

Psalms 9-10

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[0 : 00] I'd like you guys, if you have a copy of the scriptures, to open up to the book of Psalms.

To the book of Psalms, Psalm 9. We're actually going to be reading Psalms 9 and 10 this morning. So turn to Psalm 9. And if you're using one of the Bibles that we have scattered out in the chairs there, you'll want to turn to page 451.

Otherwise, turn to roughly the middle of your Bible, and you'll find the book of Psalms, and then turn until you find Psalm 9. So this morning, Psalms 9 and 10, I want to ask you guys to stand with me in honor of the Word of God as we read together.

To the choir master, according to Muth Laban, a Psalm of David. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart. I will recount all 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 your presence.

[1 : 19] 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. And He judges the world with righteousness. He judges the peoples with uprightness.

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed. 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 people his deeds. For he who avenges blood is mindful of them. He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

[2 : 22] 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. That I may recount all your praises.

That in the gates of the daughter of Zion, I may rejoice in your salvation. The nations have sunk in the pit that they made. In the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught.

The Lord has made Himself known. He has executed judgment. The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. The wicked shall return to Sheol.

All the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten. And the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. Arise, O Lord.

Let not man prevail. Let the nations be judged before you. Put them in fear, O Lord. Let the nations know that they are but men.

[3 : 22] 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 boast 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 see him. All his thoughts are, there is no God. His ways prosper at all times. Your judgments are on high, out of his sight.

For 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.

[4 : 17] 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 to account?
But you do see, for you have no 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.
[5 : 19] 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.

Father, what a raw emotional passage we confront this morning from the hand of King David. And our prayer this morning is that the words of King David would direct our hearts to King Jesus. And we ask that in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. We have stepped out of our study through the book of Romans to jump back into the book of Psalms.
As many of you know, we are trying or I am attempting to cover at least five psalms a year so that in thirty years we can get through the entire book of Psalms. It's not a problem at all.
I'm sure you'll all be sitting right here in thirty years and we'll get through all of the psalms. But even if you're not, we will at least cover a significant number over the next few years. And so this morning we come to these two Psalms.

[6 : 39] One of the reasons that I really want us to spend some time each year in the book of Psalms, especially in the midst of a study like the book of Romans, we have seen the Apostle Paul argue throughout the book of Romans.

We have seen him build a case not only for the gospel, but for his vision of the Christian life. And he does that in a very systematic, very logical pattern.

There's passion in Paul, but nevertheless his writing and his thinking comes out in a very orderly, logical way as his argument unfolds throughout the book of Romans.

But in the book of Psalms we have oftentimes a much more raw, on-the-surface display of real emotions, of real passion demonstrated by God's people.

I think that oftentimes we overlook the power of a book like the book of Psalms, because sometimes we don't rightly value, we don't place enough value on just being real, on just recognizing reality, on just confronting the world as it comes against us.

[7 : 56] And as we encounter it, we live, in fact, in a world that is filled with all sorts of injustices. And we can talk about those in a detached sort of way, and we can even say true things about the injustices that are in the world, and yet say them in a detached manner.

But we can't do that when we arrive at a passage like Psalm 9 and 10. In fact, these two Psalms were originally one psalm, one composition.

The book of Psalms, as many of you know, is a collection of songs and poems. That's what the book of Psalms is. It's not like the book of Romans where the Apostle Paul sat down and he wrote the book of Romans all at one time, maybe writing it in his own hand, probably dictating it to his scribe that he mentions at the end of the book of Romans.

But Paul sat down at some point and he composed the entire book of Romans. The book of Psalms is not like that. The book of Psalms is a collection of songs and poems written by different men over a period of a few centuries.

So that many of the Psalms are Psalms written by King David himself, as is Psalms 9 and 10 this morning. But many other Psalms are written by other men, so that we have a number of Psalms in the book of Psalms that are attributed to a man named Asaph.

