

# Is God Really in Control?

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! To the choir master, according to Muth Laban, a psalm of David, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

I will recount all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you. I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence. For you have maintained my just cause. You have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment.

You have rebuked the nations. You have made the wicked perish. You have blotted out their name forever and ever. The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins.

[ 1 : 26 ] Their cities you rooted out. The very memory of them has perished. But the Lord sits enthroned forever. He has established his throne for justice.

And he judges the world with righteousness. He judges the peoples with uprightness. The Lord is a stronghold to the oppressed. A stronghold in times of trouble.

And those who know your name put their trust in you. For you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. Verse 11. Sing praises to the Lord who sits enthroned in Zion.

Tell among the peoples his deeds. For he who avenges blood is mindful of them. He does not forget the cry of the afflicted. Be gracious to me, therefore, O God.

See my affliction from those who hate me. O you who lift me up from the gates of death. That I may recount all your praises. That in the gates of the daughter of Zion, I may rejoice in your salvation.

[ 2 : 32 ] The nations have sunk in the pit that they made. In the net that they hid. Their own foot has been caught. The Lord has made himself known. He has executed judgment. The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.

The wicked shall return to Sheol. All the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten. And the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.

Arise, O Lord. Let not man prevail. Let the nations be judged before you. Put them in fear, O God. Let the nations know that they are but men.

Verse 1, chapter 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 boast of the desires of his soul. And the one greedy for gain curses and renounce God.

[ 3 : 38 ] In the pride of his face, the wicked does not seek God. All his thoughts are, there is no God. His ways prosper at all times. Your judgments are on high.

Out of 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. 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 a thicket. He lurks that he may seize the poor.

He seizes the poor when he draws them into his net. The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might. He says in his heart, God has forgotten.

[ 4 : 36 ] He has hidden his face. He will never see it. Verse 12, arise, O Lord, our 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 an 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've 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 their ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

[ 5 : 46 ] That was five minutes of reading the scriptures. But incredible verses. This is the word of God. This is the word for us this morning. You know, one of the more important Bible professors of our time is a man named Vern Poitras.

I don't know if you ever heard that name. He's known for many different books he's written on the Old Testament. He's one of those Old Testament weird guys or eccentric guys. I won't call them weird. Eccentric. Several weeks ago.

But what you wouldn't know about him or what most people don't know about him is his personal commitment to the Bible. One day he was sitting in the seminary cafeteria muttering over his Bible while he was at lunch and the employee came by and said, Mr. Poitras, Dr. Poitras, what are you doing?

And he said, memorizing the book of Habakkuk. And the employee questioned, why Habakkuk? And he said, because it's the next one. Let that hang on you for a minute. You know, after hearing Psalm 9 and 10 read aloud for five minutes, you might be wanting to ask, why study these verses?

[ 7 : 01 ] People don't usually think of Psalm 10 when they write up their favorite chapters from the Psalm. They think of Psalm 23 or 84 or 103. So why study it? But maybe I could respond this morning because it's the next one.

The benefit of going through the Bible verse by verse and chapter by chapter is coming to passages that we would not normally take up to preach. We would not normally take up to study. And it allows God to set the agenda in so many ways so that we might benefit from the full counsel of God.

And so I believe God has this Psalm for us, even though it's not one of my favorites. Now, in many ways, it is a Psalm of David. It's a Psalm for David. You captured that as we read it.

These are the words of David. These are the prayers of David. And so they take us into the behind the scenes of the way David felt abandoned, angry, and powerless in the face of evils.

This Psalm, though, is also a song of the church. It's a Psalm for the church. Every Christian is a saint, sufferer, and sinner. And over the years, the people have suffered together and they've sung this Psalm.

[ 8 : 09 ] This morning, we're not treading new ground. We're treading old ground where sufferers have found comfort in these verses. And so it's a Psalm for the church. But, you know, it's not just a Psalm for David and a Psalm for the church.

It's also a Psalm for Jesus Christ. The Bible says, Jesus is the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Imagine how he felt when all the masses deserted him, when all his friends abandoned him, when his own father didn't rescue him.

