



Crying Out for God's Justice

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: The humble cry out to the Lord and call on Him to act when they witness the unjust acts of the wicked.

MAIN PASSAGE: Psalm 10

In 2015, a video appeared online that began with a smiling baby girl, bright-eyed and full of wonder. Then on a black screen flows the statement “She deserves to be *loved*.” The baby returns to the screen, laughing, before fading to black once more: “She deserves to be *wanted*.” Again the baby appears, reaching for the camera with a curious hand, followed by black one last time and these six words: “She deserves to be *a choice*.”¹

This video was made in support of Planned Parenthood at a high point in the country-wide debate regarding the federal funding of the organization. To show their support, the video’s creators did something both exceptionally clever and deeply disturbing: They subverted the message of the pro-life movement. Right up until the words “a choice” appear on-screen, most viewers would expect a message advocating for the inherent value of a child: She is a human being who deserves to be *loved*, *wanted*, and *to live*. But then comes the caveat—as long as you *choose* she should live.

This message is a perversion, but it’s more than that. It is unjust. It celebrates ending a human life as a valid choice instead of seeing abortion for what it is: a deplorable act. And when we see such injustice, our hearts should naturally cry out to the One we know is always just.



What is an injustice you have witnessed, and how did you respond?

Group Time

Point 1: The wicked believe God ignores injustice (Ps. 10:1-11)

¹ LORD, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide in times of trouble? ² In arrogance the wicked relentlessly pursue their victims; let them be caught in the schemes they have devised.

Christians believe God is just and has authority over all creation (Ps. 9). But daily we are reminded that this world is broken, that injustice and wickedness seem to rule the day. It's okay to ask, "Where is God? Why doesn't He do something?" Even the psalmist asked these questions (Ps. 7:6; 44:23-24; 88:14). Yet like the psalmist, we must hold on to our faith because we know the source of our sense of justice—the good Creator God.

God is Just: God establishes standards for His moral creatures that are in accordance with His _____, and His moral creatures will be _____ according to those righteous standards.

³ For the wicked one boasts about his own cravings; the one who is greedy curses and despises the LORD. ⁴ In all his scheming, the wicked person arrogantly thinks, "There's no accountability, since there's no God." ⁵ His ways are always secure; your lofty judgments have no effect on him; he scoffs at all his adversaries. ⁶ He says to himself, "I will never be moved—from generation to generation without calamity." ⁷ Cursing, deceit, and violence fill his mouth; trouble and malice are under his tongue. ⁸ He waits in ambush near settlements; he kills the innocent in secret places. His eyes are on the lookout for the helpless; ⁹ he lurks in secret like a lion in a thicket. He lurks in order to seize a victim; he seizes a victim and drags him in his net. ¹⁰ So he is oppressed and beaten down; helpless people fall because of the wicked one's strength. ¹¹ He says to himself, "God has forgotten; he hides his face and will never see."

The **arrogance** of the wicked blinds them to the humanity of the ones they oppress, but it also affects their view of God Himself. The wicked believe there is no God (v. 4) and that He doesn't see (v. 11). Therefore, they act without fear of consequence. But while the fool thinks God ignores his deeds, God's judgment awaits (Heb. 9:27).



What are some ways arrogance impacts one's relationship with God?

Point 2: The humble turn to God when facing injustice (Ps. 10:12-15)

¹² Rise up, LORD God! Lift up your hand. Do not forget the oppressed. ¹³ Why has the wicked person despised God? He says to himself, “You will not demand an account.” ¹⁴ But you yourself have seen trouble and grief, observing it in order to take the matter into your hands. The helpless one entrusts himself to you; you are a helper of the fatherless. ¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked, evil person, until you look for his wickedness, but it can’t be found.

Throughout Scripture, and in Psalm 10, there is a contrast between the righteous and the wicked, between the humble and the proud. The righteous person, unlike the wicked, is no fool. This person has seen the wicked’s evil deeds and recognized the foolishness of their arrogance, and he or she is angered by it, not just because they are oppressing the weak but because they are despising God. At this point, the righteous person has a choice: **respond from anger** or **respond from faith**.

