

Praise the God Who Works

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[0 : 0 0] questions. So this is David, and he writes, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart. I will recount of 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 me, or 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. 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. He judges the world with righteousness.

The people with uprightness. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed and 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. 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, O Lord. See my affliction from those who hate me.

O you who lift me up from the gates of death. So David begins this psalm, and I'm just going to say this psalm, I mean 9 and 10, with praise to God.

[2 : 0 2] That's his first posture in addressing the evil and wickedness, not only within this world, but also that was in David.

He begins with the praise of God, telling God who he is. I will recount of your wonderful deeds. David chooses to begin his plea for help with the God who who is worthy to be praised. Notice, David doesn't say, I am righteous. God, this is not fair.

He begins with the truth of, this is who God is from eternity past to eternity future.

We read of what God has done in the past, so we are free to grieve over our present circumstance. And we plead with God to act as he has in the past.

Okay, as you and I read the Bible, if you are someone who reads the Bible, you read of the history of God engaging his people, bringing comfort, bringing peace, meeting them in their present circumstance.

[3 : 3 2] And then you and I need to realize, where are we in our present circumstance? And to be honest about it. And what we are called to be encouraged by is the way that God has acted in the past, promised in the present.

He is Emmanuel. He is God with us. And that he will meet us again in the future. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

We are to remember. That's a lot of our reading of the Bible, is to remember.

It's to remember, how did God meet the Israelites in the Old Testament? How has God met the people of God throughout history? Remember, that is the God of the Bible.

And that is what he does. But the big problem is, we have our own personal expectations of this is how God needs to meet me today.

- [4 : 53] And when God does not do that, we get frustrated. And we become disenfranchised with the God of the Bible and many times the church and other Christians.
- Because we've created this way that we assume God is gonna meet us. God is there. But the truth is, throughout Scripture, God is there.
- God is worthy of praise. And God knows. God is there.
- He was there in the past, throughout history, and he is there now with you. He is worthy of praise, always has been, always will be.
- And God knows. He's not surprised by whatever is going on in your life. He's not a surprise to him.
- [6 : 12] And this is part of what we do every Sunday as people of faith in Christ, is that we gather with a community of believers to be reminded of these things.
- That God is there, God is worthy of praise, and God knows. And we hear words, and we sing words, and we recite words that carry these truths.
- So whenever you go home today, if you take your worship guide, worship bulletin with you, I encourage you, read through it. Because what you have been reminded of is these three things.
- And what does that mean for you as you wake up Monday morning? In this psalm, there's a cry of lament from King David.
- We don't like lament. It seems weak and maybe un-American. But the majority of the psalms are lament. Are people crying out to God for help.
- [7 : 31] That they would know that God meets them in whatever struggle they are walking through. Lament is to be a normal part of our life.
- Lament is not saved for the day you grieve over someone's passing. Or someone's hurt against you. Lament is a part of every day of our life.
- That we are to lament that there is not only evil in this world, but there's also evil in our heart that has been unrefined. I think that's a greater lament.
- We are not called to ignore sorrow and evil that is around us. We are called to first turn to God and cry to him about the affliction we experience.
- And this goes for everyone. If you are five years old, if you are 12 years old, especially, we have five kids at our, well, four kids at our house, we have five kids total, one's 20, lives on our own, blah, blah, blah.
- [8 : 48] But it's also, it's lamenting. It's allowing adolescents to have a deep theology of lament.
- I think I'm middle age. I'm 49. I don't know. Is that middle age? Or maybe it's old.
- I'm not sure. But there's a part of my life that I realize there's a part that I just need to lament and grieve.
- And what helps me is reading the Psalms. And recognizing, yeah, spiritually, I'm not as far along as I really thought I would be at 49.
- I thought I'd be a lot more spiritually mature. And those are some of the things that I cry out to God and turn to him and acknowledge my own failure.
- [9 : 59] And I confess and repent knowing that Christ is the one who is perfect. It's Christ who's done everything right.
- as much as I'm called to, as a child of God, to live in the rightness of his righteousness. But I realize more and more as I grow that the only perfect person is the God-man, Jesus Christ.
- Christ. So think about your plea for mercy and lament.

If you've ever even had one, maybe you haven't and that's fine. But think about where would you start with that plea? David here starts with praising the God of his righteousness.

A call to God is where our plea is to begin and to end. Our plea is heard because God is a stronghold and it shows how we seek him.

[11 : 14] What does that mean in your lament, in your frustration, in your confusion of evil in this world and in your heart? What does it mean that you go to God first and last?

And what does that look like? Verse 12 says, he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

And maybe that is where you are right now in your life. That you are deeply hurt and afflicted. You are not forgotten.

You are not forgotten. God sees and he hears and he is Emmanuel to you, God with us. That's who he is.

So let's look at David's three pleas for help in this passage. His three pleas for help are, God, be gracious to me, let not evil prevail and forget not the afflicted.

[12 : 22] be gracious to me, let not evil prevail, forget not the afflicted. This shows the author David understands who God is and how humanity is called to come to God.

We are to come to God only by his grace. Only by his grace. There is only one redeemer. There is only one mediator between God and man and it is the Lord Christ.

And the God of the Bible is the great inviter. He is the great initiator and he is the God who moves toward you.