Well, we don't have to imagine anymore. The Psalms take us into the heart of Jesus Christ, but this Psalm is also for you. This Psalm is for you if you've ever been betrayed by a close friend or a spouse.

This Psalm is for you if you've ever been bullied or canceled by the mob. This Psalm is for you if you've ever been violated or made to do something against your will.

This Psalm is for you if you've ever had someone wrongfully hold your sins over you, refusing to let you change. This Psalm is for you if you've been haunted by the threat of physical harm or the personal destruction of slander and gossip.

[ 9 : 28 ] This Psalm is for you if you've ever been in a moment where you wanted to throw in the towel. This Psalm is for you if you've ever felt convinced that the Lord is nowhere to be found and does not care.

This Psalm is for you if you've ever found yourself in darkness. And this Psalm looks darkness in the eye and it has a message for us. There's a way out of the valley in so many ways where we're going.

Those who know the name of the Lord trust Him through life rearranging affliction. Those who know the name of the Lord trust Him through life rearranging affliction.

And I do have a tall order by taking up these Psalms today so we're going to break it out in three points. The first is the wicked think they're secure. Now, just a brief little note.

You know, we're going to take this up in two Psalms because originally or in one Psalm even though it's two Psalms because originally it was one Psalm. The oldest transcripts or translations have this as one Psalm.

[10:26] And if you notice when we got what I read at the beginning of Psalm 9 there's a little subscript there which are really old in the translation history of the Psalter. So there's a subscript to Psalm 9 but there wasn't to Psalm 10 because many people said it was one Psalm originally.

Does that make sense? And so, and in fact it's an acrostic, you know, so, you know, maybe if you made an acronym for your name like sometimes we do that in kids' school, you know, somebody's birthday their name's Adam and so you make an acronym.

Awesome. You know, maybe not devious but something else would be the D and so it's an acronym here. Essentially it may be saying that this is the most complete picture that we need for facing evil in this life.

So if you take up these Psalms together it's a fascinating cry of deliverance there. It's peppered as you notice with these pleas for help and it's also kind of situated between the past and the present and the future so he's kind of thanking the Lord for past acts of deliverance but he also, he's also saying I will wait for future acts of deliverance and so, and kind of in between all those are these rich declarations of faith which I just love down there in verse 9 and 10 of chapter 9.

The Lord is a stronghold of the oppressed. Those who know your name trust in you. I mean that will preach. Those are just wonderful but these declarations are not superficial.

[11:56] David's not putting a good spin on his pain. David's not sugarcoating evil if you notice. In fact, David details the thoughts and actions of wicked people that he's facing like never before and we went through some Psalms.

David, David Powelson says no Psalm gives a fuller description of the inner workings of those who hurt others. That's who the wicked are and that's who David has in his cross hairs.

The first thing we notice when we're reading through this when David gets to the meat of the plea is that the wicked pursue. Look in chapter 10 verse 2 he says, In arrogant, the wicked hotly pursue. David's not focused on their thoughts or their intentions or their words. David is focused on their aggressive action. Look down there in verse 8 and 9 of chapter 10 he says, He sits in ambush in hiding places.

He murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless. He lurks in ambush like a lion. He lurks that he might seize the poor.

[13:06] He seizes the poor when he draws them into his neck. The wicked are like predators. Listen to those words again. He sits. He hides. He lurks.

He watches. He ambushes. He seizes. He murders. The idea is that the wicked are not passively waiting for the righteous or the poor or whatever to come before them. They're actively hunting. Now if you notice all these references to the wicked are personal. A lot of people would say that's because David's talking about personal enemies.

People he knows who know his name know his family and are yet after him. But also the wicked are personified here as well as a single man for another reason because evil comes to us in the form of a man in the form of Satan.

The father of lies who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to destroy. And so they pursue and then they succeed. Look in verse 5 of chapter 10.

[14:11] His ways prosper at all times. That's not a promise. You know, that's not a promise for David right there. He's saying the wicked's ways prosper at all times. He succeeds.

He's skilled. Now in the south when the days get shorter and the weather gets cooler many men start dreaming of the deer stand.

