

Psalm 109 "A Cursing Psalm?"

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah,¹ either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself.

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer for a minute. Father, sometimes your Word is shocking to us us. And we don't entirely know what to do with it. Often, Father, we just try to forget it and move on.

But Father, this is your Word, Psalm 109. And it is hard for a lot of us Canadians to get our minds around. And so we ask that your Holy Spirit would do a gentle but powerful work in our minds and our hearts. And bring your Word with all of its beauty and all of its richness and all of its wisdom deep into our lives that your Word might form us. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

[1 : 53] So I don't know how closely you were paying attention when Ross started to read that. But if you're wondering, they go, one moment, did that Psalm just say, did that Psalm just ask to kill that person?

Like, did that Psalm just ask God to impoverish his children? Like, was that what it just said? Well, it did. And, you know, I have to say several things. So on Monday morning, I started to look at the text to prepare myself for the sermon this Sunday. And after I came back from my first look at the text, I said to Louise, Louise, I don't know why I picked this Psalm. You really got to pray for me.

I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do with it. And so you might even be wondering why, I mean, I think Louise said, why did I pick this Psalm? And the answer is this. So we're going through any, we're preaching on 10 Psalms between Psalm 91 and Psalm 120. Different speakers have picked different ones. And there is this cursing Psalm. And one of, I think one of the jobs of a presbyter and elder should be to help ordinary Christians read the Bible for themselves wisely and well. That should be part of my job. That should be our church's hope that people can read the Bible themselves wisely and well. And so if I just avoided uncomfortable Psalms like this, I wouldn't be helping you or serving you. So we're going to look at it. And, you know, one of the things that's really struck me, I was thinking about this on my drive in this morning, like this was a Psalm, I really need to sit with it for the whole week and pray into it and think about it. But I now, I'm really glad this Psalm is in the Bible. And I hope by the end of this sermon, you also will be glad that it's in the Bible. And in fact, if you sit with it and not dismiss it, it ends up having a very profound emotional power and beauty. And so here, let's have a look. So open your Bibles. If you don't have a Bible of your own, there are some Bibles over there. And it's Psalm 109.

Ross only read about half of the Psalm. But we'll read the whole Psalm. And it's Psalm 109. And this is how it goes. It begins by saying to the choir master a Psalm of David. So David is the author of the Psalm. And it goes like this, Be not silent, O God of my praise, for wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues. Notice there, wicked and deceitful mouths, in other words, people speaking. And they're speaking with lying tongues against the David, against the Psalm, whoever the poet and the prayer. Verse 3, They encircle me with words of hate hate and attack me without cause. In return for my love, they accuse me, but I give myself to prayer.

So they reward me evil for good and hatred for my love. Now, one of the things about the Bible is the Bible is very, very, very realistic, but it's realistic with wisdom and it's realistic with hope.

[5 : 16] And so this Psalm is dealing with one of the rawest and most terrible situations that people can find themselves in. In fact, part of the problem, it might be for Canadians, is that we might have like maybe a day where people turn on us or, you know, but there's fewer people who've really had to deal with such a profound, raw experience of many, many people, not only people in positions of authority, but also just others turning on you. And you get a little bit of a sense of the depth of the problem there, that it sounds as if there was in fact a very affectionate relationship at one point in time.

The psalmist talks about how he loves them, how he prays for him, these people, but rather than getting love and everything in return, what they get is this. And it's devastating. It's devastating to have lies told about you and to be slandered and to be deceived.

You know, it's just a very, very small thing. But when we were going out of the Diocese of Ottawa and come under ANIC, and we left the Diocese of Ottawa for reasons of biblical faithfulness, back in those days there were these things, I think they're called chat rooms or whatever, and you could go and people could post things and have conversations online. And I had people in my congregation who said, George, you better not read them. And I did read them a couple of times. And after I read them a couple of times, it was just, the lies that were said about me, the slander, the untruths that were said about me, the hatred that was obviously there, the self-righteous hatred against me, it depressed me for several days. It was very, very hard. And I realized why people had told me that I shouldn't look at it.

