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“In their pride the wicked do not seek him; in all their thoughts there is no room for God.” Psalms 10:4

Main Idea: What are we to do in times of dire trouble and distress? What are we to do when God seems so far off that He does not see or care about our plight? Why does the wicked seem triumphant over the faithful? The psalmist gives his reaction with a heartfelt, passionate cry, “Why, oh Lord, do you stand so far away from me?” He feels that God is hiding when he is in his deepest need while the prideful and greedy seem to have all the attention and blessings, yet are too prideful to turn to God. The God-fearing and hardworking are poor while the God-hating rich are evil as they take advantage and hunt down the poor. Those who are blessed from lying, cheating, and murdering seem to have it all as they plot and carry out their cruel diabolical schemes. The evil doers say, “God does not care” as they sneer and curse at the faithful. This does not make sense!

A request is made. *Lord, please see them for what they are and catch them in the act of their evil.* He asks that God intervene and make things right. He asks that those in trouble have more faith to trust and commit themselves to the Lord. Why? Because, this is true: God is the helper of the parentless and The King of all, forever and ever. As nations and people come and go, as kingdoms rise and fall, God is now and forever. He *does* know all. He *does* hear us, and He knows our deepest desires, and, He alone offers us real hope and defense for the hurting. He *will* severely punish the evil doers. God asks each of us to prepare a humble, trusting heart for, one day, there will be no more crying or oppression.

Contexts and Background:

This Psalm is a personal lament that depicts a passionate plea to God to restore justice. It is perhaps a Psalm of David and was originally part of Psalm 9; both are “acrostic” poems that have alternating lines which began with the sequential Hebrew letters. In the Septuagint, Psalm 9 and 10 are one Psalm. It asks a question we all may do in times of dire troubles and injustice: *Why do you allow this evil in my life with God!* This Psalm has a contrast of the evil and faithful, both with the same view of God, that He does not notice. One out of pride, the other out of hurt. The tyrant is full of contempt and pride who boasts against God and holds conceit to his fellow man. This prideful person is blasphemous in the assurance and thinks, *God does not care, so I can do as I please.* These prideful sinners are quick to betray and are hateful in their corruption, schemes, and all they do. Meanwhile, the victims cry out to God to restore justice, keeping their faith, assured He is there, and wonder why there is no response (Psalm 44:8).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

Verse 1-3: The cry of the faithful to God, *Why to the wicked prosper?* While, the behavior of arrogance and contempt of God goes unmet. It seems everything is upside-down, that God forgot or is off duty. One’s choices and actions are based on feelings that are rooted in pride and the desire of evil. The psalmist sees this as turned around, where the wicked should suffer and the righteous be blessed.

- Why, *LORD*, do you stand far off? Surrounded by hateful, prideful, prosperous enemies and feels the absence of God (Heb. 2:18).
- *Hide yourself.* In the midst of unheard trial, to the hurting, God seems to have forsaken His people.
- *Times of trouble.* God does not look upon trouble as we do. Where we see stress, He sees opportunities. Where we see a crisis, He sees growth and betterment. God’s purpose, in such times, may be to teach us precious lessons. This might be a time to examine us, discipline us, refine us, or

even protect us from something worse. The key is to pray, trust, ask the reason, learn, and of course, repent (Gen 50:20; Psalm 46; Acts 27)

- *Arrogance / boasts.* The wicked are governed by their view of God. Since they can rationalize He is not there or does not care or will not intervene, they have no accountability and feel they can do as they please.
- *God will never notice.* The lure of atheism is that it holds no personal conviction or culpability to one's life. A life of meaning and purpose presupposes a higher power, as one's self is a god, not believing there is the one true God to lead. Morality must also have a power greater than self to make it work, like a government of laws. Thus, if God does not exist or is uninvolved, as agnostics believe, personal pleasures and immorality have no real consequences; sin becomes good in their eyes as there is no moral constraint. You can have your own rules or none at all. Thus, those who are moral and religious show conviction; they know in their hearts what they do is wrong, which produces a hatred to the sinful hearted (Psalm 14:1; Rom. 1:8).
- *Cravings of his heart / flesh.* Referring to the desire and practice to pursue sin, as the heart is corrupt and wants what it wants. To approve of sin and or the approval of others sin and desire it, and hate those who are moral and consider those who are religious and moral to be below them. (Jer. 17:9; Matt. 6:33; Rom. 1:31-32; 6:1-14; Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 3:1-11).

Verse 4-10: There can only be a devious heart and mind if one thinks they can push God away or claim He does not care or exist. Yet, God does see and hear! There is a purpose that we do not see as everyone is interwoven in God's divine tapestry. Therefore, the ungodly may think they are OK; but, in fact, their judgment is coming and God's reprieve to the faithful is, too, in route.