Let's be honest. Deer hunting for men is a little bit like labor for women. The joy of the baby the joy of the kill erases the misery of the experience. But deer hunters know that just rising early and climbing into the stand ain't gonna do you nothing.

And so you have to hunt. You gotta wash your clothes and unscented detergent and leave them out on the porch or something like that. You gotta spray them down with deer pee and other things like

that.

You know, you gotta walk out long before sunrise and don't take your biscuit up there, you know. You know, eat your biscuit in the car and then walk up there with no food. Sit very quietly in the freezing cold.

[15:26] My fingers and toes just freeze in order to see them move and succeed. That's what the wicked are doing here. They're hunting. They're succeeding because they're skilled at killing.

David's being hunted. Look in verse 10 of chapter 10. It couldn't be put more vividly than this. The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might.

But the last thing we notice about the wicked is that they are proud. You know, and you probably noticed this. Look in verse 10 too. He says, in arrogance, the wicked hotly pursue the poor.

Verse 10 three, the wicked boast. That's a word for pride of the desires of his soul. Verse four, in the pride of his face. He doesn't see God.

All his thoughts are there's no God. Verse five, your judgments are on high, out of sight. You can't do anything to me. He puffs at them. He puffs at the people.

[16:27] He puffs at the Lord. He's unstoppable, so he sinks. He does what he wants. He says what he wants. He gets what he wants. But twice, if you notice when we went through, we peer into his very thoughts in quotations.

Verse six, he says in his heart, hearts don't speak, but he says in his heart, he forms these words in our heart, I shall not be moved. Throughout all generations, I shall not meet adversity.

Verse 11, he says, God has forgotten. He's hidden his face. He will never see it. You'll never see what I'm doing. More than anything else, the pride is what becomes the focus of David's prayer.

Interestingly enough, this proud attitude of heart is one thing we share with the wicked man in these verses. Paul in Romans 3, when he's declaring that the law has come so that every mouth might be stopped, he quotes Psalm 10 because our mouths are full of cursing.

But that's not why David's focusing so much attention on the pride here. What he's trying to say is that the engine of their wickedness is not wickedness but pride.

[17:44] This is really helpful to see. The engine of the power, the steam of their wickedness is not wickedness. It's not just kind of doing bad things to do bad things.

It's pride. Now, one of the most grieving evidences of wickedness in our culture is the prevalence of pornography.

It's hard to estimate the amount of money spent in America on pornography but it's in the billions. It's an industry just loaded with wickedness.

The exploitation of women. Sadly, the exploitation of children. The objectification of women.

This isn't a creature made in the image of God. This is an object that I derive satisfaction from looking at. The profiting of bully businessmen.

[18:48] The secret fantasizing and lust of men and women watching. But David would say the engine of it is pride. The engine of it is this industry that can live in the dark and say, we'll do what we want.

Heath Lambert says it like this, a simple heart that desires to look at pornography says, I will have whatever I want when I want it. I don't care if it's harmful, if it hurts God or those I love, I will have whatever I want.

Now, this is not my favorite stuff to talk about and yet, in so many ways, it's helpful in this context. What it helps us see is that all sin is grievous to God. Every sin involved in the porn industry is grievous to God.

Every sin of lust is grievous to God. Every impure heart, every flirtatious comment, every lewd look, every illicit, imaginative contemplation, every pornographic image relish. But the power of lust, what David would say, the main problem behind it, the thing most offensive to God is the attitude that says, I will have it!

And it's the core of sin. Christianity and the world didn't fall apart because somebody ate an apple. The world fell apart because someone says, I'll do what I want.

[20:03] And so David rivets our focus on pride. It's our greatest enemy.

It's one of the things he abhors. He awakens us to the power of the gospel. This attitude that says, I will push God off his throne and assert myself on my throne is deep, deep, deeply wicked.

And so God comes and he came and he endured all the wrath for those who put themselves on their throne so that he might raise them up when they humble themselves before him and receive

the good news of Jesus Christ.

But it also awakens us to the weakness all around us. David Pallison again says, we live in a world where the roaring lion prowls, where many people are not friends wishing you're welcome, but enemies wishing to use you and harm you.

that's the world. You know, we're not in Kansas anymore, Toto. It's not just in the foreign industry.