It was better not to know. But at the end of the day, I realized it was important. It was important for me to know. Not that I'd look at it very often, but it was very, very hard. And that's just a very small thing. I mean, a lot of these people who are saying these things about me had been my partners in ministry and stuff like that, right? There'd been people that I'd ministered to and with.

A person that I helped lead to Christ was one of the people who spoke most meanly about me. And so this is talking about very, very real situation that a lot of people experience.

[7 : 56] And it's raw. But the poet now takes a shocking turn. And if the psalm was just this, we'd probably, as Canadians, not have much to say about it. But it takes a very, very shocking term. And I can tell you right now as we get into it, that knowing the original language, the Hebrew, actually, if anything, it's just even rawer than what's said in English. And so if you look with verse 6, what's the shocking turn? Verse 6, it goes like this. They appoint a wicked man against him. Let an accuser stand at his right hand. And when my accuser is tried, let him come forth guilty. Let his prayer be counted as sin. God, whenever you hear this man praying, don't take it as a sign of virtue.

Understand that even his prayers are sinful. Verse 8, may his days be few. May another take his office. May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. He prays for his death.

He prays for the death of his accusers. Verse 10, may his children wander about and beg, seeking food far from the ruins they inhabit. He prays that his entire family will be completely impoverished. His house will be turned into ruins. Verse 11, may the creditor seize all that he has.

May strangers plunder the fruit, the fruits of his toil. Let there be none to extend kindness to him, nor any to pity his fatherless children. Complete and utter impoverishment. Verse 13, may his posterity be cut off.

May his name be blotted out in the second generation. He's just prayed that if this man has any kids, that God would work in such a way that none of his children have children.

[10 : 12] This is very raw, right? 14, may the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. And this is partially the fact that it's not just the accusers who are there, but they are part of a tradition and a lineage of what he's been praying about in verses one to five, or at least potentially. So what do we do with this? I think for most of us, we think it's a little bit over the top. In fact, if I was to say that I was praying this way about people that I had just mentioned back in the chat rooms when I was the pastor as we were leaving the Diocese of Ottawa, you'd say that I was over the top. And that would be, I think, valid to pray that in that particular situation, at least in every aspect of this. And some people might even wonder if that's just one of these examples of how the Old Testament God is bloodthirsty and the New Testament God is a God of love.

The question would be, how could Christians pray something like this? It seems like it would be an unchristian thing to pray. But I want to make the problem harder in the short run, because if you see the problem is even harder in the short run, you begin to see the solution.

So if you have your Bibles, although we'll be on the screen, I ask you to actually go up. If, Claire, could you put up verse eight again? May his days be few, may another take his office.

Now take, turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter one. Acts chapter one. And what's happened is Jesus in the Luke, which was the book before this, Jesus has died on the cross. He's been buried. He's risen from the dead. And we see that for 40 days, he appears, makes appearances, and eats food, and speaks to people, proved to hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people that he's fully resurrected.

And then just before this, we have the ascension on the 40th day. Jesus ascends into heaven. And then in the 10-day period between the ascension of Jesus into heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, this incident happens. And so there's a large group of them in an upper room that they're praying. And it's not up there on the screen, but in those days, Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters. And then he says this, verse 16, which I think will be on the screen, brothers and sisters, the scripture had to be fulfilled. Look, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. Note this, you know, sometimes I, there's a whole pile of, you know, I'm sorry, baby, I'll, there's a whole pile of, you know, YouTube apologists going after Protestants about our belief in the authority of scripture. And, you know, I'll say that my wife sometimes, you know, I'll see somebody saying, look at the three main verses that this whole doctrine rests on. There's hundreds of verses that express this. It's hundreds and hundreds of verses. It expresses the biblical idea that it's the Holy, when we hear scripture, it's the Holy Spirit speaking. He uses ordinary people, but it's the Holy Spirit speaking. And there's nothing else like it. Tradition is important, creeds are important, theology is important, guides are important, all those things are important, but there's something unique about scripture. So, you know, listen to that again in verse 16. Brothers, the scripture had to be fulfilled.

[13 : 55] Why? Well, it's because the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. Then jump down to verse 20. For it is written in the book of Psalms, may his camp become desolate and let no one, let there be no one to dwell on. And, here's the key, and let another take his office.

