

The Lord is King Forever

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[0 : 00] Almost one quarter of a billion Christians face high, very high or extreme persecution because of their faith.

! North Korea, Pakistan, Nigeria, Nigeria, and Syria are cited as being among the worst places for such atrocities. Thousands of Christians are killed and many more face torture, ridicule, and alienation from mainstream society for things like assembling and carrying a Bible that we in the Bahamas take for granted.

Moreover, in countries around the world, the poor are exploited by governments and corporations. Indeed, corporate greed is routinely celebrated and even rewarded. While I have spoken broadly, I did not intend to convey that we in the Bahamas are immune from the circumstances that I mentioned.

Consider it as an example that a growing number of people, particularly young people in our country, often ridicule Christianity, declaring it to be uncool and intellectually unsupportable, as if they were necessarily bad things, right?

[1 : 58] Then, at a personal level, the situations that we sometimes find ourselves in, prolonged illness, business failure, relational issues, and the list goes on and on and on.

Those circumstances and countless others lead us to ask the question which the psalmist in the psalm that forms the background for our message contemplated.

Why, O Lord, do you stand far away?

Let us pray. Let us pray. Father, we look to you in this moment, knowing that without you, this time is meaningless.

And so, O Lord, by your Holy Spirit, we ask you to do what only you can do. Cause these words, your words, to come alive in our hearts.

[3 : 18] Cause them to bear fruit. Cause us, O Lord, to adjust as you would have us to adjust. And cause our faith, O Lord, to come alive as we hear your word.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. And all God's people say, and all God's people say, Amen. For the next few moments, we will consider Psalm 10.

Psalm chapter 10. And our topic is, The Lord is King Forever.

Please turn your Bibles to Psalm 10. The concluding verses of this short psalm, which we will eventually read in its entirety, is where we find the words that form the basis for our topic.

This is what it says. Psalm 10, verses 16 through 18. It says, The Lord is King forever and ever.

[4 : 34] The nations perish from his land. O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted. You will strengthen their heart. You will incline your heir.

You will incline your heir. To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed. So that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

The Lord is King forever. Much of Psalm 10 details a set of circumstances that seem to challenge the kingship of God.

In doing so, the psalmist, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, challenges us to view life through the prism of God's sovereignty, rather than the fleeting and temporary events of life, even if they are severe.

I believe that the essence of this psalm is this. Despite the pain inflicted on believers by the wicked, the Lord is still King forever.

[5 : 54] A careful reading of Psalm 10 reveals that the psalmist makes the case for this conclusion, for this summary that I have just outlined, by doing three things.

First, he makes an assertion. Second, he justifies or supports his assertion.

And thirdly, he petitions the Lord. Therefore, in the next few minutes that we have left, I invite you to consider the psalmist's assertion, his justification, and his petition.

First, his assertion. In verse 1 of Psalm 10, we find the psalmist's assertion in the form of two rhetorical questions.

Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why, O Lord, he opens the psalm, the psalmist does.

[7 : 37] Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? And then the second question. Why, O Lord, do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

And perhaps you're here today, and maybe you are a bit unusual. Maybe you can't relate to those questions. I believe that perhaps only the little boy who I saw moments ago cannot relate to those questions.

But so he will. As for the rest of us, we can relate to those questions. Those questions are rhetorical in the sense that they're not soliciting a direct answer, but are intended for a dramatic effect.

Implicit in the questions is the psalmist's assertion that the Lord appears to be unconcerned during times of trouble.

First, the psalmist suggests that the Lord distances himself in times of trouble. You know, the psalmist says, why do you distance yourself?

[8 : 50] It is as if the psalmist is saying, you know, Lord, you see what is happening. You are there, but you are far away from it. Why do you stand far away?

Uninvolved, unengaged. But then the psalmist goes on and says, why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

It's one thing to distance yourself. But it's quite another to hide yourself. It's as if the psalmist is saying, you are deliberately standing away. You are deliberately absent.

I can't find you when I'm going through trouble. He cannot be found. Those are serious assertions, serious charges levied by the psalmist.

In verses 2 through 11, the bulk of the psalm, the psalmist seeks to justify this assertion.

[10 : 08] Let's now consider his justification. To justify his observation that the Lord is distant, that the Lord seems to be hiding himself, the psalmist sets out in the most graphic detail the character and the condition of the wicked and the condition of the poor who are their victims.