[9 : 20] A few Psalms are attributed to a group called the Sons of Korah. And then there are a lot of Psalms throughout this book that we're not told who the author is. And so this is a collection that was brought together for the benefit of the people of Israel.

It really served for the people of Israel as a guide for worship. And it can do the same thing for us today. It can show us how to rightfully express the things that we feel as we reflect upon the truth of God's Word as it comes into contact with the world in which we find ourselves.

And so here we arrive at Psalms 9 and 10, which as I said, were originally one Psalm. In fact, if you go back and you read the Greek translation of the Old Testament, there was a Greek translation made of the Hebrew Old Testament so that Jews who no longer spoke Hebrew or were no longer fluent enough in Hebrew to follow along in their Bibles, those who were living in the Greco-Roman

world, so that they could read the Old Testament, the Scriptures, in a language that was easier for them to understand.

And so somewhere around the year, between the years 150 and 200 B.C., a translation was made of the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language. That translation is known as the Septuagint. And in that translation, we find that Psalms 9 and 10 are grouped together as one Psalm. There's no division between them at all, which causes a person to wonder if a translation that old and that ancient took these Psalms as one Psalm, could they perhaps have originally been one Psalm?

[10:59] Did they just forget to divide them, or were they originally one Psalm? Well, this week I came to the conclusion after a lot of wrestling, after a lot of thinking, after a lot of study, that I believe these were originally one Psalm.

They've been divided up for us, both in the Hebrew Bible and in our English translations, I think because there's a shift in theme between the two, and because they divide at a nice, neat location. In fact, if you were to do a word count, none of you are going to do that, okay? But if you were to do a word count of the Hebrew of these two Psalms, you would find that they have the exact same number of words.

Each Psalm contains 162 words in Hebrew, so that it appears as if somebody has intentionally divided this Psalm right down the middle.

But that's not the only reason to think that these were originally one Psalm. There's also the issue that Psalm 9 has an introduction, what's called a post-script, I mean a superscript.

[12:02] We read at the beginning, To the choir master, according to Mutlaben, and we don't know what in the world Mutlaben is, it's some sort of musical term that is lost to us. And then we're told this is a Psalm of David.

And all the Psalms in this particular section of the book of Psalms have these kinds of superscriptions that tell us a little bit about the Psalm itself. Either it's musical information that the Jews would have wanted to know what tune to play it to, or how it was to be sung, or it's information on the author, or occasionally the historical circumstances under which it was written.

But all the Psalms in this particular section of the book of Psalms have that kind of information at the beginning. And yet, Psalm 10 has none of that information. It's unique in this section of the book of Psalms in not having the information at the beginning of it.

Which leads you to think either these two were at once joined, and this superscription counts for both, or Psalm 10 just stands out as strange in this section of the book of Psalms. And then there's also the issue of this little word that we find scattered all over the book of Psalms, Selah.

You can see it a couple of times in Psalm 9. Look at verse 16. At the end of verse 16, we actually have two terms. First, the term Higion, which is another musical term that we really don't know exactly what it means.

[13:17] And then the word Selah, printed in most of your Bibles off to the side, perhaps in italics or something along those lines. All right? Selah, which was another musical term that most scholars think meant pause for reflection here.

Or it might have meant something like pause for an instrumental portion of the song here. We're not exactly sure, but most think it's some sort of pause. And this word occurs all over the book of Psalms.

And yet, the only time that we ever see this word used at the end of a psalm rather than the middle of a psalm is at the end of Psalm 9.

Which is really, really strange if this word indicates a pause in the middle of a song. You can't pause at the end of the song. You're done. That's not a pause.

That's being finished. So there are a few reasons within the text itself, not just looking back at some ancient translation, there are a few reasons within the text itself for taking this as one psalm.