That part of the imprecations, the curses, that's what he quotes. That's what the apostles and the New Testament sees as the Holy Spirit speaking. So we can't just dismiss this text. We have to deal with it.

And it's not just a prophecy. I mean, the implication of it is that when the Holy, if it's the Holy Spirit speaking, if what we hear is that God used David of his own free will and his own creativity and his own imagination, and out of all of the words that David spoke, some of the words are words that the Holy Spirit actually speaks using David. And that means it's something that was good for David's hearers, for those who came between David and Jesus, and the days of Jesus, and even today. It has this constant relevance and power. So what do we do? Well, here's where it's important to sit with the text and to appreciate the brilliance of the poet prayer to create tension. You feel intense? Should we be praying like this for people? Well, there's this tension which is created. And now we go into these next few verses, which are a combination of lament and also though still this type of asking for God to do particular things. So look at verses 16 to 20 of Psalm 109. Now once again, he's still talking about the the people who are the leader or the leaders of the people who really accused him. He says, for he did not remember to show kindness, but pursued the poor and needy and the brokenhearted to put them to death.

We're talking the killing fields of Cambodia. We are talking people in our country who are sex trafficked. We are talking about people intentionally targeting people to get them using drugs to be completely and utterly ruined. We are talking serious stuff. There's a range of this type of hatred and lies and deception. And by the way, indirectly throughout all of this, you see the way that we should be. You know, when it says here that he did not remember to show kindness, but pursued the poor and needy and the brokenhearted to put them to death, it's indirectly telling us that to be a follower of Christ means that rather than pursuing the poor and needy to kill them or the brokenhearted to hurt them, we are to protect them. We are to seek to help them. And verse 17, it goes on, that was a bit of an aside. He loved to curse, but curses come upon him. He did not delight in blessing, may it be far from him. He clothed himself with cursing as his coat, may it soak into his body like water, like oil into his bones.

May it be like a garment that he wraps around him, like a belt that he puts on every day. May this be the reward of my accusers from the Lord, those who speak evil against my life.

[17 : 52] If you were an innocent citizen in Gaza, and Hamas is using you, a Christian in Gaza, as a human shield, hoping that you will be killed and then spared, how should you pray?

If you are in parts of northern Nigeria or the Congo, where gangs and armed groups of Islamic State militants are going around and killing Christians and burning churches, how should you pray?

If you have survived the killing fields of Rwanda, how should you pray? If you were a Christian in Auschwitz or a Jew in Auschwitz, how should you pray?

If you were part of the killing fields of the Cambodia, how should you pray? If you were part of those terrible rape gangs that have been going on, aided and abetted by government officials in England, how should you pray?

If you are in a situation here in Canada of terrible sexual abuse by parents, and maybe even with your church turning a blind eye, how should you pray?

[19 : 22] Maybe you pray like this. You see, I mean, good grief.

I pray that my kids and my grandkids never have to pray a prayer like this. I pray they never have anything so horrific happen to them. But some people in this congregation have had those things happen to them.

Some people listening right now have had these things, or maybe having these things happening to them, where lies are being told about them to ruin their lives and ruin their children's lives.

And it's happening right now. How do we pray? See, the Bible talks about...

It's not hallmark. It talks about the whole range of human experience, even the most horrific things. And it talks about it, the real person in the real life, their real heart, in light of a real God and a real Savior.

[20 : 36] And we see some of that here in this particular psalm, obviously a range. My explain... I can give you some other examples in my life of campaigns of lies and deception against me.

And that's like a... You know, if this is like, you know, these killing fields over here, you know, and there's a range like this, I'm way over here, but we're still on the range.

And some of you have never experienced it, and praise God, you never have. But if you never have, you need to see, realize that you need to be quiet a little bit and learn and listen from people who have.

See, people expect, many people, Christians included, but many Canadians expect the Bible to be like a hallmark card. And they reject it because they say, oh, it's just like a hallmark card, just, you know, vague sentiments.

But then when they get texts like this, they reject the Bible because it's too real. You know, if you reject it because it's hallmark and you reject it because it's not hallmark, the problem is you, not the Bible.

