



MATT BLACK, Sun, September 23, 2018
livinghopechurch.net

10 | PSALM 10

WHEN GOD FEELS FAR AWAY

Drawing near to God when you feel alone

Outline

1. **LONGING FOR GOD'S PRESENCE (10:1)**

God's Distance (10:1)

David's Humility (10:1)

2. **LAMENTING THE WORLD'S EVIL (10:2-11)**

Lamenting Their Prideful Heart (10:2-6)

We Lament the Pride of Materialism

We Lament the Pride of Atheism (10:4-6)

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Applications

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1. Welcome visitors!
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Introduction

Open your Bible if you will to **Psalm 10**. The title of our study this morning is: “When God Feels Far Away.”

We are grateful Jesus Christ our Savior has defeated evil in this world. The war is won. We are just awaiting the final armistice at his Second Coming. When he comes again, he will bring a world completely devoid of all sin, evil, and brokenness—of all “the devil’s work.” Though it will require his Second Coming, nonetheless, that Day will arrive as certainly as this day has.

The Day of Christ’s coming will mean no more door-step bombings or hostage taking; no more human slavery, drug addiction, or “adult entertainment”; no more cancer, car wrecks, or crises; no more greed, need, or deeds that bring harm; no more racism, rape, or rancor; no more broken people, places, or things ... just beauty, in everyone in every place, all the time.

We give all praise to Jesus today for destroying the devil’s work, by his work on the cross. Satan’s head is crushed, his dominion broken, and demise is sure. Jesus is our victor, and our champion. Death cannot hurt us, sin cannot derail us, and Satan may roar, but he cannot harm us.

Through Christ’s humility, he humbled evil, and by his defeat he defeated darkness. Terror is now terrified of Jesus! Though the devil is filled with fury, he’s on a short and unbreakable leash, knowing his time is short (Rev 12:12).

And while we wait for Jesus’ Second Coming, we lament the evil earth that we live in. That evil sometimes makes us feel distant from God. That’s what Psalm 10 is all about.

Scripture Reading

Let’s stand and read our passage today, Psalm 10,

Why, O Lord, do you stand far away?

Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

²In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor;
let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.

³For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul,
and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord.

⁴In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him;
all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

⁵His ways prosper at all times;
your judgments are on high, out of his sight;
as for all his foes, he puffs at them.

⁶He says in his heart, “I shall not be moved;
throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.”

⁷ His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;
 under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.
⁸ He sits in ambush in the villages;
 in hiding places he murders the innocent.
 His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;
⁹ he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;
 he lurks that he may seize the poor;
 he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.
¹⁰ The helpless are crushed, sink down,
 and fall by his might.
¹¹ He says in his heart, "God has forgotten,
 he has hidden his face, he will never see it."
¹² Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand;
 forget not the afflicted.
¹³ Why does the wicked renounce God
 and say in his heart, "You will not call to account"?
¹⁴ But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation,
 that you may take it into your hands;
 to you the helpless commits himself;
 you have been the helper of the fatherless.
¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer;
 call his wickedness to account till you find none.
¹⁶ The Lord is king forever and ever;
 the nations perish from his land.
¹⁷ O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted;
 you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear
¹⁸ to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
 so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

This is God's Word.

What do we do when we see the world around us growing more and more wicked? How do we deal with the rising tide of sin? In Psalm 10, David directs our hearts in three activities that will lift our spirits.

Outline

1. Longing for God (10:1)
2. Lamenting the world (10:2-11)
3. Looking to Jesus (10:12-18)

This world is not our home. We are "citizens of heaven," "elect exiles."

1. WE **LONG** FOR GOD'S PRESENCE (10:1)

Sometimes God seems so far away.

GOD'S DISTANCE (10:1)

Here in Psalm 10 we have one of those encouraging Scriptures because in it we see David experiencing something we know well: at times *God feels far away*. Have you ever felt that way? “Lord, I’ve prayed for this so many times, please answer.” “Lord, there is so much injustice going on, where are you?” “Lord, are you even listening; are you even there?” The Holy Spirit wants us to draw encouragement today. Maybe you feel God is far from you today.

