

Psalm 10

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- [0 : 0 0] A passage from Scripture to prepare our hearts for the sermon. This is Colossians 3, verses 1 and 2. Actually, I'm going to read verses 1 through 3.
- If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
- I want that to be why we listen to God's word now, is that we have died and our life is hidden with Christ, and so we want our minds now set on things above. What should a Christian like us, those of us here who are believers, what should we do when afflictions and troubles make us doubt God?
- We know that God wants us to trust him, and so in our ordinary course of life, we're trying to trust in him, give our faith to him. But what happens when something out of the ordinary, affliction or troubles strike us?
- [1 : 2 5] What happens when someone we know, we love, hurts us so much that faith feels like a joke? Or what happens when we step out in faith, and we're banking on God to protect us, and God doesn't come through, not in the way we expected?
- What then? Do we just ignore the pain, and try to pretend like it didn't happen, put a brave, fake face on? Do we, when we're wrong, try to make things right, go out and make our own justice, get our own revenge?
- That's how we deal with the affliction. Or do we just lower our expectations in God so that next time when he fails us, it won't hurt us as much? What do we do when afflictions make us doubt him?
- Well, these are the questions that King David wrestled with when he wrote the psalm that I'm preaching from tonight. It's Psalm 10. So if you have a Bible, please turn there, because we'll be looking at it closely together for the next part of the service.
- While I'm reading it out loud, I want you to think, try to follow how David struggles to regain faith when he's watching unchallenged, wicked actions happen all around him.
- [2 : 3 7] It's filling him with doubts about who God is. So try to listen, think about how is David fighting this doubt? This is Psalm 10. Why, O Lord, do you stand far away?
- Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In arrogance, the wicked hotly pursue the poor. Let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.
- For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. In the pride of his face, the wicked does not seek him.
- All his thoughts are, there is no God. His ways prosper at all times. Your judgments are on high, out of his sight.
- As for all his foes, he puffs at them. He says in his heart, I shall not be moved. Throughout all generations, I shall not meet adversity. His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression.

- [3 : 46] Under his tongue are mischief and iniquity. He sits in ambush in the villages. In hiding places, he murders the innocent.
- His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless. 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.
- The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might. He says in his heart, God has forgotten.
- He has hidden his face. He will never see it. Arise, O Lord. O God, lift up your hand.
- Forget not the afflicted. Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, you will not call to account? But you do see. For you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands.
- [4 : 52] To you, the helpless commits himself. You have been the helper of the fatherless. Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer. Call his wickedness to account till you find none.
- The Lord is king forever and ever. The nations perish from his land. O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted. You will strengthen their heart.
- You will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.
- Please pray with me. Father, we just want you now to bless the time we're spending devoting here to your word. Please help us to be attentive to it.
- Let your spirit be among us working, working to set our hearts on you, set our minds on you through this time. We ask for that in Jesus' name.
- [5 : 48] Amen. Well, it's clear, even if that's the first time you've read Psalm 10 in a while, that something happened in David's life that's cast doubt on who God is, and it's even stirred up some dark emotional turmoil in him.
- The first two verses, they give us the setting and really the summary of David's circumstances. He begins with a terrifying accusation, if it were true. Why, O Lord, do you stand far away?
- Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? From his perspective, David's God ran away and hid when troubles came. When the going got tough, God got out of town.
- Either he's a coward or he just doesn't care. Now, we know, in reality, that's not what happened. The Lord is always near to his people, especially in times of trouble.
- But the point is that David's feelings are out of touch with reality right now. As he experiences life, he feels like God is far away and hiding himself.
- [6 : 56] And the first half of verse 2 tells us what the experience is that pushed David into this doubt. It says, in arrogance, the wicked hotly pursue the poor. So David has watched proud, wicked men openly oppressing poor men, and no one is challenging them.
- It's actually possible that David is one of the poor people. He's personally experiencing this trouble, though he never mentions personally being hurt by the wicked in this psalm, and he does do that in other psalms.
- So at the very least, David is watching. He's watching other vulnerable Israelites get harshly crushed by wicked men, and their supposedly righteous and caring God is doing nothing.
- David asks for justice at the end of verse 2. Let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. David has clear expectations for what a righteous God ought to be doing to these wicked men.
- He should be freeing his people from affliction right now. But since God is not meeting those expectations, David is now full of doubt. He feels like God is standing far away from his people.

[8 : 10] God's hidden himself from us. And we, even today, can also feel what David felt because we live in the same world. We experience similar circumstances and then interpret them in similar ways.

So what do we do? What do we need when we're in David's shoes? What does his prayer teach us about regaining heartfelt faith when afflictions have led us into doubt?