[21 : 36] There's something problem inside of you. And as well as that, you know, even many of our secular friends and many Christians, if they complain about this text or feel uncomfortable with it, it shouldn't be in the Bible, they have no ground to judge.

Because they themselves do the same thing, but think they get a pass. Why am I saying this? Sorry, if you've never seen the very first Star Wars movie, and I haven't kept track of the Star Wars universe, I have no idea if the original movie done by Dick Lucas is now number 73 in the Star Wars.

Like, I have no idea what that is. But the very first movie that was ever done, and if you haven't seen it, I'm going to spoil it for you. Block your ears. But part of the whole point of the movie is to stop the Death Star from destroying the rebels.

And at the end of the movie, they kill the Death Star, literally killing thousands of people, and everybody cheers. Well, why is it all right for Hollywood to kill thousands of people, but you can't have a psalm like this in the Bible?

And now I'm going to be very politically incorrect. What about this generational thing? Well, the smart people in our country think that it's completely and utterly just.

[22 : 51] For something that was done 200 or 225 or 250 years ago, that I have to pay for it. Even though 200 years ago, my parents were peasants in Northern Ireland.

And nobody from my family even came to this country until the 50s. But that's seen as wisdom in the Supreme Court. It's seen as wisdom at the universities.

It's seen as wisdom in all of the mainstream media. That somehow or another, five or six or seven generations later, not even of the same generation, that we should pay. So how can you be uncomfortable with a text like this?

In fact, what our culture wants in both of these cases is vastly more bloodthirsty and lacking in mercy. You see, even psalms like this, what's the point of the psalmist praying for this?

Part of the point of the psalmist praying for this is that if the children of the accusers hear it, they repent and avoid that fate. That's the whole point in the psalms, you know, how the punishment will go to the second or third generations.

[24 : 02] It's not that God's necessarily going to do it. It's for them to learn, these are things that your parents taught you that you shouldn't do. Stop it. Turn.

God takes no delight in the death of the wicked, but rather that they would turn from their wickedness and live. That's his heart. But there's grace and there's mercy, there's forgiveness, which we do not get in our culture by the elites on these issues.

They have no grounds to talk about it. See, the fact is, when we have a problem with, when we think we can do it but God can't, then we have a problem. And we are not wise.

And the other thing about this text is if you think about it, listen a little bit about, you know, you know, he loved to curse, let him be, like, let curses seep into him. If you go back and now that you understand that the accusers are actually trying to have the poet prayer killed and ruin his family, then what you actually see in this text is there's something very, very powerful about it that we understand at a very, very deep, at a deep level.

You know, just before I went on holidays, I was talking to somebody. It's a very regular conversation I have. How could God judge somebody who never knew about him and never knew the Bible or any of those things? How could God judge them?

[25 : 19] And I say, well, because, in fact, the Bible talks about how to do that. And the simple answer is that God is unbelievably fair. That at the last day, nobody can say that God's unfair. And so that if he's dealing with somebody who's never, you know, had, never had any type of whatsoever of understanding of God or his ways, all God has to do is say, we're just going to replay your life and we're going to make a note of all of your moral judgments and how you judge and what you pursue.

And we'll use your own standards to judge you. And every single person would fail. And there's something very similar here. You see, at the end of the day, the end of the end of the end of the end, one of the ways to understand what happens in terms of God's judgment is he says, you know, I basically have a choice.

I can say, like Frank Sinatra, I did it my way. Or I can say, I need your way, Lord. And if I go all through my life saying, I did it my way, I did it my way, I did it my way, then God can say to you and me at the end, you have chosen cursing over blessing.

Cursing is what you will receive. You have chosen lies over truth. Lies is what you will receive. You have chosen greed over generosity. Greed is what you will receive.

You have loved a curse. You will become a curse. And dwell in curse. You love death. You will dwell in death.

[26 : 52] What can be more fair? What can be more horrible? That God actually, at the end, gives you what you desire. What you have spent your life pursuing.

What can be more terrible? And that's what David, the psalmist, has prayed. What you've desired for others is what you will receive.

Now, there's something else as well here, which talks very powerfully about how we experience evil and how we respond to it.