How do you tend to respond to injustice?



From Anger

From Faith

When we see injustice reigning and the strong overcome the weak, doubts can rise. We know the right answers to these doubts, but sometimes it’s hard to believe these truths about God in the moment. We might even question: What if the wicked are right? Is God really watching? Will God hold them accountable? But God isn’t far off, nor is He caught unawares by the wicked’s deeds. He sees, He knows, He helps (v. 14). So when the doubts arise, we turn from them to God and cry out, “I do believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24), until He finally puts an end to evil once and for all.



What are some reasons we might choose to respond from anger instead of from faith when faced with injustice?

Point 3: God will overthrow injustice (Ps. 10:16-18).

¹⁶ The LORD is King forever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.

¹⁷ LORD, you have heard the desire of the humble; you will strengthen their hearts.

You will listen carefully, ¹⁸ doing justice for the fatherless and the oppressed so that mere humans from the earth may terrify them no more.

Responding from faith recognizes that God is, indeed, just. He cares deeply about the cause of the vulnerable and helpless (Pss. 18:27; 103:6; 147:6). In fact, the Son of God experienced the greatest act of human injustice in history—the perfect and sinless Creator of the world suffered hatred, betrayal, abandonment, abuse, false accusation, crucifixion, and death at the hands of the creatures He created. But this was no mere accident of history—Jesus’ death on the cross was the instrument of **God’s justice** for both the **oppressed** *and* the **oppressor**. And we are both, so we need the gospel.



How should the gospel change the way we live as a community of faith?

Recognizing that God is just and always acts justly allows us to rest, not from pursuing the good of the helpless but from questioning whether or not there will be a victory. God listens and does justice for the vulnerable. Who are the wicked? Who are the oppressors? They are mere humans, earth-dwellers. They are nothing compared to the eternal God. Their evil works will not last forever, and they will perish in their sin and judgment. The Lord, however, is King forever and ever, and all who find their refuge in Him enjoy His eternal rest (Ps. 2:12).



Voices from Church History

“Evil is always temporary ... Nothing counter to God’s justice has any eternity to it.”²

—Eugene Peterson
(1932-2018)



How should the hope of God’s justice and eternal rest inform how you speak on behalf of the vulnerable?

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Psalm 10:1-11

In many ways, the Psalms are the most “human” part of the Bible. They are filled with the full range of human emotion and snapshots of what it means to live faithfully in a fallen world. Some include the most beautiful expressions of love toward our Creator in all of Scripture. Others challenge us to turn to Him in our times of need. Others still remind us of His great care for us. And then there are psalms like this one that slap us in the face with human sinfulness and arrogance. These psalms give a voice to a secret fear in our hearts: What if God isn’t really all that concerned about the injustices of this world?

Intellectually, we know that’s not true, of course. We know what the Bible says about His concern for the vulnerable and oppressed, for the widow and the fatherless. But when we look out at the wicked flaunting their disregard for the dignity and value of the most vulnerable in our society, something in us resonates with the psalmist’s cry: “LORD, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide in times of trouble?”

This cry of our heart isn’t wrong; it is a profound acknowledgment of the truth. We know that justice is real because God made it. We know in our heart of hearts that God is just. And we long to see Him act justly for His glory and our good.

 In what ways has your knowledge of God’s justness been challenged by what you’ve witnessed and experienced in the world?



Voices from Church History

“The only place where God is not is in the thoughts of the wicked. This is a damning accusation; for where the God of heaven is not, the Lord of hell is reigning and raging; and if God be not in our thoughts, our thoughts will bring us to perdition.”⁴

—Charles Spurgeon
(1834–1892)

Day 2: Read Psalm 9:1-20

One of the great difficulties we have as people living in a fallen world is maintaining perspective. This is especially true when it comes to the realities of injustice. When we look out at what's wrong in the world, including seeing women celebrating their abortions on social media (#shoutyourabortion, for example), it's hard to believe that justice can even exist.

