

Divine hide & seek?

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[0:00] Amen. Why don't I just pray as we begin. Caring and good you are.

We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, I think we've all met somebody in our lives, maybe growing up, who've taken hide and seek a little bit too far.

Okay? So, in 2023, a boy from Bangladesh was playing hide and seek with his friends. And he got into this big red box. He thought it was a really good hiding place.

I can't, no, my friends aren't going to find me here. And he was there for quite a long time. And I think his friends were probably saying things like, okay, okay, good hide, you can come out now. It turned out, well, he was in a shipping container. And he got shipped to Malaysia. And they found him six days later. Moral of the story, don't play hide and seek at a shipping port.

[1:22] Okay? He took hide and seek way too far. And today we meet someone who's almost saying that about God.

Look at verse 1 of Psalm 10. It'd be great to have that open. Verse 1.

Why, Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? Is God playing hide and seek?

If he is, he's taken it way too far. And we're back in the Psalms for the summer, which are the songs of God's heart.

They're words God gives to his people for all times of life. And in this section of the Psalms, God's king and his people are being surrounded by wicked people.

[2:30] And today is no exception. And the Psalmist here is asking, why are you playing hide and seek, God? I think this is a universal experience.

Something that we've all maybe kind of felt or even asked. We've all felt distant from God in hard times, haven't we? And we've all wondered where he is.

When we look at them, when we watch the news or we hear of a story, and the world is so wicked.

The wars that, if we're honest, we've probably lost count of how many there are now.

Millions dead. That terrorist attack in Berlin this week. What was God doing? Where was he?

Maybe in your own life, there's a moment of injustice where you think, where was God when that happened?

What were you doing? Here's the good news of this Psalm. That God is not hiding.

[3:45] He's not absent. He's not uncaring. He sees and he takes note. And he cares. And he will act.

Three points today. And we ask that, where are you, God, when arrogant thugs get away with it? It's a really honest picture he paints.

Look at this really honest picture. They're arrogant. Have a look at verse 2. Verse 3. He boasts about the cravings of his heart.

And no one can stop me getting what I crave. In his pride, the wicked man does not seek God. In all his thoughts, there is no room for God.

Verse 4, it literally means, in his pride, the height of his nose. This is kind of how we imagine sort of proud people today, isn't it? Like, looking up at this. Putin, with all his power, giving the sign-off for another attack on Ukraine.

[4:50] I can do that. I can do what I like. Kim Jong-un sitting in a chair. King's chair. There's no room for God in my regime. And that arrogance leads to thuggery, doesn't it?

Have a look at verse 8. He lies in wait near the villages. From ambush, he murders the innocent.

His eyes watch in secret for his victims. Picture the person sort of on the lookout.

On the lookout. His eyes watch. It literally reads, he treasures it. He loves it. He rubs his hands together with glee. Those call centres.

They're rubbing their hands together with glee. Those scammers in those call centres. What old lady can we get five grand off today, boys? Verse 9.

Like a lion, in cover, he lies in wait. He lies in wait to catch the helpless. He catches the helpless and drags them off in his net. And we've all seen those documentaries of those lions lying in wait, waiting to pounce.

[5:57] I was watching another documentary, a different sort this week. It wasn't too far from that, I'll be honest. It was a show about catching criminals, kind of forensic stuff.

And there was this one case where this man was a delivery driver. And he was just going about his business. And while on broad daylight, seven men pounced on him and murdered him.

Brutally murdered. I was watching that just going, they're animals. They're like lions. Lying in wait. Or think of women, unsafe on our streets. There are people who just prowl around. And the worst is that, well, it looks like they get away with it.

They get away with it. Verse 11. He says to himself, God will never notice. He covers his face and never sees.

[6:59] The murder of that delivery driver. Most of those murderers got caught. Most of them. It's still two on the run.

And you can imagine where they are now. I can do what I like. God doesn't see. See? Think of a controlling relationship.

There's not quite enough evidence to convict. Oh, I got away with it. God doesn't see. A bully at school.

No one sees. No CCTV at that moment. That's painful for parents as well, isn't it? Where is God when arrogant thugs like this in this psalm are getting away with it?

Now, isn't it good to know that the Bible does not sugarcoat life? It is honest. It matches with our experience. With what we feel. And it doesn't treat what is going on out there as a normal thing.

[8:09] This is not pain is a good thing. It's a horrible thing. It teaches us not to tolerate it. Don't get used to it. Be appalled. These are the words that we have to be appalled with.

It's out there. But it's also close to home, isn't it? I know there's more than a small minority of people in this room who are victims.

A little bit like Psalm 10. And these honest words really are for you. To cry out to God with.

That is evil. That's not normal. And why? That's the word to say why to God. Now, you might even think that hide and seek is a little bit too weak.

It's more like the boss who shirks their responsibility when it's getting hard. More like the kid who conveniently needs to go to the toilet every time it's washing up time. Is God running off when it's hard?

[9:27] I think there are two very sensible questions we can ask. Either, God, you're doing this because you're not powerful enough. Or because you don't really care.

I think most of us will know that God is powerful enough. But we don't want to trust a God then who's powerful but then doesn't do anything about it.

That's almost the worst combination. Before we get an answer though, there's one more thing we need to see. Because these wicked men, they are proud, strutting around, saying there's no room for God.

But it's all bravado. Actually, if you look, he kind of does believe in God. He said he doesn't. He's a self-professed atheist. But he reviles God, verse 3.

Verse 11, he says, God will never notice. Okay, if you don't believe in him then, why are you saying that? It shows us they're not ignorant.

[10:32] They're rebellious. And that means they're even more comfortable than we thought. And that gives us special comfort because God takes note of all of that out-and-out rebellion for the judgment.