And it's a little bit about, well, let's look at this next bit. Because the fact of the matter is, like, when I've been attacked like that, there are several things that I tend to do.

I'll be very honest. I have revenge fantasies. I imagine terrible things happening to the other person.

[28 : 01] Well, what happens? The psalmist, right? He sets the beginning of the problem, creates tension, begins to clarify what's really going on and where our human heart is.

And then he moves into the conclusion. Look at verses 21 to 39. Look at that.

Verse 22.

Verse 22. Verse 22. Verse 22. Verse 22.

Let them know that this is your hand, that you, O Lord, have done it. In other words, when justice is done, when there is vindication, help people to see that it's not an accident.

[29 : 44] It's not an impersonal process like karma, but that the Lord, the sovereign Lord, has actually done something. Verse 28, let them curse, but you will bless. They arise and are put to shame, but your servant will be glad.

May my accusers be clothed with dishonor. May they be wrapped in their own shame as in a cloak. With my mouth, I will give you great, give great thanks to the Lord. I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

His accusers, their mouths are filled with lies. He wants his mouth. If you go back to the beginning of the psalm, their mouths are filled with lies and hatred and deception.

Verse 30, at the end, he wants his mouth to give great thanks to the Lord, and I will praise him in the midst of the throng. That's the prayer. Not that my mouth will be just as good as telling lies, just as good as hatred as them.

In fact, God, make me even better at lying. Make me even better at hatred. Make me even better at deception. That's what happens with revenge fantasies, right? Oh, just watch me get unleashed, and I'll really let them go.

[30 : 47] That's not what he wants his mouth to be filled with. He doesn't want to become a curse. He doesn't want to become a lie. He doesn't want to become hatred. So he says, with my mouth, I will give great thanks to the Lord.

That's what I, Lord, help my mouth to be a mouth of thanks, to be praised in the midst of the throng, for he stands at the right hand. God stands beside the needy one.

He stands beside the oppressed. He stands beside the one who is maligned and hated. He stands beside them. He is Emmanuel. He is God with us in our midst to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.

It describes Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us. You see, the fact is that when these terrible things happen to us, we often just get completely and utterly overwhelmed with depression, with powerlessness, with despair, and we maybe alternate that with fantasies in our mind about all the bad things that can happen to those people who are so unjustly hating us.

But we don't pray. We worry, but we don't pray. This is telling us to pray.

[32 : 12] And rather than having our time spent in revenge fantasies and feelingness of despair and powerlessness, we are encouraged to pray.

To pray. To tell God about it. And we're reminded that God is Emmanuel. That he knows. In fact, this is part of the great brilliance of this connection of this psalm to the story of Judas with Jesus.

Jesus was lied about. He was pursued. He was pursued to the point of death. And as he was dying naked on a cross, he is taunted by his enemies.

If there are those here who are going through that, if there are those here who this psalm has described in the past and you haven't completely processed it, you need to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is Emmanuel.

And this psalm shows that when you are having those terrible things happen to you, he knows. He sees you.

[33 : 23] He loves you. He's with you. You know, one of the things which was so helpful for me at different times when I've had things like this happen to me, and I can't expect somebody to fix something, but gosh, it can be very helpful to just have somebody put a hand on your shoulder and say, it's a hard time.

You're really doing remarkably well. I really respect you. Just a simple word of kindness or a card can be unbelievably powerful.

You see, this psalm also shows something else because at the end of the day, it gives us a bit of a window as we come to an end of the sermon about what salvation is like, is that David wants justice to be done, and he wants to be vindicated.

And part of what salvation is, is that justice is done, and we are vindicated. When we come into union with Christ, it's not just a matter that the bad things are taken away, but it's also a matter of being clothed with righteousness.

It's not just in a sense that the bad things we've done are all dealt with, but the actual goodness of Christ clothes us and starts to form us, and you can see that dynamic here.

[34 : 47] And that other thing about it brings us to the very final thing here, which is that I don't think we Christians who now know about Jesus can just pray Psalm 109.

There's some nuances in how we have to pray. A couple of years ago, I was helping another church, a pastor in another church, who was having a problem with two couples in conflict.