How long do we have to wait out this evil world? Don’t you long for Jesus to come again? David asks:

Why, O LORD, do you stand far away?

Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? (10:1)

The Bible is so honest. It does not make every character of note a super-saint, sinless and above the mess of the rest of us mortals. It tells us of their good deeds, which we can easily emulate. It tells us of their sins, which we are to steer clear of. But it also tells us of their deepest agonies, depression, loneliness, and sorrows. It’s in these stories that we draw comfort because we identify with the same struggles. As Paul says in Romans 15, “whatever was written in former days was written for our learning, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4).

Times of trouble are upon us, and God seems so distant and far away. Where are the testimonies of salvation and the revivals? Where is the world retreating and the church of Jesus advancing? Why does God seem to be so **hidden in times of trouble**?

The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:1-5,

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

This is the atmosphere of our culture. It’s the air we breathe, and it is toxic. It’s choking the church. But King David felt the same way. There were many times when he felt like **the LORD** was **standing far away**.

DAVID'S HUMILITY (10:1)

“Why LORD, do you stand far away?” David asks. He longs for God’s presence. He can’t stand it when God seems hidden or distant.

This says something about God but it also says something about us, the questioner. This is a question of faith. Notice that while we like David are perplexed by God's seeming absence, we still go to him with our petitions.

That's faith. David says: "*God, I know you seem absent to me right now, but where else can I go?*" It's like when Jesus asks Peter: "Will you leave as well?" And what does Peter say: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (**Jn 6:68**). David even calls the Lord "you" here, "Why do you stand far away...why do you hide yourself?" That's David's personal faith in a personal God. David knew the Lord who revealed himself and his name to Moses and Israel; we know him as our Father because of Jesus Christ coming to earth to reveal God's immense love for the world.

As believers, we all have the desire to have perfect, uninterrupted fellowship with our heavenly Father. He is our Abba, our daddy. He will take care of us. Our emotions sometimes get in the way of what we know is true.

What should we do when God feels far away? This is what David does: he brings his cares to God. That's what Peter says: "Casting all your cares upon him, for he cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7). The word "casting" has the idea of throwing. The same word is used of people throwing their garments in front of Jesus at the triumphal entry.

This is a transfer. It is as if you gather all your worries—whatever is troubling you right now—and you bag them up, and you throw them onto the Lord. And note—it is a total transfer, isn't it? The text doesn't say, "Casting **some** of your anxieties." It doesn't say to cast those things that you think God is able to handle (as though you could handle something God couldn't). No, what does it say? It says, "casting all your cares." All your anxieties, all your cares, all your worries, all those things that have you afraid, all those things that have your heart weighed down. You bag them all up and then there must be this total transfer. That is *humility*. You say, "I am going to leave these things in his care, because I know that is what he wants me to do."¹

The key to this Psalm is found in David's **humility**. He's **humble** enough to come to God and say, "I feel alone. I feel you are far away. I sometimes even feel abandoned." But David knows his feelings are not his guide. Yahweh is his guide. "Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah!"

Peter says this very thing. When our emotions of anxiety and fear and depression are weighing us down, we must not respond in pride and trust our emotions, but in humility casting our cares on Jesus.

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you (1 Pet 5:5-7).

We need to have the humility to come to God and the courage to believe that God loves us and wants to hear all our cares, and he does! Listen to David list his cares to God.

¹ Richard Caldwell. *Answering Anxiety* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2016), 47-48.

2. WE **LAMENT** THE WORLD'S VANITY (10:2-11)

The Christian is out of place in this present evil world.

The wicked, lost person is vain. David is so deeply grieved by the world, that he feels God is doing nothing. He sees the sin and evil and vanity of the world and is perhaps anxious, angry, feeling God is unconcerned.

David felt so out of place in this present evil world. He was so upset about the injustices and vanity of the world, that perhaps, like many, he felt perhaps he was more concerned about the world's sin and evil than God.