[ 21 : 22 ] It's in credit card companies who prey on young 18-year-olds knowingly luring them into debt that will ruin their financial life as if no one sees. It's in parents who prey on their children instead of protecting their children in the secrecy of their home.

It's in congressmen and women who write laws to privilege the rich or the powerful and prey on the poor and bullies who team up on the playground or in the conference room or in the lunch room and intimidate, thinking they're safe in their numbers.

That's what they do. That's what the wicked do. Many people in this world are not after you're good. Jesus said, I don't trust man because I know it's in him. We must be shrewd as serpent, innocent as doves.

So the wicked assume they're secure than the helpless, point to assume they're sunk. How would you not? I know this stuff's heavy.

It's heavy for me too. You know, beginning in Psalm 9, David recounts the past but then he makes these escalating cries for help. And look down in verse 9, 13. He says, be gracious to me.

[ 22 : 32 ] See my affliction. Oh you, lift me up from the gates of death. In 19 and 20, he says, arise, O Lord. Let not man prevail. Let the nations be judged before you.

Verse 12 and 13 in chapter 10, he says, arise again, O Lord. Lift up your hand. Forget not the afflicted. Why does the wicked renounce God and say all these things? All of these pleas capture the content of his pleas, but none capture the depth of his desperation like verse 1 of chapter 10. He says, why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? These verses, they unpack his devastating fear.

Yahweh, the Lord, is standing, not seated. You think he's ready to pounce, but no he's not. He's standing far off, looking and listening, but not acting. Rather, hiding his eyes and ears as if not to see or hear because if Yahweh saw and heard, then surely action would follow and so he cries out and essentially says, why are you nowhere to be found?

Why are you standing so far away? Why are you not listening to me? How could you watch and not lift a hand? How could you see them heard? And the feeling is just heightened by the specific words that he uses to describe the innocent or the helpless and underlines their powerlessness.

[ 24 : 04 ] He says they're oppressed, they're afflicted, they're needy, they're poor. Again, they're poor, they're innocent, they're helpless, they're poor, they're poor, they're helpless, they're afflicted, they're helpless, they're fatherless, they're afflicted, they're fatherless, they're oppressed, all that just stacking up to say they're sunk.

And so he cries, why? Why? Why? Why? Why? that question takes us into the deepest agony of life.

The moments we feel utterly deserted and abandoned by God without explanation. For me, there's no more agonizing moment in my life than losing my first cousin at 13 years old.

My cousin John and I were born one month apart, March 8th and April 7th. Summer before my seventh grade year, John was riding his bike on the shoulder of the road in our hometown.

When a drunk driver swerved off the road, slammed into his bike, killed him immediately upon impact.

[ 25 : 28 ] Graciously, there was a friend of ours that came up one of the third or second cars behind him and went and stuck a thumb to his throat. And then he fled.

But I never forget the hollowness of those words when I heard them. I still feel it.

Sorry about that. My heart and my life reeled out of control. To say this had a significant impact on my life is a massive understatement.

I became deeply bitter and angry. Angry at God. Angry at this man who killed my cousin. I think my parents sent me to every counselor in the state of South Carolina.

I used numerous drugs to deaden the pain and make me feel somewhat different. I felt pointless in the seventh grade.

[ 26 : 35 ] I felt life was just pointless. I planned my own funeral. I found God basically irrelevant because I said why too many times.

And my guess is you have that moment. My guess is you know that darkness. But David doesn't stay there. And this is where it gets good. This is where the plane lifts. You know, his devastating fears lead him to total desperation upon God.

This is the key. Often we become bitter and angry because we're not hopeless enough. If we were hopeless enough, we'd place our lives completely in God's hands. But look in verse 14 of chapter 10.

He says, to you, look at the second half, to you the helpless commits himself. That's the key. That's the key to the whole two psalms or whatever, one psalm as we established earlier.

[ 27 : 47 ] To you the helpless commits himself. You have been the helper to the fatherless. Suddenly David shoots up. Literally he says he commits himself. He abandons himself.