And one of the couples in conflict were overwhelmingly, no, it wasn't like 100% and zero, but it wasn't 50-50.

It was probably like 90-10. And in 90-10, one couple was very, very, very, very aggressive and assertive and hounding. And part of the problem is, I can easily imagine, I was thinking about this this week, God brought it to memory.

That's one of the advantages of prayer, right? You pray and God brings things to your mind. And I realized that if that Psalm 109 was read to that couple that were the worst offenders, they would probably come up to me afterwards and say, George, I really need to hear that prayer because that's what's happening to me.

[35 : 59] They wouldn't see themselves as the ones who are actually being prayed against. See, David, who wrote this psalm, also wrote a psalm that said, we flatter ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin.

So I'm not saying this to minimize it. I mean, if there's anybody here who's been profoundly sexually abused, and you're maybe being profoundly sexually abused right now, especially if you're sexually abused as a child, it is not your fault.

It's 100% the fault of the terrible man or the terrible woman or the family or the church that's allowing that to happen. I'm not saying that. But when I'm saying that there's this extreme from here to there, when you're getting closer to this end, it's not always 100%.

There's some things that you yourself can do that make things worse. But the main thing is that we can be morally blind. We can be morally blind.

And we could even be at this extreme and think that we're the ones, the ones doing the terrible murdering and lying, that we're the ones who are being hurt. And this psalm is a challenge for us to say, is it I, Lord?

[37 : 02] Have I done something in the past? Have I contributed in some way in my workplace or in my family to something which is so horrible? Is it I, Lord? Do I need mercy?

Do I need to repent, Lord? Help me not to flatter myself too much to detect or hate my own sin. Help me, Father, not to be a person who's very good at seeing specks in other people's eyes and not seeing the logs in my own eyes.

Is it I, Lord, standing in need of prayer and of forgiveness? Is it I, Lord? And so it is that in this prayer, if those of you who have experienced this or may be undergoing it right now, you can pray this psalm.

But you need to add one other aspect. You need to pray for the conversion of your persecutors. Because God does not take delight in the death of a sinner, but rather that he will turn from his weakness and live.

And this is really important to help to understand the gospel because one of the mistakes that Christians in the world makes is that somehow Christians think that we're the good people. I am not a good person.

[38 : 09] And this is not a church of good people. I am a sinner who has been redeemed. And apart from the grace of God shown to me in the person of Jesus Christ, I deserve his judgment.

All I am is a beggar telling other beggars where to find God's grace. And so it is that if you pray for your persecutor, it doesn't mean that if they become a Christian that there's no earthly justice done to them.

But it does mean that when justice done, that they will go to God redeemed. It is both valid to pray for earthly justice to be done and at the same time to pray for their conversion.

Because a Christian is not a good person, but a forgiven person. A Christian is not better than other people. A Christian is one who is a sinner, who has put their faith and trust in Christ and is now in union with Christ.

So that the guilt, the doom that I deserve fell on him. And the destiny that he deserved is offered to me. I invite you to stand.

[39 : 33] Bow your heads in prayer. Father, this psalm is maybe for some people it's even triggered. And I don't know, Father, if there are people in the church right now, somewhere on that whole spectrum.

Father, there's maybe many of us who've never had anything like that happen to them so bad. And there's others who have, maybe some who are living with it. And if there are some who are living with it who are hearing these things, Father, we ask that you both grant them the courage to share a little bit with us and grant us the courage and the wisdom to know how to stand with them and to walk with them and to pray for them.

And so, Father, we ask as well for each of us, you know how easy it is for us to be filled with revenge fantasies but spend no time in prayer.

And we ask that you deliver us from revenge fantasies, deliver us from feelings of powerlessness, deliver us from feelings of despair, and teach us to pray.

Pray and assure and certain confidence and hope that whether on this side of the grave or beyond, that justice will be done, that those of us who are in Christ will be vindicated, we will be received and welcome into heaven.

[40 : 44] And we ask, Father, for those of us who are persecuted or oppressed that you would help us to pray for our persecutors, pray for their conversion. And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior, and all God's people said, Amen.

Amen. Amen.