Well, there's two main sections of this psalm that can help lead our hearts out of doubt and despair. So you see verses 3 through 11, that shows us why we doubt.

And verses 12 through 18 show us how we escape doubt. So David first exposes the cause of our doubts so that we can attack them at the roots and actually exterminate them.

So let's look first at verses 3 through 11. These are the roots. This is why we doubt. Here's the cause. So first, David doubts, just like we doubt, because we watch the wicked.

[9 : 14] We watch the wicked. What I mean is that we focus our attention on the lives of wicked men and for some reason, they thrive. You can tell by how particular the details are in verses 3 through 11 that David has been doing this.

He's been studying wicked men closely. Even though he's not participating, he's familiar with the path of wickedness. He knows where it starts and what it leads to. He knows even their thoughts and their desires that lead to words and actions.

And then repeatedly, watching that wickedness happen over and over again, watching it go unchallenged at every step, has troubled David in his soul.

In this psalm, it's a prayer, David's prayer to God. David just starts listing these steps, this process of wickedness, as if to say to God, how can you be close to us when the wicked prey on the poor?

God, my eyes are on the lives of these wicked men and it is muffling my faith and pouring doubt over me. And David lists four basic steps of wickedness in verses 3 through 10.

[10 : 25] The wicked worship the wrong things, they get what they worship, they speak evil words, and then they do evil actions. And at every step, there's an implicit cry from David saying, God, where are you?

Why aren't you doing anything right now? So look, glance again at verses 3 and 4. David has watched the wicked close enough to know what's in their hearts. It says, they boast of the desires of their soul.

He knows the desires of their soul. They are greedy for gain. And so what do they do? They curse and renounce the Lord. That's the first thing. Their soul worships the wrong thing.

Material prosperity. And so there's no room for God. That false worship of greed, it gets such a hold of their hearts that every thought has to force God out.

Look at the end of verse 4. All his thoughts are, there is no God. There is no God. There is no God. It's wicked. It's wicked. It's wicked. But to David's shock, the wicked get what they worship.

[11 : 38] In verses 5 and 6, he watches the wicked prosper. They devote their lives in greed to getting earthly gain. And in David's words, his ways prosper at all times.

God's heavenly judgments never seem to interfere with his earthly ambitions. Not even his enemies trouble him at the end of verse 5.

So here's David crushed by doubt in his God while his wicked enemies in verse 6 are confident and boastful in what they worship.

David's experiences are not lining up with what he believes. While the wicked men's experiences seem to line up exactly with what they believe. And then the wickedness comes out.

This must be the final blow for David. He can think, fine, let them thrive, let them live a life over there, but why do they then get to come afflict the poor? Why do they come take advantage of people who are less fortunate than them?

[12 : 43] In verse 7, they speak evil words. They start cutting others down. They're using lies to gain more things for their greedy soul. And then in verses 8 and 10, here's what they do.

The wicked ambush, murder, seize, and crush other people for their own selfish gain. And the victims don't deserve it. In David's words, these people are the innocent, the helpless, and the poor.

How could a righteous God be close to this? Do you feel the doubt? One of the causes of doubt in God's people is watching the wicked.

But here's the thing. There are some innocent, helpless, poor people who observe and even suffer this kind of oppression, but don't doubt God.

These troubles expose their faith, and it's strong. Like, think of when Joseph was thrown into Egypt, or when Daniel was sent into exile in Babylon, or when the apostle Paul is thrown into prison.

[13 : 52] Those troubles reveal their faith, and it's a strong faith. Wicked men don't cause doubt by merely afflicting us on the outside.

The real danger is when they get inside and trouble our souls. So the second reason we doubt is because we believe the wicked.

We watch the wicked, and then we believe the wicked. Here's where I get that. Look at verse 11. He says in his heart, God has forgotten. He's hidden his face. He will never see it.

Who's it talking about? Who says that in his heart? It's the wicked man, right? Is there a substantial difference between those words and David's accusation back in verse 1?

God, why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? You see what's happened? Here's the real sinister source of David's doubt.

[14 : 55] When David set his eyes on the prosperity of the wicked, he was not just an objective bystander. He was influenced by them. He began to adopt the wicked man's atheistic beliefs.

He began judging God's word according to his earthly experiences instead of judging his earthly experiences according to God's word. And from that frame of mind, the wicked man's beliefs started sounding very reasonable.

Yeah, God has hidden himself. He has forgotten. He will never see. David's troubles, the afflictions alone did not cause the doubt.

The Bible actually teaches us that troubles can purify our faith and result in all kinds of glorious things for us. What causes doubt is watching the wicked without vigilance over our own hearts.