He underscores the unbearable pain the poor endures at the hand of the wicked.

And as I studied verses 2 through 11, I concluded that David's description of the wicked was the most comprehensive I had ever seen.

And that I would not wish to be personally characterized in that way. In these short verses, David launches a scathing and fulsome attack on the wicked.

As if to shout, Lord, how could you allow these morally corrupt, prideful, God-defying people to ride the backs of the poor without being punished?

[11 : 39] In this section of the psalmist, he sets out to demonstrate that surely God must be distant to allow these things to happen, these wicked people.

In these ten verses, David uses cutting, simple, and compound adjectives to describe the wicked and their activities.

I counted about 21. Let's take a look at what David says in verses 2 through 11. Remember now that David begins this psalm asking the Lord, Why do you stand far away?

Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? And then he goes to verse 2. In arrogance, the wicked heartily pursue the poor.

Let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. For the wicked boast of the desire of his soul.

[12 : 52] 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. That's the wicked, David says. Your judgments are on high. Out of his sight. David says to the Lord that your judgments are on high. Your judgments are away from the wicked.

They are out of his sight. As for his foes, he puffs at them. He says, the wicked that is, 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. Under his tongue, a mischief and iniquity.

[14 : 03] He sits in ambush in the villages. In hiding places, he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless.

He looks in ambush like a lion in his thicket. He looks that he may seize the poor. He seizes the poor when he draws him into his neck.

The helpless are crushed, sing down and fall by his might. He says in his heart, God has forgotten and he has hidden his face.

He will never see it. Ah, David describes these individuals, these individuals, as wicked, as prideful. They challenge God. David says they are arrogant and they hotly pursue. David here is saying, telling us that this is not something that happens by happenstance.

[15:09] This is intentional. They hotly pursue the poor. Intentionally abuse them. They boast.

Intentionally abuse them. They boast, David says, of the desires of their souls. Then they declare that there is no God.

Unbelievers. Abusing and taking advantage of the poor. And then they say in verse 5, His ways prosper at all times.

You look around you sometimes and you say to yourself, Man, this person doesn't go to church, doesn't believe in God. As a matter of fact, he is a self-declared atheist.

He treats his employees poorly. And look at him. Look at him. Look at where he's living. Look at where he's driving. Look at everything about him.

[16:16] Where is God? Could it be that God's judgment towards him is on high? Out of his sight.

As David says. This man says, the wicked man says, I shall not be moved.

Full of arrogance. Not only now. Not only today. But throughout the generations. My children and my children's children. We shall not be moved.

We're going to be alright. We will not face adversity. But then, aren't you glad that that's not the end of the story?

Because having made a bold assertion, and setting out a compelling argument, argument based on what David sees around him, the circumstances.

[17:26] David, David does not approach God as if these things do not exist. David does not approach God blindly.

He says to God, God, this is what I see. This is the reality. This is, I see this happening. I see the poor being abused by this wicked, arrogant person who declares that you do not exist.

Who declares that your judgment is far away from him. So David makes the case in support of his assertion.

But then, we see now that David petitions the Lord. David's petition is as clear and to the point as his assessment of the wicked.

I'd like us to examine it in two parts. First, let's consider verses 12 through 15. Here is what David says in this psalm.

[18:45] David prays 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 shall not call to account. But you do see. For you note mischief and vexation that you may take it into your hands.

To you, the helpless commits himself. You have been the helper of the fatherless. Break the arm of the wicked and evil doer.

Call the wickedness to account till you find none. In those verses, David gives us a model for our prayer of petition.

First, we see David's humility on display as Brother Clarence reminded us earlier today. We see David stands in humility understanding that he does not have the power by himself to do this.

[20:03] he acknowledges as we should that the problem is not one that we have the power to fix. You and I can't do this.

You know, I spent decades believing that there were some problems that I could fix and I've come to the conclusion that I was crazy to think so. We can't fix it.

Only God can. Instead, David calls on the Lord to intervene. David calls on the Lord to intervene in a miraculous way.

Lord, intervene in these circumstances. Lord, help do what only you can do for we are powerless. to bless. He asks the Lord to display his own power. David rebuts the view of sinners who suggest that the Lord is unaware of their sins.

[21:14] Instead, he says that the all-knowing will indeed recompense evil. the Lord knows and he sees.

