

Lord God Almighty, come, we pray  
this evening, and search us, O God, and know our heart. Try  
us and know our anxious thoughts, and see if there be any grievous,  
any hurtful way in us. any way rooted in the grief of  
Adam's choice, where he looked for a life beyond God, a better  
life apart from God and without God, and found nothing but death. Come, O God, and  
root out such  
ways, such thoughts, such words, such deeds from my heart and  
the heart of every man, woman, boy, and girl here this evening,  
and lead us in the everlasting way. For Jesus Christ's name's  
sake we pray. Amen. Amen. Please take your  
seats, and if you would, turn with me in your copy of the Word  
of God to the 10th Psalm. If you remember last week, we  
said there are some ancient translations of the Bible that include Psalm  
9 and Psalm 10 as the same Psalm. The Hebrew doesn't, but some  
of the Latin translations, Jerome's Latin Vulgate, and the English  
translations descending from it do include 9 and 10 as the  
same Psalm. One of the reasons for that is  
Psalm 10 has no title. And you'll notice that's quite  
strange in the first book of the Psalter. But the themes of  
the psalm are different. They're different in the Hebrew  
original, and we treat them as different psalms in our sermons.  
Please listen carefully. Once again, this is the word  
of God. With what measure you use, it'll be measured back to  
you. Take heed how you hear. 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 boasts of the  
desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and  
renounces the Lord. In the pride of his face, the  
wicked does not seek him. All his thoughts are, there is  
no God. His ways prosper at all times.  
Your judgments are on high, out of his 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 his thicket. He lurks that he may seize the  
poor. He seizes the poor when he draws  
him into his net. The helpless are crushed, sink  
down, and fall by his might. He says in his heart, God has  
forgotten. He has hidden his face. He will  
never see it. Arise, O Lord, O God. Lift up your hand. Forget not the afflicted. Why  
does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, you will  
not call it into 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 have 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 your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more. Amen. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of God endures forever. Well, where is God when you need

him? That's the essential question

of this psalm. And sometimes the answer is nowhere

to be found. You'll not find him in your circumstances. Why,

oh Lord, do you stand far away, the psalmist says? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? The term trouble, the lexicons

tell us, describes a place, a tight place, a place that is too small

or narrow for people to live. under pressure from all sides. And God seems, the psalmist says,

to be standing far off, and worse, he seems to be deliberately hiding. You'll not find him in your circumstances.

And you certainly won't find him in the heart of the wicked.

In the pride of his face, the wicked does not seek God, we're

told. All his thoughts are there is no God. Martin Luther says

about the whole psalm, there is not in my judgment a psalm

which describes the mind, the manners, the works, the words,

the feelings, and the fate of the ungodly with so much propriety,

fullness, and light as this psalm. It is, Augustine used to say,

the psalm of the Antichrist. There's the seed of the woman

and the seed of the serpent, and they describe two peoples in

the Old Testament, but they climax in two individuals, Christ, the

child of life that came from Eve's womb to bring life, and

the Antichrist, the spawn of Satan, the offspring of hell,

to lead the infernal forces of darkness against the church. These two peoples are defined

by the character of their leader, and Psalm 10, Augustine is saying,

really shows you the character of the wicked, who they are in

their thinking, and in their feelings, and in their speaking,

and in their living. So where is God when you need

him? You'll not find him in your circumstances at times, and you'll

not find him in the hearts of the wicked. But that is not to

say that you can't find him at all. You can find him on your

knees through prayer. And there are some times in this

world, times will be so bad and so hard, the only place you'll

find a sense of God is on your knees. And if you don't resolve

to find him there, well, you'll not find him anywhere. Ralph Davis, always a great commentator