- *Pride.* God hates Pride! It unveils and lifts our self-interests and our self-sufficiencies, against God and others. It is a very dangerous sin that leads to the production and fueling of other sins. Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall (Psalm 119:21; Prov. 3:34; 8:13; 21:4; Rom. 12:16; James 4: 1-6)."
- *Prosperous.* There seem to be no real issues of trouble to the oppressors and monovalent, at least not yet (Psalm 73:12).
- *Shake me / shall not be moved.* The ungodly say in their arrogance, I do not fear God and can do what I feel like. Yet, they will be moved. The godly have the conviction of trust in God, so one's faith will not be moved no matter what. This brings about a faithful attitude, so doubts and circumstances do not rule over. This also means one's ability, account ledgers and prosperity in the world's eyes do not govern one's call and mission (Psalm 30:6).
- *Lies and threats / mouth and tongue.* Sinning by words to draw attention to oneself and put down those who deserve proper attention (Rom. 3:14).
- *Lies in wait / sit in ambush.* A metaphor on how oppressors hunt to manipulate, allure and trap to oppress people. Usually done at night when it is dark and they cannot be seen, also believing they are not in God's view or light (John 3:19).

Verse 11-15: We are not alone! God may seem standoffish; but, He is there. Therefore, we can trust, even when we can't see Him. Even though we do not know the answers to our questions, we can trust and commit our way to Him. The victim commits by their confidence in God for the future is in His hands. Their faith sees what is ahead when conventional eyes and thinking cannot (Psalm 37:5).

- Arise, *LORD!* This is a Jewish battle cry and an expression of a call to action that means to urgently engage, to "GET UP NOW!" Grammatically, it is an imperative, seeking quick and decisive action. It is OK to ask God to help you; He wants that. Just make sure your call is just and right, and not out of petty retribution or for selfish gain (Ex. 12:31, Num. 10:35; Duet. 2:13; Judg. 7:9; Psalm 68:1).
- *Lift up your hand.* Meaning God's active intervention in people's lives.
- *Fatherless.* In ancient cultures, in that area and the Near East in general, orphans and widows who had no kinship were on their own; there was no protection. They were the most helpless and oppressed of all people; they had no one.
- *Break the arm of the wicked man.* Means breaking their power and hold over you, and, in context, call them to account. (Psalm 44:13)

Verse 16-18: The fervent call for vindication turns into an affirmation and reassurance in Who God is and that true justice is in His hands in His timing. This conclusion brings comfort to those in this situation, that in faith, we can trust and have hope in God.

- *LORD is King.* The divine name *Yahweh*, Who is The Great Royal King over all things and all people, of all time and all are subject to Him. He is The Creator Who preserves. The psalmist as His servant boldly seeks to remind God that in this title, and by His covenant, He is responsible for the well-being of his people and the judgment of evil (Psalm 3:8; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1).
- *Nations will perish.* Those who worship false gods, indulge in idolatry and evil activities will be held to account.
- *Hear the desire.* Yes, of course, God hears and sees the plight of both the oppressed and the oppressor. He feels our grief and despair, and He will intervene in His perfect timing, even if it is in eternity.
- *Encourage.* Even in distress and hopeless situations, God is still The One in charge and will overrule wickedness. He will demonstrate His awesome power and we will triumph.
- *Defending / justice.* God is the One who delivers from oppression, those in Him, the weak and helpless.
- *Strike terror.* It may look like the evil is winning; but, in the end, it will be put off while the godly will be put up and God will triumph (Rev. 21:4)!

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

Life will not always, if ever, go as we plan or will. So, we need to learn, pray, repent and be faithful. But, we can take heart: whatever we face, we do not face alone. God may seem aloof, but He is the God Who is there and in control and does have something good for us. It is up to the one in the trial to discover the faith and what there is to grow from. Our lives here on earth are mere specks on the timeline of eternity. Like a 100-foot rope laid out with a ½ inch piece of black tape wrapped around one end, the black is the life we live, and the rope is the rest of eternity. Our perspective needs to take a look at God, keep our eyes upon Him, even when He is not seen. That is what gets us through. It is not about the tyrant or the situation. It is all about our relationship with our Lord. We can have a real, authentic devotion and endurance no matter what. This is what we take into eternity. And, yes, we will still hurt. There will be disappointments and setbacks, death and pain, mourning and sickness. That is the sin-filled world in which we live. Yet, we can get through it with our eyes upon our purpose and plan who is Christ

the Lord. So, the nature of our lives becomes a beacon of trusting and obedient faith and a great service for His glory.

Christian Life Principle: God does not answer the “why,” of our sufferings; He simply is there. True faith rests on facts--that of His Word and Truth--but is pointed to what is not seen. To be mature and growing, we must have cleansing and purification all from Christ’s work for a faith that sees beyond doubts, fears, hurts and frustrations. So, we have confidence in God, that we are in His hands (Rom. 8:28; James 1:2-12).

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Have you ever made a passionate plea to God for an intervention in a dilemma?
2. What are some injustices you think God should restore to justice?
3. What does this Psalm teach us about faith, injustice and disappointments?
4. Have you ever felt that God does not care about you, especially in tough times? That He seems to play favorites?
5. What do most people do to in times of worry and suffering?
6. What should we say to someone who sees God as so far off that He does not see or care?
7. Why do you suppose the wicked triumphant over the faithful?
8. How and why do people with a devious heart and mind think they can push God away or claim He does not care or exist?
9. Why does God hate Pride? How pride fuels other sins? What have you seen it done?
10. Does it seem that hateful and conniving people have no real issues or trouble like those who are really hurting?
11. What can you do to develop a deeper faithful attitude, so doubts and circumstances do no rule over you?
12. What can you do to make sure that your ability, or bank account do not govern your call and mission?