In verse 14, David's prayer shows that he has engaged with God before. He has a history with God, but you do see, David says, you do see, for you note mischievous and vexation, that you may take it into your hands.

to you, the helpless commits himself. You have been the helper of the fatherless. And I believe that David is able to pray this way, because yes, he has seen the hand of the Lord in his life before.

And very often, you and I, when we have problems, when we have challenges in our lives, one of the hardest things for us to do is to remember our history with the Lord.

The time, the times when he brought us through those circumstances that we thought would overwhelm us when we were stuck in the merry!

[22 : 37] And he brought us through. But what we see here in David's prayer, in David's petition, is faith.

David says that though these circumstances exist, I'm not going to disregard them. I'm not going to ignore them, but I'm going to go to the Lord, and I'm going to pray to the Lord in faith.

And what an example for you and for me today. So when we go to the Lord, yes, we acknowledge the challenges, we acknowledge the difficulties, but we say, oh Lord, that you are the one who promises never to leave us.

You have said in your word that you love us with an everlasting love, that there is none stronger than you, that you do indeed recompense evil.

We can come to the Lord in faith. We can leave when we are on our knees crying to the Lord about our circumstances. We can rise in faith, believing that the Lord is going to work it out in his own way.

[24 : 07] Finally, in verse 15, we see David being very, very specific in his prayer here.

Break the arm, break the strength. David says, he wants the Lord to weaken them, weaken the wicked and the evil doer, call his wickedness to account till you find none.

This is faith. David goes to the Lord in faith and says, Lord, do this. As we consider the remaining two verses, David says in verses 16 through 18, the Lord is king forever and ever.

The nations perish from his land. Faith, 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 the man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

[25 : 25] See, David is in the Lord. David declares that the Lord is king forever.

David rested on the immutability of God, all-powerful, all-loving, and yes, mysterious. He found comfort in remembering that God is sovereign.

God is all-powerful. And so we look to him because David remembers that there are many battles, most battles in fact, that you and I cannot win in and of ourselves.

But we can look to God in faith. The Lord is king, not yesterday or just today, but the Lord is king forever.

the Lord is king forever communicates a truth that we often take for granted and one that we always need to be reminded of.

[26 : 33] Often we need to be reminded of. Indeed, it is the well from which all of our attitudes should spring.

this truth that the Lord is king forever should inform the way we live, should inform the way we face difficult circumstances, should inform the way we interact with one another, should inform the way we pray.

The Lord is king forever. So when next you pray, when next you have an overwhelming circumstance in your life, you can pray like David prayed, Lord, how challenging, how difficult this circumstance is, but you, oh Lord, are king forever.

You are able to do what I cannot do. As we conclude, how do you and I live in a world where there is so much injustice and abuse?

Do we throw in the towel or question God as if there is no hope? or do we like David pray and ask the Lord to intervene while being mindful that nothing escapes him?

[28 : 20] God does see each tear that falls and he does hear us when we call. finally, as we consider, as we consider Psalm 10, our focus was principally on wicked men, how they oppress the poor and God's response.

But I want to remind us today, I want to remind us that the chief of the wicked, Satan, who kills, steals, destroys, and accuses.

Paul tells us in Colossians 2.15 that he, that is God, disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him, Jesus.

The fact is that for those of us who are believers our vindication is in Christ and nothing on earth or in heaven can pluck us from his hand.

That walk is finished. That walk is done. However, if you're here today and you're an unbeliever, no matter your circumstance, you will die and one day face a judge without an advocate, there is unfortunately no victor for you, for your soul, and you cannot win the battle by yourself.

[30 : 12] I pray that the Lord would open your eyes to the truth of his word. Let us pray. God, you are king forever and ever.

Lord, arise, we pray, on behalf of the millions of people around the world who suffer hardship and even death because they call upon your name.

Have mercy on them for your sake. Lord, as we consider our local circumstance, Lord, we pray that you would cause us not to go to battle by ourselves.

Lord, we pray that you would cause our hearts to be humble, humble, to recognize, oh Lord, that we are weak and you are strong.

Father, help us not to be unmindful of the circumstances around us, but help us, oh Lord, to be even more aware that Jesus, your Son, has overcome the world.

[31 : 42] And help us, oh Lord, therefore, to have our faith planted in you. So Lord, we pray that whatever the circumstance that we're faced with today, that we will remember that you are indeed king forever.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.