David brings his hard questions and laments to God. How long do we have to wait out this evil world? How long will you allow the wicked to continue blindly in their sin?

Dear saint, don't you long for Jesus to come again? David laments the blindness of the lost in the world. How can people live as if there is no God and no tomorrow? How can people be blind to eternity?

We long for God's presence. We lament this present evil world. The evil of this world lies deep in the prideful heart of man.

WE LAMENT THEIR PRIDEFUL HEART (10:2-6)

Pride destroys people's faith and trust in God. David laments that lost people see themselves as self-sufficient. In their pride they are blind. It's all about Money, Power and self-sufficiency for the lost. There is no humility, only pride. David gets into this in verses 2-6.

- ²In arrogance the **wicked** hotly pursue the poor;
let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.
- ³For the **wicked boasts** of the desires of his soul,
and the one greedy for gain **curses** and renounces the LORD.
- ⁴In the pride of his face the **wicked** does not seek him;
all his thoughts are, "There is no God."
- ⁵**His** ways prosper at all times;
your judgments are on high, **out of his sight**;
as for all his foes, he puffs at them.
- ⁶**He** says in his **heart**, "I shall not be moved;
throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity."

The shocking thing is that David as king is looking out at what is going on in Israel. These are people who claim to know the Lord, but they are "practical atheists." Do people really live like this? Yes.

We Lament the Pride of Materialism

People seem to do anything for money. People will destroy others because of money and material gain.

David looks as king at his people in Israel and he sees wicked among them. He feels like God is far away. Why do the wicked get away with taking advantage of the poor? Why do people destroy other's lives for money? Where are you LORD?

For gain, the wicked take advantage of the poor (10:2).

²In arrogance the **wicked** hotly pursue the poor;
let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised (10:2).

This is so common. When I was a child I can remember after my mother died, a family friend robbed us of \$10,000 dollars during this great tragedy. The woman started a bar with the money, and we never recovered anything back. I'm sure we have stories of how we've been personally injured because of someone else's greed.

The Bible says in verse 2 that the wicked "hunt down" the poor to take advantage of them financially. We see this even **today** in **casinos** and **gambling boats**. There's one in my town (Elgin, IL). What about the lottery. What an evil thing that destroys people's lives. People take advantage of the poor and offer them a "quick fix." This is evil. We lament with David. It seems like God is so far away.

We see this evil greed in the **health and wealth false teachings**. Wolves in sheep's clothing are always preying on those who have no money. They are living lavish lifestyles while putting others in deep debt. I read recently of a "bishop" needing money for his "residential center" that cost 2.8 million dollars. So a lady cashed in all she owned and went into debt to donate \$600,000. Now the woman is destitute, and this false teacher is completely immune from accountability. Isn't that the attitude we hear so often by people high and low? "I can have what I want, when I want it, how I want it!"

We see this evil greed with the majority of the citizens of America are blinded by **our culture of prosperity**. No one seems to seek God as long as all is going well. We live in the midst of a culture of greed. The American Dream is the new Gospel. People in our country are happy as long as the economy is good and they have a car and a home. But those things don't last forever. Where are the godly? Where are the generous? Where are the compassionate? Riches have hardened the hearts of the lost all around us.

We see greed in the culture of **death and abortion**. So many are more worried about the economy than the deaths of unborn children in the womb. Our fellow citizens are often taken advantage of. The fact is that abortion is a multi-billion dollar industry that takes advantage of the poor and the down and out. We all know friends and perhaps family members who are taken advantage of by the **wicked**.

The lost are blind to true riches. They don't mind taking advantage of others. In fact, they **hotly pursue** the poor. They are blind to the worth of each soul, promoting their own prosperity above others.

Praise God for many who are rich, and who use their riches to advance the kingdom. Not everyone has bowed their knees to Baal. There are many, praise the Lord who are not taking advantage of the poor. But while this culture of greed spreads, we as Christians lament.

People are willing to do anything for money.