He turns himself completely to the Lord. He holds nothing back. David holds his life and all the potential damage the enemy could do. And he just lays himself on the Lord.

You know, Carrie Underwood said, Jesus take the wheel. And that's often the way we think. We just give a little part to the Lord. But that's not enough for David. He gives it all. Take the dang car, Lord. It reminds us that the helpless have many needs.

And there's so many needs that we're aware of. They have practical needs, which we're talking about with grace and mercy. Food and shelter, clothing, money. They have legal needs. Protection, legal aid, advocacy. They have physical need.

Treatment, medical care. But these verses press us to see the most pivotal need of the helpless. The helpless need God. No amount of help will help without the Lord.

[ 28 : 44 ] And that's what we get this wonderful window into David as he's wrestling with all these things. And suddenly commits himself to the Lord. But it's hard to do that.

One of my favorite stories. I just love the Bible. I remember when I was working at Walmart in between my, well, one of those years in college.

They started running together. Three and four. I say three and four because it took me five, you know. I needed one more football season. But in between third and fourth, working at Walmart, reading the Bible, reading the Old Testament for the first time.

I was like, man, this is amazing. But not only is it amazing, there is some really crazy stuff. You know, Ehud sticks that knife in. I don't know. I'm not even going to show you what happens after that. You know, all these just wild stories.

I was telling this worker. He's like, man, that ain't in the Bible. I said, oh, yes, it is. That Old Testament, it is wild. And one of the stories that's so wild in there is about Jacob. Jacob, you know him.

[ 29 : 50 ] He's the biggest scoundrel in the Bible. You'd cut him out of your family if he was in there. You know, he wrestles in his mother's womb, comes out holding his brother's heel. And so the fight begins.

You know, it is the sons of thunder bringing their thunder against one another. He manipulates his brother into handing over his birthright for a bowl of soup. Not exactly humble servanthood promoting the interests of others.

He dresses up like his brother to receive his brother's blessing. And his mom helps. Don't do that, mom. Using goat skins to feel like his hairy brother.

Then he skips town as soon as he's blessed. And Esau, when he comes in and finds out he's blessed, he skips town too. And marries a foreign woman and assumes his life is over and a waste. But perhaps the only bigger scoundrel than Jacob is his father-in-law, Laban. And David encounters Laban. He works seven years for Rachel and wakes up with Leah.

[ 30 : 47 ] He works seven more years to get Rachel. Then he comes to his senses. At that point after a little battle about the cows, which you can go read that. Comes to his senses. Comes and decides to move back to Canaan.

But along the way, he begins to realize. He comes to this come to Jesus moment, so to speak. He comes to realize what a scoundrel he is. What a punk he is. And how wicked he is. And he knows going back to Canaan would mean he passes through Edom where his brother is.

And he knows his brother is out to get him and is going to kill him. But the night before Jacob meets Esau and Edom, he meets the Lord. Remember that story? A little WWF.

The Lord, they wrestle. I mean, you think the Lord could have, you know, explained the transaction in a different way. But they wrestle all night.

The angel of the Lord and Jacob, they wrestle. And the Lord breaks his hip. Because he's the Lord, you know. He leaves him. Wacket throws. Breaks the chair over his back or something like that. [ 31 : 50 ] And then he continues to fight, though. Jacob continues to fight. He holds on the Lord. And he says, you know, I'm not going to let go of you until you bless me. Now you're like, why are you telling this story? But it's one of those stories where you're like, Lord, why are you telling me this story?

What happened? What changed? I think.

Actually, I know. David decided to stop playing the charade and to give his life completely to the Lord. And the Lord says, you're no longer Jacob, you're Israel, the father of many nations. It's given us a window into faith. And it's the key for making it through life rearranging affliction and making it through an evil world.

Trusting God is hard because we don't know what the future holds, you know. Like if we knew what November 3rd held, well, we could make some money, you know.

[ 33 : 06 ] But we would sleep easier. But trusting God is also hard because it's hard to let go of everything. And I think that's what David did.

And I think that's what God's Word wants us to do in emulating David and committing ourselves to the Lord. The wicked think they're secure. Helpless think they're sunk.