Notice David does not plea for fairness. He does not plead for what he has earned but he has a proper perspective of God as God relates to his creation.

By a plea for grace David is moving toward God and reconciliation only because God has invited him. and God has invited you.

[13 : 49] He has invited you to dwell within his house. He has invited you to be called one of his children. He has invited you to no longer be an orphan but to be a child of God.

And as you wrestle through not only the evil that the sin that you struggle with but also the sin that you see outside of you it begins with accepting and living within that truth that you are a child of God and that only comes through faith in Christ and repentance of sin.

And you are invited into that. So how does evil prevail?

Well I can't fully answer that question. Obviously that's a deep deep question. There is evil in this world because this world is broken.

This is not how it is supposed to be. And the only comfort I take in this is that there is a God who's in charge of everything.

[15 : 11] And he is not only ultimately wise and loving and gracious, he knows why everything happens and I don't.

God's and that's just part of the mystery of living as a human being in God's creation.

But there are a few things that we can understand of why does evil prevail? One, because we are self-centered and prideful. We are.

Let's begin with us. Okay? Let's begin with us. We are. We're not looking outside of us. We are.

And the only healing and restoration that we need is a redeemer. we long to build a value system that revolves around ourself.

[16 : 21] And we do that by ignoring God and the law of God. And we're pretty good at that. Aren't we? You can nod.

I'll nod. Yeah, we are pretty good at that. verse 2 says, in arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor.

This desire is to fill self and ignorance that are made for something greater. It's to fulfill our own selfishness.

And then we long for selfish prosperity. Verse 5, why do the selfish continue with selfish pursuits? Honestly, because at some level it works.

Like, at some level it's functional. If we are selfish and we pursue our own selfish desires, at some level you and I will find satisfaction.

[17 : 30] Okay, that is just true. At some level. Ultimately, we begin to destroy our own soul, our own self, and the people around us.

And it's only when we have the long view of life and we see that there is a creator and there is a redeemer and there is grace and there is mercy and God's spirit works within us that we can let those go.

Think of the workaholic. The workaholic will continue in their work more and more and more thinking this is actually going to solve it but actually it's really a selfish thing for the workaholic.

But what are we told from our culture? What we're told is well, the workaholic you're actually just not working hard enough.

And then what does the workaholic do? You know what they say? Great. Now I have something more to do. And then they pursue that more and more and more.

[18 : 57] And it is the complete opposite of grace. It is the complete opposite of grace. Another struggle that we have in our pleas for help is security of self.

Thinking I shall not be moved. I am the one who holds who I am. I am the one who gives myself significance.

I am the one who is ultimately valuable. And when we say that, what we're doing is we're telling Christ and the God of the Bible who created us and loves us that they really don't know what they're doing.

God's work of redemption is realigning these desires so we can be shaped by what is true and beautiful.

You want to live a flourishing life? A flourishing life is understanding Christ is all in all.

[20 : 16] And in your affliction and that you dealing with the evil within you and the sinfulness that you and I have, you dealing with judgment and criticism from people outside of you, the only thing that heals and restores is Christ.

it's not working harder. It's not being more wise. It's not being more articulate. It's not all of those things that is going to set you free.

It's not another seminar. It's not another class. It's not another book. It is Christ. And so when you wake up tomorrow morning and your feet hit the floor, you have really two options.

Your feet can hit the floor and you can say something in the realm of the beginning of Psalm 9 that God, you are worthy of praise.

Or you can hit the floor and say, I'm just going to do the best I can. I'm going to work really hard and this day hopefully will turn out much better than the next day.

[21 : 29] And then the question is, what will you do Tuesday morning? What will you do Wednesday morning? Because you will face affliction.

God does not forget the afflicted. And in these pleas, we see the suffering of Jesus on our behalf.

For the afflicted, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, the perfect for the broken.

The opposite of these are the cries of the wicked. God, make me happy. Give me wealth and prosperity.

Make me secure in myself. love. This psalm ends with the same thing that Psalm 9 began with.

[22 : 46] So Psalm 10 ends with the same thing that Psalm 9 began with. So verses 16 through 18 of Psalm 10, the Lord is king forever and ever, the nations perish from his land.

The Lord, this is Yahweh. 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 man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

The God of the Bible is not far off. He is with the afflicted and the broken. And maybe some of your struggle might be that you aren't able to admit that you are the afflicted, that you are broken.

as I grow more and more, not in height, maybe in weight, but grow in age, I realize more and more how I am broken and I need the healing work of Jesus more and more.

more. Your pleas for justice are heard and strength is provided, but it might not be what you assume it should be, and the terror of evil will end, but God's forever rule will never, ever end.

[24 : 32] I encourage you to move toward whatever brokenness you know is in your life, whatever affliction you feel like you have faced, whatever evil that you see God bringing to light in your life, and you take time to move toward that with the comfort of Christ.

Let me pray. Most gracious God, we are thankful that you are your father, and we admit that maybe our view of that word is very distorted, but we thank you that you are a God who restores, and you meet the afflicted, and we pray that we would be people who would give you praise.

We would be thankful for who you are to us, that you are always with us, that you will never ever forsake us, that we will never ever be alone because of your great work and the work of Christ.

Thank you that you are the God of comfort and peace. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.