

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adults Sunday School

PSALM 10 – THE BELIEVER’S CRY FOR GOD’S JUDGMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 10 is an imprecatory psalm. It is the prayer of a believer to invoke God’s judgment to fall upon His enemies that their wickedness may receive a just retribution and punishment. Wickedness is seen in the world as well as in churches today.

It is absolutely understandable that wickedness ought to be seen in the world since it is filled with unregenerate men every where, but it is truly upsetting and disappointing to find also wickedness in the church among believers who are supposed to be the light of the world. When professing believers indulge themselves in wickedness, they lose the testimony that they should be bearing for Christ.

In so doing, not only it prevents unbelievers to see the light of the gospel, it also stumbles fellow believers to follow their wickedness. There is a place for righteous anger to be expressed towards such wickedness against professing believers who are unrepentant. May God be merciful.

The psalmist began his cry of desperation as he felt that God is far away from him at this point of time when he is overwhelmed by the troubles in his life.

Verse 1, “Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? *why* hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?”

God’s silence probably led the psalmist to doubt the presence of God. When he saw that the wickedness of the oppressors continues to progress and prevail, his two questions implied that God does not seem to care what is happening when His people suffered under the wicked hands of men.

Has God kept a distance away from His people and not help them? Has God kept Himself far away that He did not lift a finger to help His people who suffered? The word for trouble is the word “distress”. In moment of distress, just when we want to see God’s justice and righteousness being exercised and prevailed, God seems to have kept silence and not doing anything about it. That caused the psalmist to head towards desperation and great anxiety.

From the outset, it seems that the psalmist is blaming God for abandoning His people. Personally, I doubt that is the case since this psalm is penned down by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that God’s people may be strengthened in their faith and look more toward God.

God will not contradict Himself by abandoning His people when He has promised to help them and carry them through all their difficulties. Many a time, our emotion gets over our head and God wants us to learn to be patient and trust in Him for His will to be done. That includes the time of action which is under God’s control, not us.

We are going to see in the subsequent verses how the psalmist is going to cry against the pride (verses 2 to 6) and the wickedness (verses 7 to 11) of men and lastly how he is going to express his confidence in God’s judgment that will ultimate come upon the wicked (verses 12 to 18). It is likely that David is not king yet at the time of the writing since it seems his enemies possessed a greater power and authority than him. If David had already become the king, this would not be the case.

II. THE BELIEVER'S CRY AGAINST PRIDE

Verse 2, "The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."

According to King Solomon, pride is one of the seven deadly sins in Proverbs 6:17. He used "haughty eyes" to describe the pride of men. Indeed the eyes that looked down on others came from a heart that is full of pride.

And to the psalmist, it is the pride of the wicked. These wicked were those with power and authority and likely also to be filthy rich since they pursued against the poor. Clearly all that were endowed to them had been severely abused. No wonder the poor has to escape for their lives. The wicked refused to give up but persecute them.

The second part of the verse provides a difficulty in discerning who the "them" refers to. Is it referring to the wicked or to the poor? Note that the wicked is in the singular while the poor is in the plural. This could be the clue to the right answer.

If the "them" refers to the poor, what about the "they"? It must also be rendered to the poor in order to be consistent. And this second part of the verse can be explained in this way: As the poor were under the persecution by the wicked, fear and anxiety probably overwhelmed them that they began to imagine how they will suffer and be severely persecuted under them.

And the psalmist is simply declaring that whatever they imagine will be what they will have to go through. And this is exactly what the wicked will be proud of because they had successfully instilled the kind of fear among the poor towards them. The fear is so great that the poor even imagine how they will suffer under their hands.

This answer is consistent to the context as the psalmist is describing the evil pride of the wicked and had not come to his confidence in the Lord to judge yet until verse 12.

Verse 3, "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth."

The focus of this verse is that the wicked is a big boaster. Whatever he thought and planned in his heart and mind, he only thinks good of himself and those who are the same as him. The reason he boasted was because he thought he is better, smarter, wiser, stronger, richer, and more powerful than anyone.