on the Psalms, says, faith is perplexed here, and yet it goes

on pleading. The psalmist does not use God's

baffling hymn as an excuse for disengaging with God, but as an incentive to press on with him. When God hides, what do you do? Well, you engage in the game of hide and seek. When your children play hide and seek with you and they hide from you, you don't just go, well, I'll just let them hide in the garden for a while. You go looking for them, don't you? Well, when God seems to be hiding, it's a... invitation to faith, to go seeking for him. And the place to seek him is on your knees in prayer, calling upon him on the great throne of heaven in the sure and certain hope that when you call on earth, there is a God who hears your prayers in heaven. In heaven. So when I stand back, when you look at this psalm, if you stand back and look at this psalm as a whole, what's going on here? You see, really, the greatest trial human beings, Christian human beings, believing human beings ever encounter. The wicked are prospering, the righteous are suffering, and God is nowhere to be found. That's the circumstance, the *sitz im Leben*, the life situation of this psalm. And the psalm presents before us the basic choice when that's happening, which is pretty much situation as normal in this fallen world. The wicked are prospering, the righteous are suffering, and God seems to be nowhere to be found. How are you going to respond? And human beings respond in one of two ways. You can embrace the path of folly, Or you can embrace the path of faith. If you embrace the path of folly, you'll run from God to sin. And if you embrace the path of faith, you'll run to God in prayer. So as you look out at the world this morning, sorry, this evening, lack of sleep is taking its toll yet again. If you look out at a world this evening that's at war with God, the wicked are prospering, the righteous are suffering, and God seems to be nowhere to be found, what choice are you making? Are you embracing the path of folly and running from God to sin? And I'd be shocked if there's not at least a few in this building this evening who are taking that course. Or are you embracing the path of faith and running to God in prayer? Which is it? There only are two, the path of folly and the path of faith. Let's look first of all at the path of folly, the people embracing the path of folly and running from God to sin. We see a man godless in heart, godless in words, godless in deeds, and godless in hope. A man with empty boasts, greedy desires, bad theology, and whose life evidences complete estrangement from God. Is the psalmist describing you this evening? Now we'll see in a moment it begins in our thoughts. What grips your mind grips your heart. What grips your heart fills your mouth. What fills your mouth reveals your character and directs the course of your life on earth. Or as the Chinese proverb says, sow a thought, reap an action.

Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny, and so a destiny, and you reap an eternity. Ideas have consequences, and as one of my elders back in Greensboro liked to say, bad ideas have victims. And this man, this foolish man, is victimized by his own ideas as he empties his mind of God, his heart of God, and his life from God. But it's one thing to empty your mind of God and your heart from God and your life from God. It is quite another to empty the universe from God. Look at this man with me for

a second. First of all, he's godless in his heart. In Arrogance, verse two, the wicked haughtily pursues the poor. Let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. He's an arrogant man, verse two, verse four describes him in the pride of his face. Both the word arrogance and pride in the Hebrew carry the idea of rising up, lifting up, arrogance of face. We know a proud man, he struts about like a rooster, lifts his head up, looks down his nose at people. It's interesting that the Hebrew word for pride is to rise up. That's suggestive. It reveals, I think, the essence of pride is to forget that there's someone above you. That you might be the biggest, the baddest man on earth, but there's a God in heaven. And the pride man forgets that, and he gets too big for his britches. The wicked boasts in the desires

of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord." Now, that's interesting. Later in the psalm, the psalmist will tell us that the wicked man denies God. All his thoughts are, there is no God, right? But in reality, his bigger problem is that he has first renounced the Lord and has cursed him. Atheism is always an attitude

before it's a thought. There is no God and I hate him is the creed of the atheist, remember. In the pride of his face, the wicked does not seek him. All his thoughts are, there is no God. As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is. Show me your thoughts. and I'll show you your life," Marcus Aurelius once said. How much of God is in your thoughts? How often do you engage God with

your mind? How often do you look at life through a theological lens? The wicked here, he banishes God from his mind. Now, I think it was Spurgeon made this sharp observation that this wicked man isn't a Philistine, he's a Jew. He lies in wait in the villages for the weak, poor man, for the fatherless. And only a Jew could do that, to lie in wait, crouching in the villages. Here's a man, here's a member of the covenant community. Is your mind full of God or empty of Him? Be honest tonight. Don't lie to yourself. Seriously, think about it. Because there's coming a day when there'll be no opportunity to hide and no opportunity to lie, when the great searcher of the hearts and minds of men will come and you will stand before him and

his all-seeing eye will penetrate all of the facades that human beings erect to hide themselves from the eyes of men. But on that great day of Assize, there will be no hiding from the eyes of God. He will penetrate and see what's really going on in your mind. And I'm playing with a quote from Spurgeon here, but if you have no God in your mind, and you live that way and you die that way, then God will take you to the place where your mind has always been, which is hell. What do you think about, Dr.

Ferguson likes to say, when you have nothing else to think about?