- Young men give the best years of their lives for the **easy money of drugs**. Every year 400 billion dollars enriches people because of the **sale of illegal drugs**. \$35 billion dollars is spent on treatment for addictions every year. Why do these addictions continue? People want to make money.
- Young women are conned or kidnapped into giving themselves into **human trafficking**. Every year thousands of women here and around the world are sold as merchandise.
- Every year the distribution and sale of pornography destroys our families.

Here's an article from ABC News posted on January 28, 1985.

Pornography has grown into a \$10 billion business — bigger than the NFL, the NBA and Major League Baseball combined — and some of the nation's best-known corporations are quietly sharing the profits.

Companies like General Motors, AOL Time Warner and Marriott earn revenue by piping adult movies into Americans' homes and hotel rooms, but you won't see anything about it in their company reports.²

God's people know where true riches are. Our riches are not found in this world. We "lay up treasure in heaven." We are very grateful for earthly treasure that God gives, but we gladly give it away to expand the kingdom of Jesus.

For greed, the wicked renounce the LORD (10:3).

So much more could be said about greed. David laments how money controls the lives of the wicked, even causing them to renounce faith in the LORD. Look at verse 3.

³For the **wicked** boasts of the desires of his soul,
and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD.

The idea is that the wicked boasts and praises the one greedy for gain and curses the LORD. We see this in our president. He thinks he can do anything as long as the economy is good. He doesn't think he's accountable to anyone.

Woe to the country whose leaders deny the LORD. Woe to the country whose standard is *merely* material gain. Don't get me wrong, we should all work hard and earn a living. We should bless the Lord for the wealth and riches he gives us. But that is not the standard. The standard is how we use the monies we have as a stewardship of God's kingdom.

² "Porn Profits: Corporate America's Secret." ABC News. January 28, 1985. Accessed September 23, 2018.

Application

What are we giving to the Gospel, to missions, to the expansion of the Kingdom? Listen, our lives are not mainly about prospering financially. Jesus said (quoting Deut 8:3), “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4).

Let us lament with David the pride of *materialism*. How long will money **define** people? How long will we look at people and be partial to the rich and oppress the poor? The church of Jesus Christ is not defined by materialism. In fact, throughout history, the poor have populated the kingdom of God far more than the rich.

We Lament the Pride of Atheism (10:4-6)

So many think they can do whatever they want without consequences. So many allow their pride and materialism to forsake the LORD.

⁴ In the pride of his face the **wicked** does not seek him [*the LORD*];
all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

⁵ **His** ways prosper at all times;
your judgments are on high, **out of his sight**;
as for all his foes, he puffs at them.

They may go to church. They may be members of a congregation, but they do not seek the LORD. They are practical atheists. There is no room in the thinking of many for serious thoughts about God. Judgment day is “out of the wicked’s sight” (10:5).

The wicked goes on to boast in that none of their actions will every be reproved by the Lord.

⁶ **He** says in his heart, “I shall not be moved;
throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.”

I’ve heard people say, “I will live like I want to live, and then I shall die and become dirt again.” This may be true of our bodies for a time, but it is not true of our souls. We shall all stand before Christ. The sheep and the goats will be divided. Anyone who has not experienced the blood of Jesus and his forgiveness through faith in his blood, shall perish forever. The one’s who say, **“I shall not be moved...I shall not meet adversity”** are fooling themselves.

Application

Let us lament those who deny the Lord. Let us bring our anxieties and cares to the Lord for our lost family members. We pray for the afflicted and oppressed all around us. Let us bring these things to the Lord. Let us ask the Lord to “open the eyes of the blind.” Let us trust the Lord has not forgotten. He does and will answer our prayers.

But let us also evangelize. As we see our nation forsaking God more and more, we lament this downward spiral! But we do not give up. We never give up. We evangelize. There is hope in Jesus Christ.

Transition: We lament the **prideful heart** of the wicked. We also lament their **perverse mouth**.

WE LAMENT THEIR PERVERSE MOUTH (10:7)

David laments the boasting of the lost people around him. There are so many around us that use threats and deceit to get their way.