This is why we need the psalmist's perspective. The psalms don't simply lament injustice; they also celebrate God's justice, and God the just One. Psalm 9 fixes our eyes on the truth that God is just. He "judges the world with righteousness" and "executes judgment ... with fairness" (v. 8). The state of the world may make us question this truth at times, but it cannot defeat it. God is a just judge; He is our good King who offers refuge to the vulnerable and will not allow human wickedness to prevail.



How does the psalmist's reflection on the justice of God in Psalm 9 encourage you?

Day 3: Read Psalm 10:12-15

One of the most dangerous things to be called by the Bible is "wicked." To be wicked is to be deeply hostile to God. It is, ultimately, to be a fool, the sort of person who says God will not demand an account (v. 13) because he believes there is no God (v. 4), and how can God hold them to account if He does not exist?

When we see the arrogance of the wicked, we have a choice to make: We can either respond from our anger over their sinful deeds or we can respond from faith. The former causes us to act as the fool does: to take matters into our own hands, exacting justice from our own perspective, which ultimately means taking vengeance. To respond from faith is to do as the psalmist does: to recognize that God sees, God knows, and God will act. It is to say that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Rom. 12:19). He will "break the arm of the wicked" and remove their evil from the face of the earth (Ps. 10:15). Because we know and believe this truth, we can call out to Him in confidence that He will act justly on behalf of the vulnerable.



What are some ways you have had to entrust yourself to the God who sees, who knows, and who will act?

Day 4: Read 2 Corinthians 12:8-10

To see human beings as having inherent dignity and value, regardless of their stage of development, health, or social status, is wildly countercultural. In some circles, it is considered evil. After all, the argument goes: Shouldn't a person have the right to choose when to end his or her own life rather than be an inconvenience to others? Should a baby be brought into the world when his or her parents aren't capable of providing the love and care necessary, or even if they simply aren't ready? Who are we to decide what is best for someone else?

The prevailing folly of the world's wisdom requires believers to embrace God's grace as being sufficient for us (v. 9). To be biblically pro-life is to be in a position of cultural weakness. Although we should use every legal means at our disposal, we cannot expect those who hold power to come to our aid (though we pray they would). But the good news for us is this: God is for us and His power is perfected in our weakness. So we need not lose hope. Instead, we continue to work and pray and seek justice for the vulnerable, knowing that God will glorify Himself through us.



What are the dangers of using the world's ways to pursue justice for the vulnerable?

Day 5: Read Psalm 10:16-18

While it can be agonizing to wait for God to act, we should never doubt that He will. In fact, we have absolute confidence that justice will prevail. Why? Because as the final verses of Psalm 10 remind us, God is on His throne. While this psalm challenges us with the reality of human arrogance and sinfulness, it doesn't leave us wallowing in despair. Like the Bible itself, it ends with hope: "The LORD is King forever and ever."

The Lord is on His throne, and He has shown us the end: A world where there is no more sadness, sin, and death. A world in which the wicked experience the consequences of their wickedness. A world in which Jesus wipes every tear from every eye, personally bringing comfort to all who have suffered in this life as He welcomes them into life everlasting. So we work and speak and pursue justice for the vulnerable, but we do so from our confidence that the God who has shown Himself to be just time and again will fulfill every promise He has made to bring evil to an end.



How does knowing the end of the story give you hope?

THE GOSPEL PROJECT®

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Adult Daily Discipleship Guide CSB
Volume 7, Number 2 Winter 2018-19

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Printed in the United States of America

The Gospel Project®: *Adult Daily Discipleship Guide* CSB (ISSN 2162-7207; Item 005461524) is published quarterly by LifeWay Christian Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234, Thom S. Rainer, President. © 2018 LifeWay Christian Resources.

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