But point three, the Lord is the righteous refuge of all. Of overall. David began with pledging to give thanks to the Lord when he delivered him. And then he concluded giving thanks, essentially.

Look at verse 16. He says, the Lord is king forever and ever. The nations perish from this land. Oh, you hear the desire of the afflicted. You'll strengthen their heart. You'll incline your ear. David celebrates that the Lord sees all the actions of the wicked.

You remember back in chapter 9, he cries out for the Lord to see. See my affliction. And then the wicked says, he'll never see. He forgot you. Verse 14.

[ 34 : 11 ] Look down there. He says, you do see. You note mischief and vexation. The Lord sees and notes every evil.

The Lord keeps all your tears up in a bottle. But he also writes down every wrong in his bottle against you. He will not forget you. That's what it's saying.

Then he'll never forget the afflicted. He'll never forget his people. The Lord hears. So he sees and he hears the desire of the afflicted. The assumption all throughout the Psalms, which we talked about, they put the emphasis on hearing.

If you'll only hear. Because the idea is that if you hear, we know you're coming. Because you're so good. You're so gracious. You're so righteous. So if you hear, all you got to do is hear, Lord. And you're coming.

But look at verse 17. He doesn't just hear their prayer. He hears the desire of the afflicted. He hears your heart. You know, the image I saw, just, I don't know if you ever pull up one of your kids and pull them close to you just so you can hear their heart.

[ 35 : 13 ] That's the Lord. He doesn't look like men look. He looks on the heart. And so he sees and here, look at verse 14. He says, you do see, you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands.

So he sees and he hears so that he might take over. And then he delivers. No wonder these Psalms are just loaded with declarations of faith.

Look in verse 9, verse 7. He says, the Lord sits enthroned forever. He judges the world with righteousness. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust you.

For you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. Sing praises to the Lord. Tell among the people, for he who avenges blood is mindful. That same word back in Psalm 8.

Remember that? He who avenges blood is mindful of you. He doesn't forget. Yeah, this past Friday, we remembered 9-11 when two planes crashed in the World Trade Center and killed numerous Americans.

[ 36 : 23 ] I was a junior in college, getting ready for class. One of the things I like to do every year is there's one of the White House staffers from Bush's presidency, a man named Harry Fleischer, and he takes over Twitter.

I only follow him one day a year. But he takes over Twitter, and he gives you the detail of Bush's day with timestamps. It's really neat.

So he gives you, and he gives you pictures too. But back when, you remember, Bush received the news in that elementary classroom. I think there was a threat he heard about before, but yeah, he received the news that it struck the tower there.

And thus began the day of trying to figure out, how can we get the president back to D.C.? Didn't land until that afternoon, or that evening, really. And so I love to read that.

I love to go back. It's part of the way, it's cathartic. You know, it's helpful to go back and remember those things. One of the things I did, though, this year is I watched that video of President Bush at Ground Zero three days later.

[ 37 : 23 ] You remember that? Remember when he put his arm around that New York City fire chief with a bullhorn? And he said, thank you.

Thank you all. This is what Bush said. He said, I want to thank you. I want you all to know that America today is on bended knee in prayer for the people whose lives were lost, for the workers who work here, for the families who mourn here.

The nation stands with the good people of New York City and New Jersey and Connecticut as we mourn the loss of thousands of citizens. And then it kind of breaks up a little bit. Somebody figures they can stick in a moment.

Said, I can't hear you. The bullhorn's not loud enough. And Bush said these incredible words. I can hear you. I can hear you.

The rest of the world hears you. And the people, the people who knock down these buildings will all hear from us soon. And then everybody went, USA, USA. And regardless of what you think about that, it was incredible.

[ 38 : 25 ] And I think these verses, what the Lord is saying, I can hear you. I can hear you. I'm standing with you.

I'm coming back. I'm going to right every wrong. I'm going to set this world right. Don't fear. Don't give up. Don't worry. All of it is in my hand. I sit enthroned forever and ever.

Those who know your name, trust the Lord through life rearranging pain. Now, in conclusion, I just want to make a couple application points.