⁷ His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;
under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

This verse is actually quoted in Romans 3:14. The lost person boasts and schemes deceitfully and lawlessly, doing whatever it takes to gain temporal happiness. They think they can lie or make threats to get material or social gain. Telling lies and swearing oaths they have no plans to keep, they escape the penalties of the law and pursue their devious ways.³

The words of the wicked are perverse. The **media** and **movies** have an agenda of mocking God and making fun of what God calls holy. Any time I notice what's on **primetime TV**, it's usually something **mocking God**, his order of creation, or his people.

Maybe you have **people at your workplace** that think they can lie and scheme to get a little extra. Maybe you yourself have been **bullied** or **threatened** or **abused**.

We lament how our governments lie about **abortion** and call it pro-choice. God calls it pro-murder.

How long is this going to go on? David says: *"It's not right Lord!"* He's perhaps angry about this. *"Lord look at what's happening. How long till you make these lies and bullying right?"*

WE LAMENT THEIR PLUNDERING HANDS (10:8-10)

David laments even further. He says there are lost people who use violence to get what they want.

⁸ He sits in ambush in the villages;
in hiding places he murders the innocent.
His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;
⁹ he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;
he lurks that he may seize the poor;
he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.
¹⁰ The helpless are crushed, sink down,
and fall by his might.

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Worshipful*, 1st ed., "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2004), 47.

Look at the wicked's actions: violence and murder. Like ferocious lions, wicked people hide and watch for opportunities to pounce on the helpless prey, and like hunters or fishermen, they catch their prey in their nets. They are sure that the law won't catch up with them or the Lord notice what they do.⁴

Example of Norbert

I've seen this in my own neighborhood. Our dear neighbor Norbert loved to use his snow blower. He was a fellow believer in the Lord. Often on the snowiest days, we would look out our windows and see Norbert going up and down the neighbors driveways and sidewalks with his snowblower.

Everything changed one day two years ago. Norbert who was about 6' 6" answered his door. There was a man looking for his girlfriend, a friend of Norbert's daughter. This young man forced his way into Norbert's house. Norbert picked him up and threw him into the front yard. The man shot Norbert and our dear neighbor Norbert died instantly.

Murders in the USA

Just like that people's lives are taken away. Every 10 years in the USA 150,000 murders are committed. Pew Research says that more than half go unsolved.⁵

September 11

Indeed there are people in the world that think when they murder they are doing God service. When almost 3000 died on September 11, 2001, millions in the Muslim world rejoiced and celebrated. How can we live in a world that celebrates these things?

Celebration of Violence

Even our media culture celebrates violence and murder through salacious news stories, video games, Hollywood movies and violent sports. How long will our culture celebrate violence?

LAMENTING THEIR PERVERSE MINDS (10:11)

So many in the world today believe that if there is a God and if there is a heaven, they will definitely go there. The wicked think they are going to get away with their sin.

¹¹ He says in his heart, "God has forgotten,
he has hidden his face, he will never see it."

"My sin is not that bad." The lost think God has hidden his face. They think he's uninterested in the affairs of men. He doesn't care.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ John Gramlich. "Most Violent and Property Crimes in the U.S. Go Unsolved." Pew Research Center. March 01, 2017. Accessed September 26, 2018. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/01/most-violent-and-property-crimes-in-the-u-s-go-unsolved/>.

David Wakes Up

This is where David's mind wakes up and begins to realize his error. He's been adopting the thinking of the wicked in the world. Do you remember verse 1?

Why, O LORD, do you stand far away?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? (10:1)

There's a fascinating turn in this psalm, almost as if thinking about the wicked awakens David to a renewed faith in God. David prays (10:1): "Why, O Lord, do you stand afar off? Why do you hide yourself?" God, you seem so far away, so remote, so uninvolved. You don't seem to do anything!

At some point in the psalm it seems to dawn on David: "That's what the wicked believe!" David says: "Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble" (10:1)? The wicked say: "He has hidden his face, he will never see it" (10:11). I'm discrediting God. That's what the wicked do! God is not uninvolved. He's sovereign.