When you're just sitting on your porch by yourself shooting the breeze, what thoughts fill your mind? Now, I don't expect that all your thoughts turn to God, but do any of your thoughts turn to God? Do you ever think about God? Do you ever think, thy Lord seest me and knowest me? Do you ever bring God to your mind, or is your mind empty of him? Be honest tonight when you can still change and repent, for soon the day will come. As eternity finds you, it will leave you forever. His ways prosper at all times, verse 5. Your judgments are on high, out of his 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. Here's a very common problem

in the mind of the godless. They confuse prosperity with reality. They think because I'm doing

well now, I will do well always. They think because I'm doing well now that it is well with me. God wouldn't let me prosper

like this if I was a wicked person bound for utter perdition. Well, how would that logic work

for the turkeys just before Thanksgiving? The farmer must love me, he feeds me. Sometimes prospering in the way

of sin is the worst judgment God can send into a person's life. As Thomas Brooks says, carnal

security, opens the door for every other impiety to enter the soul. He's godless in his thoughts,

his hearts. He's godless in his words. His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression. Under his tongue are mischief and iniquity. His mouth is full of cursing

because his heart has already cursed God. John Trapp says,

this is a very searching comment, The cursing man is a cursed man. Do you use bad language? Do you take the Lord's name in

vain? It's amazing. I sometimes think about this.

The instinct to pray is so deeply rooted in the human heart that sometimes the wicked will pray and call for their own damnation.

Damn me, they'll say. What are they doing? They're praying. And they take the name of God

upon their lips as a curse. Something goes wrong, and they

take Christ's name upon their lips. Why are they cursing Christ? Because deep down in their heart,

they know that every misfortune is really his fault, and they

hate him for it. Of course, what they don't realize is that Christ only sends big and small misfortunes into our lives to call us back to him. They despise him for his kindness. Derek Kidner says, one of his chief weapons is the tongue, whose varied techniques of intimidation and confusion are suggested in the long catalog of verse seven. His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit, oppression. Under his tongue are mischief and iniquity. In your marriage, do you use your tongue to help your spouse or to hurt them? There's one who speaks rashly like the thrust of a sword. but the tongue of the wise brings healing. And man, maybe you're so smart, you can win every argument with your wife, you can broi beat her and kind of argue her into existence, and you're always twisting things in arguments. Maybe it's, ladies, you do it. It's common in arguments, we get angry and we become filled with the logic of hell, which finds root in our minds and we start using our words to deceive, twisting, gaslighting, manipulating. Always keeping our spice on the back foot. And we need to remember that a wicked man or woman is known not just by his thoughts, but by his words. And Jesus says, this is a convicting, convicting thought that we will give an account for every careless word in the judgment. I shared that with a friend recently. He said, that'll be a long day. He's godless in his thoughts, his words, his deeds. He sits in ambush in the villages and hiding places. He murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless. He lurks in ambush like a lion in his 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. Thomas Brooks has this very insightful comment. Oppression turns princes into roaring lions and judges into evening wolves. It's an unnatural sin against the light of nature. No creature under heaven oppress their own kind. Look upon the birds of prey as upon eagles, vultures, hawks. You will never find them preying on their own kind. Look upon the beasts of the forest as upon the lion, the tiger, the wolf, and the bear. You shall never find them, you shall ever find them, sorry, favorable to their own kind. And yet men in sin unnaturally prey upon one another, like the fish in the sea, the great swallowing up the small. Godless in his thought, his heart, his words, his deeds. And lastly, he's godless in his hope. Verse 11, he says in his heart, God has forgotten. He has hidden his face. He will never see it. Dirk Kidner, this is wonderful, vintage Kidner. The bold words, there is no God, in verse four. All his thoughts are, there is no God, right? He's constantly saying there's no God. The bold words, there is no God, in verse four, are bravado, for his inner dialogue contradicts them, verse 11 and