Whatever he desires came to pass due to his ability and strength. And he purposely blessed the covetous. Those who want more like himself, he chose to feed them even more. And he knew that God hates the covetous and yet the very act of blessing those who covet is directly despising God Himself. What rebellion and bold challenge the wicked stood against God!

Verse 4, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after* God: God is not in all his thoughts."

The wicked is called the wicked because of who he is and what he has done to go against God. All his thoughts and actions spring from a wicked heart. The psalmist says here of the pride of the face of the wicked. From the face, we can easily see the manner in which he scorns the name of God. All his facial expression reveals his pride to the uttermost. Surely he will not seek after God. Why will he look to God when his heart is full of evil? Far from it!

You think of a person fondly when he or she is someone special or important to you. You will consider your behaviour and action in front of this person who is special to you. When God is not in all his thoughts, it reveals from his behavior and action that he does not consider God at all. God is totally ignored and taken for granted.

Verse 5, “His ways are always grievous; thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.”

The way of the wicked are always leading to hurt, sorrow and pain to others. He obviously does not care for others. He only care for himself and therefore will sacrifice others for his own benefit and survival. The word ‘always’ describes the continuity of his wickedness and not once it was described as good and acceptable to God.

The judgment here refers to God’s judgment. And the wicked could not care less of God’s judgment. Either he does not believe it or he purpose chooses to ignore it. He refuses to consider and take heed of God’s warning of coming judgment.

The word “puff” means scoff or to “blow” at them. The way he treated them is as if he is blowing them away with one breath having no mercy and compassion for them. He treats them as dirt.

Verse 6, “He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for *I shall never be* in adversity.”

The wicked is also a stubborn person. No matter how wrong he has proven to be, he remained in his state of hardness, refused to repent and submit to God. It is something which he has already decided within his heart that he will not surrender to God even though he has been proven wrong and that God is right in His judgment. In his own eyes, he will still think he is right even though all fingers are pointing at his error.

And he sincerely believes in his heart that he will be able to escape. He believes he will not come under any punishment or be persecuted for it. That is his foolish assumption. He thinks he is untouchable and nobody can lift a finger to take him to task. What arrogance and foolishness he is!

III. THE BELIEVER’S CRY AGAINST WICKEDNESS

Verse 7, “His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity.”

From pride now the psalmist turns towards his wickedness. How wicked is he will be seen from verses 7 to 11. Wickedness of the heart is often revealed by the words he uttered. His mouth is used for cursing, deceit and fraud. Cursing includes blasphemy and swearing using God’s name. Deceit is scheming act of deception all out to cheat. Fraud is producing hurting words out to destroy and tarnish a person’s character and reputation.

Whatever he says out of his mouth and under his tongue is up to no good. The word “mischief” means something that is a heavy burden. His words bring about great burden and heaviness to others, even sorrow. Vanity means “evil”. His words bring evil to the hearers. His words are like poison that the moment people hear these words, they were poisoned and infected immediately. And the effect of it is that they will “die” or at least “seriously injured.”

Let us not think that such wickedness that is revealed by a wicked mouth and a wicked tongue is far from us. Of all we know, we are guilty of such wickedness ourselves that we must repent of. God will not be pleased if we fail to control our mouth and tongue.

And of course we need to guard our heart first since it is there where it springs forth all kind of wickedness. The mouth and the tongue are just means to carry out the wickedness.

Verse 8, “He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.”

Where will these wicked men be hiding and waiting to launch their attack upon the innocent? We are told in this verse that the wicked man was sitting at lurking places in the villages. These lurking places are areas where they provide the best opportunity for ambush and assault. Usually these places will be poorly lit and filled with dark corners which naturally aroused fears upon those who pass by.

The psalmist also describes these places as secret. It is secret because if any thing happened and the victim wanted to cry for help, no one will be able to hear him or her. These are probably places which are isolated and deserted for most of the time. But it is there where the wicked man will do all his vices.