It's as if David says to himself, "Wait a minute... I'm saying the same thing as the wicked!" Something happens to David in the course of this prayer, and it happens to him as he is praying. He finds help. Strength and faith come to him as he prays.

3. WE **LOOK** TO JESUS' APPEARING (10:12-18)

The Christian must always focus on Jesus, not this world.

Dear saints, we need to be looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Stop looking at yourself. Stop focusing so much on the wicked. We cannot ignore the ungodly all around us. But remember: we are on the winning side. The wicked will perish. We must realize that we have a sovereign God who will judge. What are the core commitments of faith outlined here in Psalm 10:12-18? We need to look to the Lord in his morality, his majesty and his mercy. There is no one like the Lord. The wicked are not getting away with anything.

LOOK TO THE LORD'S MORALITY (10:12-15)

The Lord is sovereign over all things. Nothing escapes his view. God is not asleep when evil goes on. Psalm 7:11 (NKJV), "God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." David begins to remember that God has a greater sense of morality than anyone in the human race. The Lord is the righteous judge. He will judge the living and the dead when he returns.

He's Concerned about Judging the Ungodly (10:12-14b)

There is no one more concerned about wickedness than the Lord. This realization comes over David. He begins to see God in his heavenly courtroom, realizing that God is

not distant. David looks forward to the day when God will “arise” as judge of all and give his verdict. David takes us to the courtroom on high and says:

¹² Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand;
forget not the afflicted.

There will be a day when God’s patience with the wicked runs out. There’s coming a day when he will **lift up his hand** in judgment against the ungodly and remember his **afflicted** people.

¹³ Why does the wicked renounce God
and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”?
^{14a} But you do see, for you note mischief [*trouble*] and vexation [*grief*],
that you may take it into your hands;

God has not forgotten about the immorality on earth. The wicked person says in his heart that **God has hidden his face**, that he **will not call to account** at the Day of Judgment. David says “But you do see...” (10:14). The wicked person says in his heart that God has forgotten. *He won’t judge me*, says the wicked. *God doesn’t care. He doesn’t see.* David says “No, you, O LORD do see! You note trouble and grief...” (10:14). David has now changed his perspective. In verse 1 David felt God was hiding his face from David’s trouble. Now he knows God sees.

He’s Just in Helping His Saints (10:14b)

When Jesus went to heaven, he sent the Comforter. God has always helped his afflicted saints. He is here called the “Helper of the fatherless.” He loves the least of these that are on the earth.

^{14b} to you the helpless commits himself;
you have been the helper of the fatherless.

David

He’s Just in Bringing Evil into Account (10:15)

David knows God’s judgment is severe. He asks God to “break the arm of the wicked and evildoer.”

¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer;
call his wickedness to account till you find none.

David looks forward to a day when wickedness will be brought to account until there is no more sin in the world. Hallelujah!

LOOK TO THE LORD’S MAJESTY (10:16)

Judgment is coming. It’s not if but when. God will not acquit the wicked. He stretches his arms out to the world, but those who bypass his mercy receive his judgment.

¹⁶The LORD is king forever and ever;
the nations perish from his land.

LOOK TO THE LORD'S MERCY (10:17-18)

There is coming a day of mercy for the afflicted. Dear saint, I know you suffer every day. The Bible says that even for Lot, living in Sodom and Gomorrah “vexed his righteous soul from day to day.” There is coming a day of mercy for the afflicted when Jesus returns.

¹⁷O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted;
you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear
¹⁸to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

The King of kings is coming, and all nations and governments will perish from the land on that day. On that day, the believers who are afflicted will have their prayers answered. There is coming a day when **man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.**

APPLICATIONS

Let me leave you with some applications.

1 - Wait on the Lord

When you feel distant from God, wait on him. God's silence is merely a matter of time. He will answer. Time is so long for us finite people, but God is outside of time. How many times does the Bible tell us, “Wait!” Dozens of passages. Psalm 37:7 says, “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.” Wait. Psalm 27:14 says, “Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord.”

