject God.

So when God comes, he must deal with our hearts. Are you comfortable and confident that on that day as you stand before God, which you will, that you'll be saved by faith through Jesus Christ?

Or have you had a false sense of security that God won't judge? On that final day when God comes to judge the world, you must stand with Jesus because God will call all people to account.

And there is no hope for those who don't have faith in Jesus. But how exactly does God have this sorted? How exactly will God bring justice?

[25 : 01] David now has confidence in the king. Verses 16 to 18, let's read those together. David writes in verse 16, The Lord is king forever and ever.

The nations will perish from his land. You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted. You encourage them and you listen to their cry. Defending the fatherless and the oppressed so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

David ends this psalm of lament in confidence. And his confidence is grounded in the kingship of God. Just look at some of the things the psalm says that this king does.

He hears the trouble of the afflicted. He's a helper to the fatherless. He hears the desire of the afflicted and encourages them. He listens to their cry and he defends them. Knowing all of that, doesn't it make sense that David has confidence in the kingship of God?

Now the image of a king is helpful. In the Old Testament, the king would sit on his throne. People would bring their problems to him and he would judge. People would come to seek wisdom and advice from their king.

[26 : 12] He had to know what was going on in the lives of his people, in the life of the nation. He had to protect them, care for them and often provide for them. So if that is the responsibility of an earthly king, how much more does God do?

The man who creates the people who are going to be kings. God is sitting on his throne. He is ruling this world and he sees all things.

He is sovereignly in control. Nothing surprises him and he listens to the pleas of his people. There is nothing that is not seen by God. There is nothing that is not heard by God.

But he listens, he cares and he loves. This is the king that David is speaking about and this is the king that he has confidence in.

But David isn't only speaking about God. David is pointing forward to the great promised king of God. And because of the time of history that we live in, because of the New Testament, we know that David is pointing forward to King Jesus.

[27 : 24] The king who has authority over all of the things that plague our short lives here on earth. King Jesus has power over sickness, over evil and over death.

But the most important thing is that Jesus Christ has power over sin. Man's biggest problem. Jesus defeated sin on the cross.

On the cross, Jesus made it possible for us to be forgiven by God. Because he who himself is God took the punishment that we deserve and died so that we might live.

We can have confidence in King Jesus because he's made it possible for us to say with the Apostle Paul, Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?

King. This is the amazing king that Christians have confidence in. But why do I say David is pointing forward to Jesus?

[28 : 27] Well, look at the second half of verse 16. It says that the nations will perish from his land, meaning that God's enemies will be destroyed. We know that that hasn't happened yet.

So we know that David is talking about a future event. David is pointing forward to a time where there will be no more evil and no more wickedness. David knew that injustice wasn't just going to disappear.

And we know that often people aren't going to get justice on this side of eternity. But I hope that when we as Christians suffer injustice and when we see injustice happening all over the world, That we can do exactly what David did and cry out to our God.

And we can do it with a hope that he will act. And I hope that this will lead us to have confidence in our King Jesus. Our confidence in Jesus comes from the fact that he has already defeated our worst enemy.

He has defeated sin. So our confidence is much greater than David's. Because we understand more about God because of Jesus and the cross.

[29 : 38] We can have confidence in Jesus because he will come and with him will come justice and a kingdom of peace. But in our hearts we are sitting with David and asking the same question.

God why is this happening? Where is the justice? And we ask this because Jesus hasn't returned yet. We live in the tension of the now and not yet.

Now we can have confidence in our King Jesus that he will bring justice. But we know that justice has not yet come. Jesus hasn't yet returned. But we are waiting eagerly for that day, aren't we? Because suffering injustice is so hard. But we need to remember that God is not powerless in the face of wickedness and evil. The day will come where he will dwell with his people.

And all that is against him will be taken away. God is patiently waiting and that is a good thing because when God comes to judge the world, he must judge our corrupt hearts.

[30 : 43] So God is giving us time to come back to him. If you're here and you're not a Christian, I want you to really think hard about who you put your confidence in. Who is it that you cry to when

you face and see injustice?

Is it not better to cry to the God Almighty? Who sees all things, who knows all things and who will judge all things fairly? Is it not better to put your trust and confidence in him than it is in somebody else?

If you're a Christian, then this psalm wants you to know that we can and should have confidence in our King. Remember the promise of Revelation 21 verses 3 to 4.

Look, God's dwelling place is now among the people and he will dwell with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more pain, no more death, mourning, crying. That is the promise that is giving David hope in the King.

[31 : 47] And that is the promise that is giving us hope in Jesus Christ. This psalm shows us that it is okay to ask the question, why?

It is okay to cry out to God as we are perplexed by injustice. But we shouldn't expect an answer. David's never got an answer. Job didn't get an answer.

This psalm doesn't give us the answer to the question, why? Instead, it points us to the more important question of who. It points us to the King. It points us to God.

And it points us to Jesus who will bring justice. Let's turn to our King in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can have confidence in your kingship.

But we thank you that your word knows the reality of life. We thank you that we can come before you and ask the question, why? But Lord, I pray that as we are suffering injustice, that you would help us focus on the more important question of who.

[32 : 54] Help us fall in love with you. Help us see you in the greatness that you are. And help us have confidence in your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.