verse 13. Yet they are the language of his choices and actions. Since thought in verse four means schemes, as in verse two, he is a practicing atheist, if hardly a convinced one. He likes to convince himself there's no God. But the lady doth protest too much. because he really knows there is a God in heaven, and he's trying to comfort himself. God has forgotten. He has hidden his face. He will never see it. Stephen Charnock says, we may as well say, God foreknows nothing that shall be done to the end of the world, as that he forgets anything that has been done from the beginning of the world. He knows the end from the beginning. No creature, action, or thing is hidden from the eyes with whom we have to do. All things are naked and laid bare before the eyes of God. And you may tell yourself, God doesn't see. God doesn't know. But oh, yes, he does. You know, whenever I was in RTS, I worked in the library. And, as in I worked as a librarian in the library to help pay for my bills, but I was working, I'd work behind the desk and bring books back and so forth, and I would sit there, and you know, we had the fastest internet on the campus. Blisteringly fast. And you know one thing? None of the students ever viewed pornography on that computer. Do you know why? Because men were watching. The computer was right in the middle of the room, and anyone walking by could see every internet site they visited. And it was the thought of the eyes of a man stopped them from sinning. If being seen by man is such an awful prospect, think now this evening, what will it not be, young person, one day to be seen all the way down to the depths of your soul by the eyes of Almighty God? So you have two choices. When the wicked are prospering, the righteous are suffering, and God seems nowhere to be found, you can embrace the path of folly and run from God to sin. You don't want to do that. There's a better way, and that is to embrace the path of faith, which is to run to God in prayer. And the psalmist shows us that in the last part of the psalm. Verse 12, arise, O Lord God, lift up your hand. Forget not the afflicted. Arise, O God. I think it's Kidner says, arise, O God, forget not. He said it's almost as if God is asleep at the wheel. He's forgotten, he's asleep. Lying down on the job, well, actually, it was Alec Mateer, I wasn't kidding her. As if God was lying down on the job. Equally striking, Mateer says, is that nothing is done except through prayer. Deadly though the threat, mighty though the opponent, prayer is enough because the Lord is king. He knows our needs, and he has pledged to shelter, uplift, and help his needy people. Here's a world where the wicked are prospering and the righteous are suffering. And what's the answer? The psalmist says, Lord, stand up. That's it. Stand up, oh Lord, and lift up your hand. Look at this world this evening.

See ISIS attacking and slaughtering people in Russia. We see Hamas slaughtering Jews in Israel. We see great conflict. I'm sure there are excesses, too, by the Israeli army. I know that bothers some of our congregation. It bothers me, too. Although I do believe the Jews have a just cause in defending themselves against this attack. War is a terrible thing. We see wars, rumors of wars. We see conflict, bitterness, men behaving more like beasts than human beings. And all that needs to be done is for God to stand up, lift up his hand, and forget not. Here's omnipotence in action. and is laid hold of by prayer. Arise, O Lord God, lift up your hand, forget not the afflicted. Stand up, lift up, forget not, and all will be well. Call it to mind, O God, and to stand up from your throne. Like whenever Stephen is being butchered in the book of Acts, what's Jesus doing? He's standing. He's always sitting on the throne. But not then, as his servants being butchered, he stands up from his throne, standing to welcome him home to glory. Yes, standing up also in indignation at what the wicked are doing to his servant. Why does the wicked renounce God and say, in his heart, you will not call to account? Oh, 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 have been the helper of the fatherless." Joseph Carroll, who Spurgeon loves to quote, says this, God considers all your works and ways. And will you not consider the works and ways of God? Of this be sure, whether you consider the ways of God, his word ways or his work ways, of this be sure, God will consider your ways. Certainly he will. Those ways of yours which in themselves are not worth considering or looking upon, your sinful ways, though they are so vile and so abominable that if you yourselves but did look upon them and consider them, you'd be utterly ashamed of them. Yea, though they are an abomination to God, while he beholds them, yet he will behold and consider them. The Lord, who is of purer eyes than to behold any of the least iniquity, to approve it, yet will behold the greatest of your iniquities, and mine, and your impurest ways to consider them. Thy, said David, beholdest mischief and spite to requite it. God beholdeth the foulest, dirtiest ways of men, their ways of oppression and unrighteousness, their ways of intemperance and lasciviousness, their ways of wrath and malice, at once to detest, attack, and requite them. If God thus considered the ways of men, even those filthy and crooked ways of men, should not men consider the holy, just, and righteous ways of God? And the psalmist here finds encouragement by doing precisely that. He considers the ways of God, his being, his glory, and that he does see, even though the wicked in their pride, Kuvill, says he can't see. The psalmist reminds him, but oh God, you do see. And he gets to that confidence on his knees in prayer. That's how he answers the why