Then Psalm 40:1, “I waited patiently for the Lord.” No indication of how long. Just, “I waited.” “He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog” (40:1). So there is David for a season—we don't know how long—in a pit and in a miry bog. And then he finally experiences God come and verse 2–3 say, “He set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.” And in those last words, you hear one of the purposes of God.

You might wonder, Why would he do this to David and to me? Why would he leave us languishing in such a pit as this? His answer is this: “Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord” (40:3). It is a strange kind of **evangelism**. It really is. Take heart. You are hurting. God seems distant. God's strength is being perfected in your weakness. Your light is shining. Keep waiting on the Lord. He'll draw near to you. Keep drawing near to him.

I had a friend who was seriously depressed for eight years, almost to the point of immobilization. If I described it, it would be way beyond what you might be experiencing, I think. He could hardly talk to me for an hour it was so exhausting. Then one day after years of memorizing Scripture and holding on and waiting and seeking, something

happened. God broke in and broke my friend out of his depression. He's now a missionary in Mexico, married, serving the Lord. He always chalked it up to the fact that he continued in the Word even when he didn't feel much and could barely function. He continued in the Word and sought the Lord.

2 - Tell God your Complaints

Child of God, if you are going through a tough time right now, declare your questions to God and then describe your complaint. What is it exactly that's bothering you? What makes you mad? Bitter? Upset? Hopeless? Tell God about it. Write it down. Get it out. Put it into a prayer. Trust his sovereign timing. But tell him!

3 - Remember Who Wins

God's going to make all things right. He is not distant. He wins. He is with you.

Conclusion

Have you ever seen that show COPS? There's always a car chase. And I'm always thinking, why is this guy running? The cops are always going to get their guy. Their gonna get a helicopter and half the police force, but their gonna get their guy. So it is with the Lord. We can't out run him. Evil is not out of his sight. The Lord will prevail. With power and glory he shall return. The Lord will win, and peace will reign on the earth.

Life Group Questions

1. David (in vs 1) feels God's distance and silence because of the injustice all around him. What are some injustices around us in our culture?
2. Can you think of people in the Bible where it seemed God was far away? How did their stories end? Did God show himself powerful in the end?
3. What time or times in your life have you felt God silent or distant? What do you do to reconnect?
4. David laments the pride of materialism (vs 2-3) and how the wicked "hotly pursue" the poor. Talk about how our society takes advantage of the poor (gambling boats, casinos, lottery, easy money from the drug culture, pornography, human trafficking). What can we do about it?
5. How can we as Christians do better at living simple lives, not controlled by the pride of materialism?

6. David laments the culture of atheism around him (vs 4-6) with people thinking God's judgment day is far away, "out of his sight" (vs 5). How is our culture atheistic? How can we shine as Christians in an atheistic culture?

7. In David's prayer he laments the perverse words of the wicked (vs 7). How can we protect our eyes and ears from the perversity of the world all around us? What do you do when someone around you mocks God or flaunts their sin?

8. David laments a culture of violence around him (vs 8-10). If you have been abused or suffered injustice, how do you counsel yourself? How did you draw near to God in it? How can we as Christians help our friends and neighbors who are survivors of violence and abuse?

9. The wicked say that "God hides his face" and will not see sin (vs 11). David had said that earlier in a different way (vs 1), lamenting that it seems like God hides his face from judging sin. How do we sometimes think like the wicked and think God's judgment will never come? Have you ever despaired when you were treated wrong thinking God did not see?

10. David receives comfort from thinking about judgment day (v 12-14) and asks God to "arise" and "lift up" his hand in judgment. Take some time to talk about Judgment Day from the New Testament. How does the Bible describe Judgment Day?

11. What will the new heavens and earth be like after God calls all "wickedness to account" (vs 15). What will a world be like with no sin, and only righteousness and perfect justice?

12. Long after the wicked "perish" from the earth, the LORD will be king forever and ever (vs 16). What are some verses from the Bible that comfort you about God's sovereignty and Kingship?

13. David finishes his prayer by remembering that God does indeed "hear the desire of the afflicted" and broken (vs 17-18). Talk about answered prayer where you felt helpless and afflicted and God changed your heart.