What changed were David's beliefs, how he interpreted his troubles. The wicked man's words got down into his heart and he accepted them.

[16 : 05] That's, that's when doubt truly settles in. So here's a lesson for us about doubt. When we watch or experience afflictions like David, our beliefs come to the surface very quickly.

Our beliefs are raw when we get hurt. And they are very vulnerable. So when our neighbor treats us like a doormat, someone slams on the horn in the car behind us, when arrogant terrorists take credit for martyring the pastor in Nigeria, when our mom is diagnosed with terminal cancer, when evil political agendas gain more power, those troubles bring our beliefs out in the open.

the lesson is that we have to be aware of this for ourselves and for one another. In times of trouble, our faith is primed to do two different things. It can be strengthened and fixed on God through the trial, or it can be crushed, confused, and then filled with wicked doubts.

There is no God. He's forgotten. He's hidden his face. When we experience troubles, our main concern should not be, how do I get out of this trouble?

How do I stop getting afflicted? It should be, what am I believing? What do I believe about God right now? I need to be very careful, very alert.

[17 : 33] I need to set my mind on things above right now because this trial has brought my beliefs up. So when a fellow Christian is facing trials, we should be quick and gentle to fill their minds with true beliefs.

There is a God. He does see. He has not forgotten. If we're careless, if we just coast into it, we are more likely than not to begin believing the wicked and then just be overwhelmed with doubts.

The result is a life of tame, functional atheism. We're just going to deal with our own problems on our own. There's no God out there who's actually going to deal with our problems.

Afflictions come upon us and we readily believe the wicked. I think our hearts will often write Psalm 10, 1 through 11 and then never go a step further. We stop right here.

Think about it. Do the wicked simply make us angry and want revenge? And that's the end? Do progressive social agendas just make us strive for more political power and a yearning for the good old days?

[18 : 46] Do greedy people's success make us just want to follow their example, listen to their wisdom, and live a life like they're living? Does the spread of militant Islam only make us thankful that we've got a strong military right now?

These kinds of afflictions bring our beliefs to the surface and we act as if there is no God because we believe there is no God. We believe the wicked.

Why? Why are we so quick, so prone to doubt God, to let wicked men's atheistic beliefs get into our minds and then reinterpret everything else, even God himself?

Why do we let that happen? Well, it's because the wicked men don't have to get into our hearts to put wickedness there. The scariest message of the Bible is that this wickedness is already in us.

It's in all of us. That's the third reason why we doubt. We are the wicked. Why do we believe wicked things? Ultimately, it's not because we were tricked.

[19 : 57] It's not because we spent too much time in bad company. It's not because God allowed us to suffer too many troubles. Ultimately, it's because we wanted to. We chose to.

None of us are righteous. Even for the Christian, there's an old nature within us who is not neutral. The old man in us is looking for even the tiniest excuse to doubt God.

This is clearest in Romans 3 in the New Testament. It's a relatively well-known passage where the Apostle Paul says that no one is righteous, not even one. We are all wicked.

And then to prove it, you might be familiar with this, Paul starts listing sins that all of us are guilty of by quoting the Old Testament. Do you know what he quotes in Romans 3.14?

It's our psalm. It's Psalm 10.7. He says, his mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression. Paul reads Psalm 10.3-11 and says, that's me.

[21 : 00] That's you. This is us. We are the wicked. We are the arrogant. God's judgments are out of our sight. We are the crushers of the innocent.

Our mouths are filled with cursing. We accept the beliefs of the wicked because we are the wicked. We doubt because we want to renounce the Lord.

I know that sounds bleak. didn't we just sing Christ regarded my helpless estate? That's how helpless we are in sin. But listen, if we won't accept this as the root cause of our doubt, if we won't go all the way to the bottom there, then you can forget fighting doubt altogether.

Doubt will always find a home in our hearts as long as we refuse to see our willing sinfulness as the cause. If you are not a Christian here tonight, this is God speaking to you and asking you to repent.

You think there is no God? You think your experiences don't line up with the truths of the Bible? You think you won't be held accountable for your choices? Well, think deeper. The reason you believe those things ultimately is not because you have evidence for it.

[22 : 19] it's because you are wicked and you simply want to reject God. That's Romans 3.23.

But you need Romans 3.24. That verse does not threaten God's righteous anger for your wickedness. Today is the day of mercy.

That verse teaches that Christ took God's anger for sinners who will trust him, for those who chose to doubt. All who trust in Christ are pronounced legally righteous in God's courts.

If you trust that Jesus' death absorbed all of God's wrath for your wickedness, God himself will declare you righteous. So let go.