These are the things that don't preach so well. So you just tack them on the end. And this psalm, if we're going to step back a little bit, urges us to entrust some things completely to the Lord.

There are some wrongs that you can do little about. The continued pain of abuse long after legal measures have been or could have been taken.

[ 39 : 36 ] The ongoing consequences of sinful action from your past. The evil you see down the street or across the world. In these cases, often you cannot take justice in your own hands.

The Lord allows no vigilante justice. And so we respond like David and we say, break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer.

Call his wickedness into account. Now, that's an odd prayer. That's called an imprecatory prayer. But what David's saying, he's calling a curse on the wicked. Curse them. Cancel them.

Now, we don't like that. But in actuality, Romans 12 says something very similar. Love, never avenge yourselves.

Leave it to the wrath of God. So essentially you're saying, Lord, intervene. Stop the accuser. Hear the cry of the afflicted. Judge the wicked. So there's that category of stuff we can't do much about.

[ 40 : 39 ] And so we entrust to the Lord and we call on him to do justice. The psalm urges us to report some things to the authorities. The psalm calls us to take refuge in the Lord, but that does not mean we don't report wickedness and abuse and injustice.

The Lord has established law enforcement and the justice system to promote good, condemn evil, and protect the innocent. Christians should and must be quick reporters.

Sexual abuse, child abuse, threats of suicide, things like this. This is what our system is in place for. God has put them in place, Romans 13. The psalm urges us to entrust, report, and fight some things until death.

East of Eden, this world is going to be marred by injustice. Powerful people will continue to abuse their power to privilege themselves, their constituents, and to look over the interests of others.

And so we must fight. It's not going to be the platform of our church. Well, in one sense.

[ 41 : 48 ] But as Christians, there's numerous causes we should take up to help, for the helpless to be heard, for the poor to be helped, for the oppressed to be freed, for the unborn to be protected, for the disadvantaged to be given proper and equal opportunities for unity, equality, and so on.

There's things we must fight. This psalm, in conclusion, though, offers us and urges us to hope in all things.

Sorry, I was trying to think of a quote. But Albert Muller said one time that for the Christian, pessimism is atheistic, and optimism is naive.

The Christians are totally unlike everybody else. So we're not just pessimistic that this world is going to burn and everything is going to just stink, you know. We're also not optimistic, pure optimism that just thinks things are going to get better because we know the reality of sin and things like that.

But if you notice, chapter 9 and 10, they both ended with this reference to man. You remember that? So that man put them in fears so that they would know, let the nation know that they're but men.

[ 43 : 09 ] End of 10. Do justice so that man who's of the earth might strike terror no more. That's the same word from Psalm 8, which says, what is man that you're mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him?

Underlining how weak, frail, and finite human beings are. But here David takes the word to remind us that one day soon, his days, that man who's weak, frail, and finite will be over.

He will no longer haunt. He will no longer strike terror. It's meant to leave us with a word of hope. We don't cave to fear. We hope.

We hope in the face of evils. We hope in the face of the trouble in our country. Listen, we don't know who'll be sitting in the Oval Office on January 20th. But we know who sits enthroned in the heavens.

He's not rotating office. It's incredible. And we hope in the promise of an eternity that will outweigh all the life rearranging affliction we've experienced here.

[ 44 : 16 ] Let's press on. Amen? Father in heaven, we thank you for your word. Oh man. God, we give you thanks and praise. Lord, we thank you that your word is so incredibly honest.

And it pulls us in and teaches us how to walk through things that are so real, so hurtful, and yet so prevalent in this world.

God, we pray that you'd make us to be a people that first and foremost find our complete and total refuge in you. Let us be those who run to the strong tower that is the name of the Lord.

We pray that we would be people of hope. Hope does not disappoint for who hopes and what he sees. But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience because we're waiting for another world.

A world that we're born for. A world where we will soon be. Where every wrong will be right. And every right will be loved and cherished and upheld.

[ 45 : 22 ] And we thank you, God. And we pray that you'd make us to be a people that live in this world with wisdom, with kindness, with courage, with faith.

We cast ourselves upon you and we thank you. In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [trinitygraceathens.com](http://trinitygraceathens.com). Thank you.