His wicked actions are deliberate since his eyes are focused upon those that are weak. He eyed on them. Come to think of it, it is rather strange that they should attack the poor rather than the rich. This clearly tells us that the kind of wickedness that these people are having goes beyond their greed for material gain. They harboured a heart that is full of evil, that they simply enjoyed taking advantage of those who are poor, despised and weak.

Verse 9, “He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.”

A lion in his den is usually one that is hungry. The moment a prey enters within the perimeter of his sight, it is gone. The lion will tear its prey apart without mercy. This is the description of the wicked man who is waiting to eat up mercilessly the prey in whom is his target. Whether it takes him one day, one week, or even months or years, it will wait till the prey is taken. And once the prey like the fishes that enter the net will not be able to escape. He is caught and is now at the mercy of the wicked man.

Verse 10, “He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.”

The further description of the wicked man tells us how wicked is his wickedness. The first word used is “croucheth” which means sink down. It is a lying down position, which gives the picture of rest and inactivity. But this is a false picture, isn’t it? For this is what the wicked man wanted you to see that he is not doing anything to harm you or attack you. His lying position tells you that you can rest assured that nothing bad will happen and that you can come over to him at ease.

The second word is “humbled..” He made himself low. This is another false picture. Who will not accept a man who is willing to be humbled even though he is regarded as reputable person in society in terms of his wealth and status. When one sees a man who is willing to eat a humble pie especially when this same man is rich, powerful, and influential among the people, admiration of him will usually happen. No one will reject a man who is willing to humble himself.

Both actions “crouch” and “humble” are what the wicked man will employ to trick the poor. At the right time, such friendliness and humility will turn into a nightmare for those who are being deceived. Those who are not careful will fall into their deception. They are not weak at all. The psalmist describes them as strong ones.

Verse 11, “He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*.”

The wicked man lives as if God is dead. He belittles God. If only he possessed the true knowledge of who God really is, he will be in for a great shock of his life. And indeed he will greatly fear God when Christ shall judge the whole world and every knee will bow and confess that He is Lord. Believers and unbelievers will all have to bow before Him when that day comes.

This does not mean unbelievers will then be saved. When the door of grace is closed and all men have to stand before Christ the Judge, there is no turning back. Those who stand before His presence as unbelievers will still have to be punished for their sins. By then, they will have to bow down before God in great fear since they will suffer for eternity in the Lake of Fire.

It is only his wishful thinking that God has forgotten about His judgment. In here, do we not see the hint of the image of God that is found in all men including the wicked ones? He still acknowledged God, isn't it? He may choose to believe God has forgotten about His judgment against sin. His forgetfulness does not mean he will get away due to his ignorance. Ignorance is just an excuse. It is giving self an excuse to continue in sin and wickedness without judgment.

Will God forget His judgment? Will He let sin off? You and I who are bearing the image of Christ, we all know the answer, isn't it? All wicked men, beware! God's judgment is definitely not far as you think it to be! Repent now of all your wickedness and look to Jesus who can save you!

III. THE BELIEVER'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S JUDGMENT

After the psalmist cried against the pride and wickedness of his enemies, he now focuses on having confidence in God's judgment against his enemies. Only God's people who are walking in His will can have such confidence. For he believes in God and knew that He will surely execute His judgment fairly and perfectly.

Verse 12, “Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.”

The psalmist believes fully that God must act if he is to be saved. He acknowledges that he is completely helpless. Only God can help him. With this confidence in God, he called upon Him to arise. Moses also used this phrase “Arise, O LORD” as the children of Israel broke camp in the wilderness (see Numbers 10:35). It was a military phrase. It is a call on God to go forth to both defend Israel and leads them to victory. Likewise, the psalmist is calling upon God to go forth to defend His people.

We are not to see this as arrogance on the part of the psalmist. The psalmist is not being rude to God but he knew that God must act, if not there is no more hope. God's hand must be lifted up to restore His people, if not they will perish and be destroyed.

That's why the psalmist implores the Lord to remember the humble. Those who have turned to Him for deliverance and safety, and have not trusted in their own strength and ability to overcome the enemy. They had truly learnt to rest themselves in God. Do you think God will answer the prayer of the psalmist?