[14:16] But one of the most powerful reasons for taking this as a psalm, one of the most important reasons, is not one that you will ever be able to see in your English translation. In fact, it's one that I missed in my first few passes through Psalm 9 this week because I was limiting myself to Psalm 9, planning to preach on Psalm 9 when I did not realize just how closely connected these two were earlier in the week.

Throughout this psalm, we find what's known as an acrostic. An acrostic. Which means basically that the beginning of successive lines within the psalm, that the first word of each line begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order of the letters of the alphabet.

So if it were, for instance, in English, the first line would start with the letter A, the first word of the first line. And then you have a couple of other lines underneath it, and then you would come to the next line, you'd come to another line that would start with the letter B.

And then you might have a couple of more lines, and then you would come to a line that begins with the letter C. And so on throughout the alphabet. And there are, in fact, a few letters that are missing in this acrostic, which I think is probably why I never saw the acrostic in the first place.

And I'll explain to you in a moment why those letters are missing. But if those letters were not missing, then the total number of letters in Psalm 9 would be 11 letters, the first 11 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

[15:44] And then in Psalm 10, if there were none missing, the total would be the last 11 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. So that a 22-letter alphabet, if there were no letters missing, would be divided perfectly in half between Psalms 9 and 10.

So the same number of words in each psalm, and if the acrostic was not missing letters, you'd have the same number of letters from the Hebrew alphabet in each psalm.

So that these, I believe, ought to be read together if we are to fully understand them. And when you read these together, what you find in these two psalms is a powerful comparison and juxtaposition of the truth of who God is right alongside of the reality of living in a fallen world.

And these psalms can help us to learn and to see how should we process the emotions that we feel when all sorts of things, bad, negative things happen to us in a fallen, sinful world.

In fact, the places where you find the missing letters from the acrostic are places that emphasize the evil that we face in the world.

[17:01] So that in Psalm 9, all 11 letters are present except for the fourth letter of the alphabet, which does happen to correspond to the letter D, the fourth letter of our alphabet in English.

The Hebrew letter Dalet is missing. And when you ask yourself, why would that letter be missing? Did David just forget his alphabet? That's not very likely at all.

Why is it missing? Because when you arrive to verse 5, where we find the letter that comes right before the letter Dalet in Hebrew, when we come to verse 5, we find the very first mention of the word wicked, of the evil people, of the oppressors who will be mentioned throughout this psalm. And it's almost as if the mere mention of the wicked initially here in the psalm interrupts the acrostic. It throws things out of whack. This is highly, highly developed poetry.

I know that many of us today do not have a great appreciation for poetry. Most of us just don't. We don't spend a whole lot of our days reading poetry, don't spend a lot of our time contemplating poetry, contemplating the various devices used in poetry.

[18:17] In fact, most of us, our understanding of poetry is limited to one line rhymes with the line before it. That's how most of us understand poetry. Most of us, the most advanced poetry we read on a given week is Dr. Seuss, which is pretty good poetry, all things being equal.

But this is advanced stuff. This is really highly developed, intricate poetry. And you see that in the way in which David introduces the idea of disruption and chaos that is brought into our lives by the presence of wicked people and sin itself in the world.

So that when we arrive, what we would expect to be the fourth letter of the alphabet, we find it missing. And if you ask why, the reason is because the wicked have disrupted things. The mere mention of the wicked in verse 5 has thrown things off.

But it gets more interesting as you move down to Psalm 10, where we have six letters in a row missing from the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 10 starts well.

It begins what we would call the letter L. The Hebrews call it the letter Lamed. And it follows right after the previous letter at the end of Psalm 9, the letter Koph in the Hebrew alphabet. So that verse 1 of chapter 10 begins with the letter we would expect it to if these were all one psalm.

[19:38] And yet right after that, we're missing six letters in a row. Why? Well, read these verses again with me that are missing the letters.

Verse 2, 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 a diversity. 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.

[20 : 39] 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. And he says in his heart, God has forgotten.

He's hidden his face. He will never see it. And then back to something good, more positive in verse 12. And the alphabet resumes. Arise, O Lord.

