

Not Forgotten

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 September 2025

Preacher: Johan DeJong

[0 : 00] I just want to start with a question this morning. Do you believe that God will actually do! Do you believe that God will actually do something about injustice and suffering?

Do you believe that? I think often we secretly don't. Or maybe we say sometimes that we believe he will, but then we kind of live as if, you know, we can't really expect any help from that direction now, and it's in our own hands. Here's what one Christian leader posted this week.

I find it deeply depressing and frustrating to listen to the news at the moment. There is so much depravity in the world and intractable problems, national and international, caused by sin that our politicians are unable to solve. They make promises, but they lack the power to put things right. It is so easy to become cynical, angry, or to lose hope. That's the big picture, isn't it? And then there's the small everyday stuff that we walk through all the time. Why is it always my kid that gets the rough end of the deal at school? Do you ever feel like that? Why is it always my projects that work that explode? And that builds, builds, there's a kind of a low-level, simmering resentment, isn't there? And then we have folks asking us, well, if your God is so good, then why hasn't he solved this yet? Why hasn't he sorted this out? And you know, you can tell those folks that it's human beings that are responsible for the state of the world and that they have it within their power to fix most of these things if only they were interested. And you can tell people about free will that God gives people to some extent and the consequences that have to follow from that free will. But does that help? Those things might be true, but does it help? Let's call that the faith-life gap. How do we get over it? That Christian leader did. David, who wrote our psalm for today, he did. How can we do that? How can we deal with the fact that justice is sometimes delayed?

It isn't now. How can we take God at his word when he says that he will sort it out, that he will make it right? When will he make it right? That's really the root, isn't it? When is he going to sort things out? And our psalm today, under God's guidance, answers that question.

When will he sort things out? He already has. And he will yet. And Jesus is the proof.

[2 : 53] So we need to trust Jesus because Jesus will never forget us. So let's start thinking about that question. When will God make it right? He already has.

Verses 1 to 9. Let's look at verses 1 to 2. So here's David. He's praising God for who he is and what he's done. Why? Well, if you were to read verses 3 to 8, it tells us exactly why. David's doing that because God is the just judge who has rescued David and has already sorted out his enemies.

That's what verses 3 to 8 is really saying. Do you see? God has already done it and David is thanking and praising him for it. And that's good news. It's not God being biased because, of course, David represents God's plan to bring hope to the whole world. That plan that's fulfilled in Jesus. And the first half of this psalm is basically David saying, God, thank you that you have already sorted out my enemies. Thank you that you are just and that that can be seen. Thank you for bringing me relief, for being my stronghold, for being my refuge. And we think, great.

But he hasn't done that for me. But he has. He has. That's the message of this psalm for us today. He has done that already for us in Jesus. You see, this is what Christ does on the cross, what God does with Christ on the cross. He has already judged and rescued the world. Here's where we read it in the New Testament. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of his blood to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. He did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, that is when Jesus died and rose again, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Can you see, he already has in the death of Jesus on the cross, in raising him again. So the first thing we need to hold on to in our suffering and in the face of the injustice that we see in the world, is that God has backed his promise to sort this out, to make it right with his blood. In Jesus, on the cross. In the cross, all sin is judged.

In the cross, the verdict is proclaimed on all of those who do the oppressing and the afflicting. He already has made it right.

The trouble is, it feels like a desert, doesn't it? Like a dry, parched land when we are waiting for that to be fulfilled and completed.

[6 : 06] Do you know what the first signs of the rains are on the African plains? Some of you are sitting there thinking, uh, water falling from the sky? Actually, no.

The first sign of rain falling on the African plains is the rivers filling up, riding high. Why? Because of the rain that has already fallen way back upstream.

That's the first signs of the rains coming. That, my friends, is this. Because of the cross, even though we cannot feel the water falling from the sky yet, we can see the river running in Jesus.

And therefore, we know the rain has already fallen and eventually it will reach us. And God's word says, let justice roll on like a river and righteousness like a never-ending stream.

Amos 5. See, that's what makes him our refuge. Our help. When we are feeling dry and oppressed. That's also why we don't just sit back as Christians and say, well, yes, there's injustice in the world, but do you know what?

[7 : 24] God will sort that out later, so I don't have to worry about it. We don't do that. Our response should be David's response. Thank him with joy for what he did on the cross.

Do we do that? Here's my first question for you this morning. When injustice happens, when you are suffering and it doesn't seem to end, when difficult things come, do you go to the cross of Christ to find answers there?

Or do you retreat into anger and accusation? Do you lean into that bottomless symbol, the cross, that bottomless symbol of suffering and justice and hope?

Do you look at the river and know that the rain has already fallen upstream? Or do you just act as though Jesus didn't spill his blood for justice?