If you're doubting and you're loving your wickedness, let those things go and then join us, the brothers and sisters here tonight, in the mercy of the Lord. That's salvation.

[23 : 17] That's the only way that wicked people like you and me can be made right with God. And then tonight for my brothers and sisters in Christ, this also instructs us when we are filled with doubt, we need to understand why.

We might be facing very painful afflictions that brought our beliefs to light, but the circumstances are not responsible for our doubt. We are. It was our sinful decision to accept our old, atheistic, wicked way of thinking and then start doubting God.

That was us. Our first step then in fighting our doubt is acknowledging our sin and confessing it. If we're not willing to repent of the deep cause, the deep root inside of us that would doubt God in great circumstances, then we can't even begin to escape our doubt when we're going through troubling circumstances.

So, when we're feeling like, yeah, I doubt. I feel that doubt. I feel like God has forgotten me in my troubles. I feel like God is far away from what I'm facing right now.

Then our first step is to come back to God and ask for His forgiveness. The Lord is not standing far away. He's not hiding Himself in times of trouble.

[24 : 40] We walked away from Him. We hid ourselves from Him. This is why Jesus died. He was crucified because we choose to doubt the Lord.

The start of a path away from doubt, out of doubt, is holding up that little mustard seed of faith, believing that since Jesus died for my sins, the Lord welcomes me back.

He forgives us for walking into our doubt and then He graciously leads us out of it. And that's what the rest of this psalm shows. David did not let his doubts rule over him, did he?

He showed the faith of God's people by turning back to the Lord. And that's what this whole psalm is. This is David's returning to the Lord in prayer.

Even while the filthy doubts are still clinging to him and clouding his mind, he still holds up the mustard seed of faith and says, I'm coming back to the Lord.

[25 : 40] So, that's the next point, verses 12 through 18. David's going to show us how we escaped out. The Holy Spirit inspired David to lead our souls on a journey from the gloom of doubt to the bright joy of faith.

So just as there was a movement earlier for the wicked into greater wickedness, so now there's a movement for the faithful into greater faith. And since this is a song and not just like a historical story, we don't know how long this process took.

You can read this in 10 seconds. It probably did not take David's heart 10 seconds to do that. It's a condensed, poetic summary of what could be a long, hard, repetitive journey out of doubt to faith.

So as I said a minute ago, it begins with repentance and faith. It begins with restoring our fellowship with God, but even after that, we may still feel the doubt.

Our beliefs and our circumstances still feel contradictory. So to escape that feeling of doubt, we should go to the Lord in prayer like David does here with three general goals.

[26 : 52] First, we should confess our honest beliefs to the Lord. Our honest beliefs. What we actually think. Look at verses 12 and 13.

This is David coming to the Lord, still twisted up in his mind from believing the wicked. His beliefs are still mixed with doubts and lies, but he acts on faith.

Prayer is that act of faith. He comes to God and he brings what he has. He brings his honest feelings to the Lord. Arise, O Lord. O God, lift up your hand.

Forget not the afflicted. Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart you will not call to account? In those two verses, just like in verse 1, David's saying, the wicked told me that you won't do anything about this and I fear it's true.

Rise up and do something. The wicked said you would not call his actions to account and so far, he's right. Why are you allowing this? Confessing our honest beliefs to the Lord is an important step out of the prison of doubt.

[28 : 04] Hiding our doubts is no virtue. It's just hypocrisy. God sees right through it. Without this honesty that David's showing us here, we're actually blockading God's truths out of our heart.

We're keeping God's truths from getting in. Otherwise, our religious activities will begin purely external actions. There will be no inner joy. We have to open the door of our hearts by honestly bringing our real beliefs out in prayer.

And in most of our day-to-day living, if we don't do this, we'll just be the functional atheists I talked about. Dealing with our troubles on our own with no real God to deal with my real problems.

Confessing our honest beliefs to the Lord can make us feel uneasy, especially because those honest beliefs often are not true beliefs when we're in doubt. But the Psalms are full of these honest cries to the Lord.

Where are you? Why did you leave me? Bringing those honest cries out brings the true beliefs out. Confessing those honest beliefs keeps our hearts soft to his loving correction.

[29 : 18] So even though doubt itself is sinful, confessing our honest beliefs to the Lord is good. It's faith. Because it's trusting him to deal with what's wrong in our hearts.

But there's more. Second, we should recall his truths. This is what David has begun to do in verses 14 and 15. So after honestly emptying his heart of its honest beliefs, it's now ready to be filled.

Put something back in my heart. This is the first time that he contradicts what he feels is true with what God says is true. In fact, verse 14 is an explicit contradiction of the last word of the wicked man in verse 11.