So that all of these verses, beginning in verse 2 and all the way down through verse 11, are missing six letters in the acrostic we would expect.

But they are also a vivid description of the prosperity of the wicked in the eyes of David who represents God's people. You have this incredible description from the perspective of someone who has and is currently suffering at the hands of wicked people.

And oftentimes when we find ourselves in that situation, we feel as if there is no justice in the world. We feel as if things are not right.

[21 : 47] This is not the way it's supposed to be. We see the wicked and they prosper and they have large houses and they gain more money and all the while they're saying there's no God or God will never see.

And we are heartbroken. And yet, do we not feel that way? Maybe not even when suffering comes into your own life.

You turn on the television or you read in the newspaper and you see about atrocious, horrible things happening all over the world. Not just things happening in other countries, but we do see terrible acts of violence against innocent people in those countries.

We see terrible things happen in our own country. We see children abused. We see all sorts of abuse take place in the world. And oftentimes, the abusers are not caught.

The abusers are not punished. And they continue to prosper and flourish for a long time. And that can cause us, like David who's honest with how he feels and honest in the way that he sees the world, that can cause us to feel as if there's no justice.

[23 : 00] The world is in chaos. The world is out of kilter. Things are just not right. And that's what David is expressing in these verses.

That's why the acrostic breaks down into poetic chaos to reflect the chaos in David's own heart, to reflect the chaos that exists in our own hearts when we see bad things happening in the world and it doesn't feel in the moment as if they are ever, ever going to be righted.

And it doesn't necessarily have to be that some person is oppressing you, that some person is causing you pain. It doesn't have to be anything like that.

It could be simply the effects of living in a fallen world. Because as people who live in a fallen world, we're going to deal with painful circumstances.

Sometimes at the hands of the wicked and sometimes just because this world is fallen. We're not exempt from that as Christians. I know that there are a number of preachers out there that will tell you over and over that if you just believe enough, if you just have enough faith, or if you just will follow these steps, then you will be prosperous and things will go well with you.

[24 : 20] But that doesn't jive with Psalms 9 and 10 and it doesn't fit with what we see in the New Testament. Consider, for instance, what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Thessalonians. It'll be on the screen, but you're welcome to turn there if you want.

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 4, he says, When we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand, that we were to suffer affliction just as it has come to pass and just as you know.

Paul says, When I was there preaching to you, I told you that I and my companions would suffer. I told you affliction was coming for us and it has come for us and you see it now.

Paul expected it in his own life. This is a man who was shipwrecked on more than one occasion, who was beaten with whips on more than one occasion, whose life would end in Rome with his head being cut off.

Oh, Paul was well acquainted with suffering and not all of it at the hands of the wicked. You can't point to a single individual or group of people who caused Paul to be shipwrecked.

[25 : 28] It's just a fallen world in which storms take place and sometimes ships sink. Yes, God is sovereign over all of those things, but it's reality. And Paul knows that and Paul states that.

Peter goes even further. If you turn to 1 Peter chapter 4, Peter says, beloved, in verse 12, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.

Peter does not say, if you will believe enough, things will go well for you. Peter says, do not be surprised when bad things happen. Do not be surprised when the fiery trial comes upon you.

Don't treat it as something strange and alien and foreign. It's expected. It's going to happen. And if the testimony of Peter and Paul toward this end are not enough to convince you, then you can hear the words of Jesus from the Gospel of John.

John chapter 15, verse 20. Jesus says to his disciples, remember the word that I said to you. A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

[26 : 47] They will. Persecution, suffering, fiery trials will come upon us not as a strange and alien thing, but as an expected part of living in this world.

And they take all sorts of forms. Here, in Psalms 9 and 10, they primarily take the form of persecution at the hands of wicked people.

But I think David has in mind more than that. For instance, take a look in Psalm 9. In verse 9, Paul says that the Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

That word trouble covers a broad range of suffering. Suffering, yes, at the hands of other people, but also suffering from sickness, suffering from natural disasters.

