

Psalm 10 – PUNISH THE OPPRESSORS, O LORD! (part 1)

INTRODUCTION

Bullies exist in the world as well as in the church. These are men with substance and power. They sincerely believe, and some with experience, that they can get away with murder! Well in the church they may not literally murder, but isn't character assassination like murder? They arrogantly strut around like peacocks with their feathers displayed for all to see. They are not ashamed of their sin of pride. In fact, they take pride in their pride. What we now experience and see in local churches, David witnessed in his country and in his lifetime. Like local churches today, Israel the nation was the visible witness of God's grace and mercies in their lives. The local churches today are the visible witnesses. It is a very sad day when these visible witnesses of God have switched off their spiritual lights. The world needs to stare intently into their lives to find some semblance of good works; and after months of scrutiny, they still cannot find any. How sad.

Instead, what they find are professing believers who have infiltrated into churches, hurting and destroying those who are lights in this world of spiritual darkness, and salt in a world that is decaying in sin and immorality. David encountered such, and he penned this imprecatory psalm to encourage himself and others who face similar trials because of the faith. David refused to become like them and to retaliate in anger; he did not want to sin by wrestling in their filthy mud of evil. David held on to his moral high ground. He turned to his LORD in prayer, for His justice to prevail over the evil and wicked men who continuously try their utmost to hinder God's work through His servants.

We can learn much from David's experience: on the one hand to endure suffering for Christ's sake and at the same time, without condoning their sin and attack on God's work, cry out for God's justice against God's enemies. There is no contradiction between mercy and justice. The believer has the best sense of justice on earth because he has God's perfect Word to guide him in his understanding and expression of justice!

This psalm begins with David's cry. It was a cry to his LORD. The covenantal relationship is the basis of his appeal for help. David felt that the LORD was not near to help. To David, it seemed as if the LORD was standing from a distance and that He was not moving close to David to help him. In fact, David felt that the LORD had hidden Himself in times of trouble. The word for trouble is the word for "distress." In times of distress, when David needed the LORD the most and most urgently, the LORD was nowhere to be found. The enemies became bolder in their taunts and arrogance. David felt helpless and all alone to fend for himself. This was how David felt, and perhaps we have felt the same way as well in times of great distress. The distress we feel could be from enemies of the faith, a terminal illness that is extremely painful, or simply a sense of utter helplessness when friends and loved ones are

not able to help or have deserted us. Like David who poured out his heart to the LORD, we should do likewise, for the LORD wrote this psalm just for us.

- I. **IN PRIDE, THEY BOAST! – 10:2-6** – The enemy here is characterized by wickedness. The primary intention of David’s enemies was to create trouble for him. They did so in their pride. They were probably powerful men with money and influence, which are the fuel of the proud and wicked. Their deeds include persecuting the poor. If David was already king, they would not be able to do the wicked deeds. Therefore, it is very probable that David wrote this psalm when he was a fugitive running for his life from the unrelenting and unjust pursuits of King Saul. Without anyone to help him, David cried to his LORD for justice. He said, “Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.” David did not cry for over punishment against his enemies, but only that the devices that his enemies imagined against him be turned around against them, like Haman who built the gallows to hang Mordecai but he was hung from it instead.

David listed the wickedness of his enemies. They boasted of their heart’s desire. Whatever their heart desired they got! Nothing could stop them from getting what they wanted. The issue of right and wrong did not matter. Might, to them, was right. They possessed absolute power as kings often did. They blessed the covetous. They praised the ones who broke the tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet!” They placed sinners on a pedestal and encouraged them to sin more. By blessing the covetous, covetousness was exalted as righteous motivation. They knew the LORD abhors such sins, but they blatantly went against the LORD’s expressed commandment in the Decalogue by blessing the sinners. This sin flies in the face of the LORD as an open sin, daring Him to punish them!

They would never seek after the LORD in repentance because of the pride of their countenance. They might have been living in Israel, the Land where the presence of God dwelt by way of the presence of the Tabernacle and the Word of God. However, they thought like atheists, for God was completely absent in their thoughts. They thought that God does not exist! The mind is the seed of all our actions. When it rejects God, how much worse are the wicked deeds? The ways of the wicked are grievous, i.e. to bring grief to others, like David. They needed no justification for their dastardly deeds. Their wickedness stemmed from the depths of their depraved souls. Regardless of the godliness of men like David, these wicked enemies needed no excuse to bring grief. It was their way of life. They could not care less about the judgement of God. When God warned them of the impending judgement, they taunted and ignored it as if they were non-existent. They puffed at God’s judgements; they sneered at the warnings of the LORD. They declared in their own hearts that the LORD’s warnings would never move them! They foolishly believed,

even sincerely, that their iniquity would never be discovered. They possessed absolute power on earth - who would dare to take them to task for their arrogance? There is none above them, not even God. They sinned with impunity, with no sense of fear or care. They had escaped justice in times past. Things would remain the same forever, since they were mightier than the LORD. They erased Him out of their existence! They boldly declared with unrestrained audacity that they would never be in adversity or grief. They had always gotten whatever their heart desired. Why should their future be any different, as their power remained absolute? They were above the law including God's law, because they were a law unto themselves!

[to be continued]