And are we that serious about ending injustice here? Are we serious as Christians about working out, living out, the justice that Jesus has already delivered on the cross?

[8 : 33] Or are we content to sit quietly in uncomfortable lives and say, well, God will sort that out later? He already has made it right. Secondly, though, he will yet make it right.

What does David do next? After thanking God for dealing with injustice and being his stronghold in trouble, what does David do next in the second half of the psalm? He prays for God to do justice and be his stronghold in a time of trouble.

Let's look at verses 13 and 14. Lord, see how my enemies persecute me. Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death that I may declare your praises in the gates of daughter Zion and there rejoice in your salvation.

See, even though God has already proved just and David sings about it, clearly everything is not all right, is it? David's in deep distress and he pleads with God, do something.

And that's because David, like us, lives between the already of God's justice and the not yet of God's rescue.

[9 : 45] He lives between a time when God has made it right and the time when God will make all things right. And what does he do in the meantime? He prays. He prays expectantly for justice and for grace to endure and for joy in his salvation in the meantime.

Do we pray that way? Do you pray that way? Last weekend, we were out blackberrying in Farnham Park and we bumped into Annika and Asha.

They'd taken the dog out for a walk. But somewhere on that walk, phone had fallen out of Asha's pocket. Don't worry, I asked her permission before sharing this story. That's not great, is it?

So we looked and we looked and we looked. We looked for quite a while. And after a while, here's what I thought to myself. I thought, I really ought to get everybody together and just pray that we would find the phone.

And then actually, what I really felt was, yes, Johan, you should do that and you should pray that God would allow that phone to be found in such a way that it is unmistakably and answer to your prayer.

[10 : 57] That's really what you should do. Do you know what I did? I worried that God wouldn't answer and that therefore, me and other people would be disappointed.

So I prayed, but I prayed silently in my heart. And I'm going to go out on a limb and say that I'm not alone in feeling that way about how I pray.

But I prayed. And do you know what happened? I called the missing phone. And guess who answered? Lucy Hunyset answered.

That's because some folks had been walking in the park and they had found the phone and they'd recognised a small Hunyset from the home screen because their child was at the same school as that small Hunyset.

And they had gone to the Hunyset's house and knocked on the door and given them the phone and then the phone rang and that was me asking, where's the phone? And do you know what I heard the Lord say to me?

[12:10] When I said, thank you Lord, I heard him say to me, oh you of little faith. Do we pray expectantly for God to do right?

To intervene, even. Do you then go out of wherever you were praying and expect something to happen? Do you? Or are your prayers a bit like mine?

So mundane, so ordinary that even if they were answered, I wouldn't even get excited about it. You see, if we secretly believe that God won't help us, then that's how we would pray.

If we do, then it will look different. And if we secretly believe that God won't help us now, or that's practically how we live, then that kind of goes double for coming judgment, doesn't it?

Will God really show up at the end of time and sort stuff out? Well, here it is in black and white.

Verse 15. The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug.

[13:22] Their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. The Lord is known by his acts of justice. The wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. The wicked go down to the realm of the dead.

All the nations that forget God. Verse 19. Arise, Lord. Do not let mortals triumph. Let the nations be judged in your presence. Strike them with terror, Lord.

Let the nations know they are only mortal. Listen carefully. Nations who forget God and oppose his appointed king will be judged by God for it.

And it will be utter. And it will be unmistakable. The psalm also actually defines for us who it is among the nations that will suffer that judgment.

Verse 17. The wicked go down to the realm of the dead. Who are they? All the nations who forget God. See, it's forgetting God that leads to the injustice and suffering that we see in the world today in the first place.

[14:31] Isn't it? It's forgetting God that leads to people being oppressed and afflicted and suffering. And that's the path we have been on as a nation and in part as a wider church for some time, isn't it?

On the UK, God will yet do justice. But then praise God we have in verse 18.

The definition of what is good and righteous. Verse 18. But God will never forget the needy. The hope of the afflicted will never perish.

Here's how Tim Keller describes this. This is justice that those who forget God will be forgotten but those who remember God will be remembered forever.

Do you know, Jesus prayed this psalm and when we pray this psalm, when we read it just now, we pray for that justice too. For God to do justice on the nations and we should because the world can't keep going as it is going.

[15:42] with the weak being oppressed and afflicted and God's justice ignored. And we should not shy away from that, friends, uncomfortable as it may feel because Jesus didn't.

Not because I say so, but because Jesus didn't. when will he make things right? He will yet.

So God has already made it right and will yet make it right and that leaves us with right now, doesn't it? What do we do right now? Well, first off, we want to know that there will be justice and when.

That's what we've been talking about. But the next most important question is who will do the judging? And can I trust that guy? Will they really understand the injustice and suffering that I have experienced?

Will I be okay? Given that my record isn't exactly perfect. Can I know him? Is there some personal connection between me and him?