Verse 13, “Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.”

The word “contemn” means to despise, abhor, or to scorn. The psalmist is asking, ‘How did the wicked despise God? The answer is given, “Thou wilt not require it.”

In other words, of all the evil that the wicked had done, he believes in his heart that God will not call him to account for it. It is just his wishful thinking without any basis. This is something which he is convicted of and truly convinced that God will let him go. But, what blindness and utter foolishness is this!

Verse 14, “Thou hast seen *it*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite *it* with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.”

This does not mean that the wicked acts were clearly manifested everywhere. This is acknowledging that even that which is cleverly hidden, God can still see it very clearly simply for the fact that He is God. God can see through every heart and mind.

Surely God can even break them up and list them down the exact fault one by one. God knows our heart and mind far better than us. As for the wicked, surely they will never be able to escape from the powerful eyes and knowledge of God over them.

That’s why the poor commit to God. That’s why the fatherless turn to Him for help. What about you?

Verse 15, “Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*: seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.”

The arm is that instrument to carry the plan that has been carefully devised. The psalmist calls upon God to destroy the arm of instrument that is to carry out the evil plan. This is a good prayer. We should pray such a prayer because we want to see men and women walking in God’s way and not the way of the wicked by going against God.

The psalmist is not going to choose which evil of the wicked man should be held accountable and which should be pardoned. “Seek out his wickedness till thou find none” is the prayer. In other words, until the last evil deed is exposed, the wicked will not get away with it. Everything evil must be dealt with. And this, only God can do.

Verse 16, “The LORD *is* King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.”

Truly God is King in time past, now in the present and will be forevermore. One day, there will be no more sin, evil and death in His kingdom. The “heathen” refers to those who have chosen not to believe in Christ. They have chosen to remain in their unbelief and hardness of heart. The word “perish” means to wander away, to lose oneself. This “perish” is truly a frightening thought, especially to the one who have to face and experience it. They have no control over it. When it comes, there is no way they can run away from it. Will you perish?

Verse 17, “LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:”

Hell will be far from you when you turn your eyes upon your Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. The psalmist expressed his confidence that all that he uttered before God’s throne of grace, were heard by Him. Those who have this confidence are the ones who had humbled themselves before Him. It is truly amazing that confidence and humility can be found side by side. However, it can be true that a person who has confidence can also be proud at the same time. It depends on the object of his confidence. If his confidence is in self or men, then he is proud. But if his confidence is in God, it makes a whole world of difference. He will then be a humble man. And his humility will be seen in his desire as he prays. He will not pray selfishly. More importantly he will pray towards the fulfilment of God’s will, desire and plan.

And he even went on to say what God will do. There are two things: 1) Establish their heart, 2) Cause Himself to hear. The word “prepare” means to establish. The establishment of the heart is important because it is often the heart that is fearful of men and lack the confidence in God. When the heart is established, strengthened, then it will enable a believer to learn to trust in God even more. To God we are important enough to be heard by Him. What a good God we have.

I do not believe that God will do so grudgingly or forced Himself to endure hearing our prayers. I believe it will be a delightful thing for God to cause His ears to hear us. All praise and glory be to God.

Verse 18, “To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.”

This is the final judgment. The judgment of God restores the weak and the poor who are unable to defend themselves. At the same time, the judgment of God destroys the wicked in all their evil deeds that they will not continue anymore. God will surely judge. This is for sure. Many are blinded to God’s judgment, either through ignorant or unbelief. But we who have seen with our eyes of faith in the salvation which God has given us through the Lord Jesus Christ, we know that we are to fear God because He is holy, just and righteous, and will surely punish all those who refuse to repent and be saved.

IV. CONCLUSION

What kind of world are we living today? Is it not one that is full of pride and wickedness? Beware, let us not be found conforming to the proud and wicked world but rather be transformed by the renewing of our mind, bearing the image of Christ wherever we go. Will you pray for God’s judgment to come against all pride and wickedness? As you pray, make sure you do not fall into the sin of pride and wickedness yourself. May God help us. Amen.