We see this particular word used to describe all sorts of troubling, bad things that happen to us in the course of this world.

[27 : 51] So Paul has in mind, yes, persecution or suffering at the hands of wicked people, but he has in mind more than that he has in mind all sorts of suffering.

And it does take on a lot of different forms in our lives. Sometimes it does take on the form of the persecutor, the slanderer, the oppressor.

There are Christians all over the world who are being put to death for their faith. There are Christians who are being imprisoned for their faith. Or, on a note closer to home, there are times when because we take a stand for our faith, we are going to have to suffer consequences.

You may not get the promotion that you want at work because you take a stand for Christ. You may not influence all the people and have the approval of all the people in the community that you would like because you take a stand for Christ.

There are times when suffering comes to us at the hands of other people, slandering, whispering, gossiping, dismissing us.

[28 : 57] It doesn't always have to be some violent form of persecution. But we also see it in the form of sickness. None of us are immune from illnesses. In fact, cancer will enter everyone's life, either yourself or someone you love.

It's almost inevitable in today's world that we will, either in our own bodies or in those we love, we will have to deal with the reality of cancer.

We have to deal with the reality of the death of people early at times when we don't expect it, times that to us seem not right, unfair.

We see those things. We see sometimes our own suffering comes because of our own anguish. In fact, I think one of the most helpful things about Psalms 9 and 10 is that we get a peek, we get a view into David's genuine, emotional anguish over the things that surround him.

And that's one of the most helpful things about the book of Psalms is that the book of Psalms presents to us reality, real heartfelt emotions from real people who loved God.

[30 : 14] And yet we see at times they're depressed. We see at times they're anxious. We see at times they're despondent. We see at times they are willing, they are almost ready to just give up. We see that. That's real.

In fact, you can turn over a page in your Bible and see a really good picture of David's anguish.

Psalm 13. David cries out, How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever?

Have you ever felt that way? Is this going to last forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

Verse 2 speaks to us in our hearts.

How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? Have you ever experienced that? Have you ever had the experience of just an overwhelming sense of sorrow in your heart all the day?

Whether or not we categorize that sort of feeling as clinical depression or whether we categorize it as just a deep, dark downtime in your life because of events surrounding you, whatever the case may be, it's real.

[31 : 27] And people in the Bible experience it. David describes it as sorrow in his heart all the day long. We have great men of faith throughout church history who spoke of these things.

Martin Luther, the great reformer, spoke of what he called the dark night of his soul. Just intense, emotional, mental anguish that he wrestled with in the midst of the night over and over, sometimes for long periods of time in his life.

Or the great missionary, David Brainerd, missionary in the 18th century to the Native Americans. David Brainerd died in his 20s.

He did not live a long life and yet he accomplished great things for the Lord. But not only did he die early in life, but through his diary we read of his deep wrestling and struggle with what today we would probably call depression, what they called in those days melancholy.

There were no medicines for it. There were no clinics to go to. There was no therapists to deal with. Brainerd just dealt with it in the context of his journal, of his diary. And thank God he did because we have a record of it.

[32 : 37] There are all sorts of sufferings that we face in the world. There are all kinds of troubles that we will deal with. And these psalms can help us to think rightly about them.

We shouldn't ignore suffering. We shouldn't pretend that we're not suffering. And we shouldn't believe that we're not going to suffer in the future. Suffering is a reality for all of God's people. And it may be a suffering that's merely internal that others can't see. It may be a suffering imposed by others. Or it may be a suffering of illness that everyone around you is aware of. But suffering is going to come.

In fact, this week, this past week, as I was re-reading For Goodness, probably the fifth or sixth time through one of my favorite books, Desiring God by John Piper. If you've never read this book, then I would strongly encourage you to get a copy of it and read it.