[16:52] Here is the heart of this psalm, verse 10. Those who know your name trust in you. For you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Sing the praises of the Lord enthroned in Zion. Proclaim among the nations what he has done. For he who avenges blood remembers he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.

You see, we know the name of the judge. We know him. Who will bring justice? The New Testament tells us.

For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.

What entitles Jesus to that seat? And more to the point, I guess, why is that any comfort to us at all? Well, I want to tell you the story of this man.

[17:55] His name is Witold Pilecki. If any of you are Polish, you can correct my pronunciation at the end. What happened to Witold Pilecki? He was a Polish cavalry officer in the Second World War and he was a resistance fighter as well.

And he made an extraordinary decision during the Second World War. he allowed himself to be captured by the Nazis and taken to Auschwitz to document the Nazi atrocities and organise resistance from within the camp.

He suffered all of the horrors of the camp voluntarily. And he did that not because he was Jewish or because he deserved it but he did it so that justice could be done later and that suffering could be exposed and ended.

Now, Witold Pilecki you would trust to be the judge wouldn't you? Because he knows exactly what it is like. Unsurprisingly, Witold Pilecki had a Christian faith.

Witold Pilecki you would trust to be the judge of the Nazis in the camp. Just like that Jesus is qualified. Jesus is qualified to judge because he has suffered injustice not because he deserved it but because he volunteered to suffer it.

[19:16] Jesus is qualified to judge because he was judged on our behalf and those who remember him he will remember.

How is that possible though? Surely, in a just world none of us actually are clean. None of us have clean hands so then I'll go under too. That doesn't mean I'm the worst I could ever be or you are the worst you could ever be, does it?

But we are part of the system and we can all see that the system is unjust. There is systemic sin and none of us are clean. It's my nation that has forgotten God.

It's not just some nation is it? It's my nation. I want to take you back to the description at the top of the psalm which is in the original manuscript so it is God's word.

For the director of music to the tune of the death of the sun and that is our clue. It is the death of the sun in our place.

[20:22] His rising, his ascending, his sitting down on the throne of judgment. That is how justice is done and also how the wicked are forgiven and taught to remember God.

That is how I know that my suffering and the injustice that I have suffered is understood but also that I can be saved from the justice that Jesus must surely bring. That is how I as the needy find refuge, how I can have joy in my salvation because it is Jesus sitting on the throne.

See I think sometimes we forget this and we need to remember this. On the cross Jesus did not just carry your sin, he remembered your suffering.

On the throne Jesus forgets your sin but he still remembers your suffering. and when judgment comes you will be safe if you know him and if that's you, if your trust is in that Jesus, the one who died on the cross and now who sits on the throne, then I really want to leave you with three things that describe you from this psalm.

Number one, you are never forsaken. Verse 10, you Lord have never forsaken those who seek you. Remember that in the middle of your suffering and injustice.

[22:02] Number two, you are not forgotten. Verse 18, but God will never forget the needy. And number three, your hope will never perish.

Verse 18, the hope of the afflicted will never perish. perish. You are not forsaken. You are not forgotten. And your hope will never perish. Because God will not forget you.

See, the nations forget God. We may forget God. God will never forget. Derek Kidner says something very helpful here.

God's remembering implies his movement towards what he remembers. others. What he's trying to say there is, when God remembers us, when he says you are not forgotten, that doesn't just mean you're in his head.

It means you're in his heart and in his hands as well. That's what it means to not be forgotten by God. So when you feel like God is not answering you in your suffering and you cannot understand

how on earth there can be justice when you look around you, then remember Jesus who knows. [23 : 17] And remember you are not forgotten. When on Monday morning the next thing happens to your kid, or the next project explodes at work, or the pain returns again, remember Jesus.

Hold on to Psalm 9. Tell yourself he knows he has not forgotten. He has already put it right. And he will yet put it right.

friend, perhaps you don't have that personal trust in Jesus. Then my question for you this morning is just this.

In eternity, will you be remembered? Or will you be forgotten? With Jesus, we will never be forgotten.

We will never Let's pray. Lord God, we bring our anger and frustration at the injustice and suffering in this world to you.

[24 : 28] And we pray for you to act today. Lord God, we thank you that like David we can praise you because in Jesus you have already given justice and promised an end to suffering.

And we thank you that you will yet do that. But most of all, Lord, we pray. We pray with the thief on the cross who was receiving the justice due to him.

Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And all God's people said, Amen.

Sometimes it helps, doesn't it, to have something physical to hold on to.

So in a couple of weeks' time, hopefully, we'll have these armbands. They'll be at church. You can come and pick one up. We'll just say, Psalm 9, not forgotten. And it's to help you remember when that time comes, when you're struggling with injustice and suffering, that you are not forgotten.

So look out for that. James.