He takes note. Look at verse 12. Arise, Lord, lift up your hand, O God.

Do not forget the helpless. Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself he won't call to account? Notice how kind of conflicted he is here.

Calling on God to arise in the same breath. Oh God, why are they doing this? That's faith. A mix of trust and doubt.

Almost at the same time. One to the other. And that is so normal. That is so normal if you feel that. But he brings that doubt. He brings it all to God.

[11:35] Key verse. Verse 14. But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted. You consider their grief and take it in hands.

But you, God, see. You see. It looks like you're hiding, that you're standing afar off. But I know. And I kind of don't know as well.

But I know. That you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted. You see my affliction. You consider my grief and take it in hands.

Consider. That word consider means gaze upon. Look intently at. You know, other translations say take note. God sees everything that goes on.

And it's like he's taking note. He's taking note of all of it. When I was younger, we used to have this kind of screen time rule in our house.

[12:40] Sort of three hour screen time rule for Saturdays. And we kind of marked off in ten minute blocks. And I got to the end of the day. And I marked off an hour and a half on one of those days. I thought I did quite well there.

And then my dad said to me at the end of the day, how long did you watch TV for today, James? Got my sort of sheet up with a block. I'm like, well, an hour and a half. He got his one up.

You've been watching TV for six hours today, James. We don't always think that God is watching. I didn't know that my dad was watching or taking notes. But God is taking notes. You might really need to hear this today.

You might be looking out at the world right now wondering where on earth is God? It might be closer to home. Where something feels painful.

[13:42] Even now. God's forgotten me. He's moved on. Just know that God takes note. He sees. He does.

Every single bit of arrogance out there. Logged. Every bit of violence out there. Filed. Every miscarriage of justice.

Remembered. Perhaps for you. Maybe where there wasn't CCTV for you. God saw it. Where there wasn't enough evidence in court to convict in your situation.

God has piles of evidence stacked up. God takes note. And that would be no good if he just took note, would it?

But he takes note for eternity. For judgment. Have a look at verse 16. The Lord is king forever and ever. The nations will perish from his lands.

[14:57] The world will end one day. But the Lord Jesus is that eternal king. Bringing the wicked to account. In eternity. This was your life.

I kind of imagine it like it's on a big screen. This is what you did. I've got it all noted down. I didn't forget it. The nations will perish.

From his lands. Verse 15. Break the arm of the wicked. but then we ask why not now we ask why not now emmy was listening to the radio in a car the on thursday and it was um the jeremy vine talk show and i think he's talking about a hosepipe ban or something and uh people were up in arms about the complete injustice of water companies so i'm being allowed to overcharge people that that sort of thing i wasn't i don't know about this sort of stuff but um this one questioner came up um who made it very clear that she was answering and asking this from a sort of god-centered point of view and then live on air jeremy vine asked if god exists why hasn't he struck at least why hasn't he struck at least one water company with lightning and where's god and then he said but why is it in this world leave aside the water people why bad people so often seem to prosper why is that when emmy told us i was like oh this is the perfect illustration thank you so much do you know what the lady on the radio she gave a really good answer you can listen back to it on bbc sounds it's on thursday at lunchtime at some points the point is everyone asks this don't they doesn't matter who you are jeremy vine one of us doesn't matter it's what the psalmist asked and it's so hard why not now but we don't always get specific why's answers to why's verse 13 why does the wicked man revile god why does he say to himself he won't call to account it's kind of left open it's not the specifics of it aren't answered are they but behind that question always a question of god's character always a question of god's character do you care do you care enough we know you're powerful enough god do you care but god is merciful and he cares he cares look at verse 17 you lord hear the desire of the afflicted you encourage them and you listen to their cry defending the fatherless and the oppressed he cares deeply he really does he's a defender of the fatherless the oppressed he listens he hears he knows what's going on and he cares about it how do we know

because that god came that god saw he heard and he came down to love the helpless to vouch for the oppressed and he shared in the suffering he became the greatest victim he didn't hide and he came in the most caring loving defending person of the lord jesus christ that's the god that we know who sees and acts because he did it once and he will do it again but also behind this question is kind of an assumption god should judge now but shouldn't judge me god should judge now but shouldn't judge me that we're not like the wicked out there not as bad but we're all proud sometimes we're all

we've all hurt people we've all gotten away with things that we shouldn't have done but because god cares because he's merciful even to sinners like us he doesn't judge now he gives us time to repent Paul Tripp says this mercy reigns so his judgment waits mercy reigns therefore his judgment waits Jesus came for the victims yes but he came for sinners and he got on that cross if you trust in him so that you could find refuge in him so that you could be forgiven he's merciful and we think about this a little bit more in some of the upcoming psalms that we've got this summer so the call at the end of the psalm is to commit ourselves to god look at verse 14 but you god see the trouble of the afflicted you consider their grief and take it in hands the victims commit themselves to you if you can take one verse away and pray over it this is the one and it applies to all of us we look out at the world and we see the injustice and when we do those horrible things on the news the stories around you commit yourself to the one who's not hiding who will do something about it you might be a victim yourself today receive the one receive the one today who didn't move on when everyone else did who took it in hands commit yourself to his loving defending arms today and we all need to come to him as our saviour as our refuge because he came for sinners like us so that he could defend us god's not absent he's not indifferent he's not hiding he couldn't be closer he couldn't be more caring he couldn't be more merciful why don't I pray lord you see you see the trouble of the afflicted out there and in here lord you consider their grief you consider our grief you take it in hand we know that you will lord we know that we can commit ourselves to you help us to do that help us to trust in your good character thank you that you are patient and merciful to us and you gave us time to repent in jesus name amen we're going to sing a song now moment