of verse one. Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer. Call his wickedness to account till you find none. Back in the UK, there used to be, we had fairy dishwashing liquid. And back in those days, you know, nowadays, adverts are very deceitful. They don't show you the product. They show you what the product will give you, right? And so the dishwashing liquids to adverts today, it shows you the beautiful family and the million-dollar home where, like, everybody lives in that, you know. And they're all there, they're going to school in the morning, and the kids are all being friendly, and they're passing the milk and the orange juice, and it's just all wonderful. You'd think Christ had come and made all things new, and the wife is beautiful, and all made up first thing in the morning. It doesn't look the way you and I look. Pull through heads backwards. No, she's all beautiful makeup. Perfect Botox already well applied hair just pristine right and the husband's there. He's smiling his ties up You know, there's no coffee stains on his shirt first thing in the morning. Everything's wonderful and then over in the corner you'll see the dishwashing liquid and I'll say buy this dishwashing liquid and You'll have this lifestyle And if you believe that, I've got a bridge in Brooklyn I want to sell to you. Speak to me at the back of the service in the door. Anyway, meanwhile, back at the ranch, when I was a child, adverts were at least a little bit more honest. They would show you what the product can do. And Ferry was famous. It would show you how much, how many dishes. it could clean in comparison to its leading competitor. And so there were two sinks and two ladies, back in those days, were washing the dishes and there was like three drops of dishwashing liquid in this sink and three dashes from the opposite leading competitor. And there were like, you know, four or five plates. And then the fairy dishwashing, it was as far as the eye could see. and clean and they would pick up the plate and they would go and they would lick their finger and go and it would squeak. And the tagline was cleans right down to the squeak. Not an ounce of oil or grease left on the plate. It cleans right down to the squeak, while the psalmist is saying, Lord, clean this world until it's right down to the squeak. Clean it free of all iniquity and transgression and sin and evil until you find none. And isn't it wonderful that there's coming a day when Jesus will do that? He'll clean it. It'll be as clean as his own character. And what a wonderful world it will be. The climax of the psalm. 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 your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more. came across this gem of a illustration from Dr. Davis's book. Maxie Dunnan once

wrote of the time when novelist Lloyd C. Douglas was a university student. He lived upstairs in a boarding house and downstairs on the first floor lived an elderly, now infirm, retired music teacher. And according to Douglas, they had a morning ritual. Douglas would come down the stairs, open the old man's door, and ask, well, what good news do you have for me today? And the old man would pick up his tuning fork and tap it on the side of his wheelchair and say, this is Middlesea. It's Middlesea today. It was middle C yesterday, and it shall be middle C forever. And it doesn't matter that that tenor upstairs always sings C flat. His flatness can't change the fact that this is middle C. And the psalmist, looking out at a world that's so wrong, lifts up his mind to heaven, far above the stars, the constellations, the galaxies, the nebulas, beyond space and time, at the pinnacle of existence above all creation, there's a throne. And on that throne, there is a person, Jehovah. And he sits on that throne forever. He was on that throne yesterday, and he's on that throne today, and he'll be on that throne forever. The universe in general, but your life in particular, is in very good hands. And notice How, what rules a man's thoughts, fills a man's heart, floods a man's mouth, and directs the course, not just of a man's life, but of his eternity. The one man in his heart says, there is no God. And his life, well his heart, and his mouth, and his life, go to hell in a handbasket. And the other man says, the Lord is king forever and ever. Nations have perished from his land. Ideas really do have consequences. And bad ideas have victims. Fill your mind, Christian, with thoughts of God. If you want to live a way you've never lived before, you must first come to think a way you've never thought before. It's with our mind that we live the Christian life. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds." And how thankful. You could think

about this, Sam. Jesus could pray this, Sam, against every mother, son on the planet. He's the only man who deserved to pray this, Sam, by dint of his own righteousness. But because he was willing to become cursed, he is willing to open the door for any and for all to be blessed, and to hide themselves under the shadow of his wings, and to clothe themselves in the garments of his righteousness, like a bride adorning herself with her jewels. No matter how bad life seems to be, no matter how hard, how well the wicked are doing, and no matter how badly the righteous are faring, fill your mind with thoughts of God and of Christ. It's the sum and substance of a foundation, a firm place on which to stand. For there'll be times when you'll not find God in your circumstances, and you'll not find him in the heart of the wicked, but you'll always

find him on your knees. If you come to him in Jesus' name, you'll find access with the throne of heaven where grace and mercy reign, and where you can find help in time of need. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for The Scriptures. I don't think any of us would say that Psalm 10 is our favorite psalm. And yet it's lovely, oh Lord God. It leads us to your throne and to your presence and to a place of hope that the wicked will not always prosper and the righteous will not always suffer. Soon Christ shall return and make all things new. and all the sad things of this world untrue in the light of His truth and His grace. And we thank you in that day when the Judge comes, that the Judge Himself will be our Savior, who was first judged for us because of our sins, that He might deliver us from judgment and bring us home to God. In Christ, amen.