The wicked man's final verdict was God will never see it. David has honestly brought that doubt up out of his heart and then he slams it with this truth.

you do see it. God, you do see it. I'm fighting now. I'm fighting that doubt with God's truth instead of the wicked man's truth.

[30 : 29] That's a lie from my wicked heart and I want God's truth in my heart. David's been filling his mind with the words of the wicked for too long and now he's filling his mind with the words of the Lord.

He recalls the truths of the Lord. He says, you note mischief and vexation that you may take it into your hands. He's reminding himself that God not only sees but takes record of every wicked action.

He's keeping that record. And then he fills his mind with what God has done in the past continuing in verse 14. To you, the helpless commits himself. You have been the helper of the fatherless.

You are just the God that we need in these afflictions. You have been and you will be and you are. And then in verse 15, he reminds himself of why God is keeping a note of wickedness in his hands.

God is going to violently punish the wicked man to the full extent of his evil actions one day. God will have justice. That's why he sees and that's why he's taking note.

[31 : 35] David's filling his mind with this. He's recalling the truths of God's word about who God is. He's replacing the lies of his wicked heart with God's words.

This is also an important step for our souls when we move from doubt to faith. When afflictions come on us, we need biblical truths in our hearts.

We need hymns that remind us of who he is, that we can fix our hearts on and say, no, this is who the Lord is. I know it. I know it. And then contradict those wicked beliefs.

We need a church, brothers and sisters who are lovingly encouraging us with these truths through the affliction, filling our minds with truth. David's psalm is not merely emotional release.

If all we do in our doubts is cry our honest beliefs out to God until we feel better, we've done almost no good. That's just a man-made therapeutic tool.

[32 : 44] We want that filth to come out and then we want it incinerated by the holy light of God's truth. We want to empty our hearts of that death and fill our hearts with the words of life.

Isn't that what the disciples called Jesus' words? You alone have the words of eternal life. Fill me with that and get this filth out. And then third, we should rejoice in God.

This is the final step of leading our souls out of doubt. It's what David concludes his psalm with in verses 16 through 18. You see, as we're taking these steps of faith, it actually leads our hearts to feel joy again.

It makes our experiences and our beliefs consistent and line up again and we can exult and rejoice in God. And that's because it leads our hearts back to God himself.

In verse 16, David praises the Lord for being the king forever and ever. The nations perish from his land. David's just rejoicing in who God is here.

[33 : 53] It's the same God ruling over the same circumstances, but now that David has been reestablished in believing God's truth, he sees reality again.

He's stopped interpreting God's word through his experiences and returned to interpreting his experiences through God's word. God is reigning forever and not even the nations, let alone one little wicked man, can bring an end to God's reign.

In verses 17 and 18, he rejoices in two things that he trusts the Lord to do. O Lord, you will hear the desire of the afflicted. You will strengthen their heart. You will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

I think strengthening the hearts of the afflicted means that God will give them strong faith so that even if the wicked man's afflictions continue, they will have strong hearts to go through in joy and not in doubt.

He's praising God for that. You will strengthen their heart. But he also knows that God will indeed bring justice. It may not be in this lifetime, but it is certain God will incline his ear and he will do justice.

[35 : 15] He will hold the evil to account for every evil deed that he took record of. David rejoices in this God. That's why this is not just a prayer, it's a song.

It ends with rejoicing in God. Because David has been led from doubt back to his God. And it has to end with rejoicing. So what do we do, Christians, when afflictions bring doubt out of our heart?

First, we remember why we doubt. The afflictions did not cause it. It was our wicked decision to believe lies about God. So we must first repent, must first ask for forgiveness for those doubts, and be restored to God through Jesus' death.

And then we follow him. We follow the Holy Spirit out of our doubt by confessing our honest beliefs to God, filling our minds and our hearts with his truths, and then rejoicing in who he is.

So let's close this time now by seeking him in prayer. Father, we do have to confess, like Romans 3 says, quoting our psalm tonight, that our mouths are filled with filthy wickedness, that we are the wicked, and we have no right to claim any blessings from you based on who we are.

[36 : 41] So that's why we rejoice now in who you are. Father, fill our hearts tonight. Father, if there are any here tonight, any of my brothers and sisters who are under the shadow of doubt, please let your light shine on them and start leading them back out of the doubt, back to believing the truth.

Fill their minds with the truth tonight. Fill all of our minds with the truth tonight. We all need this. Father, we do rejoice that you are the king forever and ever. Thank you for being the unchanging one.

Great is your faithfulness. We praise you for that. We offer all of this service up to you in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, since we've recalled