I want to read you some of what he says, though, in a chapter he wrote on suffering. He says, In choosing to follow Christ in the way that he directs, we choose all that this path includes under his sovereign providence.

[33 : 44] Thus, all suffering that comes in the path of obedience is suffering with Christ and for Christ, whether it be cancer or conflict.

And then further down the page, he says, All experiences of suffering in the path of Christian obedience, whether from persecution or sickness or accident, have this in common.

They all threaten our faith in the goodness of God and tempt us to leave the path of obedience. And if all you had from the writings of David, if all we had in these particular psalms were David's reciting of the ills that he sees in his own life and the world around him, you would say, Here's the man who's on the verge of giving up.

Here's the guy who's about to walk off the path of obedience because that's what suffering tempts us to do. And yet David, I believe, provides a blueprint for us in these two psalms as to how we can avoid in the midst of suffering going off of the path of obedience.

And so with the rest of the time that we have left this morning, I want to look at four things that we can do that we're drawing from these two psalms, four things that we need to do when we're faced with suffering if we're going to remain on the path of obedience within the midst of suffering, a path that is, after all, God-honoring, Christ-exalting.

[35 : 09] So four things. I'm going to help you try to make them memorable so they'll all start with an R this morning. And the first thing that we need to do is what we've been seeing so far throughout this psalm in this sermon is that we need to recognize the reality of our suffering.

It does no good to deny it. It does no good to pretend it's not there. It does no good to tell yourself if I had just believed more, I wouldn't have had to face this kind of suffering. No, it's a reality.

We've seen it in the writings of Paul and Peter and even in the record of the teachings of Jesus. Suffering is real and we need to recognize it. We need to own up to it. It's okay.

We don't have to be stoics. The Bible is not an account of the writings of people who were stoics who just pretended straight-faced that they weren't dealing with anything. No, the Bible is a record of people who experience high, high, high, high experiences of joy and who deal with very, very low depths of depression, sadness, and melancholy and that often happens because of suffering and we need to be real about it.

So first of all, recognize the reality of suffering and we're seeing that throughout this psalm. Not only in the verses that we read from Psalm 10 a minute ago but we see it even in the midst of Psalm 9 which has a much heavier emphasis upon the next few points that we're going to see.

[36 : 31] So, for instance, we read in verse 15, The nations have sunk in the pit that they made in the net that they hid their own foot has been caught.

What net? What net have the nations cast? In other words, what net have the non-believers, the Gentile nations, cast? It's the net of suffering that he describes in chapter 10.

They've cast a net. They've ensnared many of us. He holds out a hope that they will ensnare themselves eventually but this is real. This net of suffering has been cast out oftentimes over God's people.

Verse 12 of Psalm 9 says that God is the one who avenges blood and he's mindful of those who suffer. He's mindful of them. He does not, we're told, forget the cry of the afflicted.

The cry of the afflicted. That's language that expresses real suffering. Real, heartfelt, spoken anguish. It's a cry of those who are afflicted.

[37 : 36] So we need to recognize the reality of suffering in our own lives whether it comes as an internal sort of emotional struggle that we're dealing with or whether it's imposed upon us by sickness or whether it's imposed upon us by those outside of Christ who would persecute us.

All sorts of causes but we need to own up to it that it's real in the world, it's real in our lives. And then secondly, if we're not at that moment, if we're not to fall headlong into despondency, if we are to remain on the path to obedience, we need to be able to recall God's past deliverances.

We need to remember and recall the ways in which God has delivered His people in the past. And David speaks of that in two ways. First, he speaks of it in recalling the ways in which God has personally rescued him and delivered him.

And secondly, he speaks of it in ways in which God has historically in the past delivered His people.

Look at verse 1, Psalm 9. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. Now pause for a moment there. David conceives of God's past acts of redemption to be real historical events.

[39 : 01] That's what he means by your wonderful deeds. They're not things that have been imagined. They're not stories that were made up. They are real. David is going to recall them.

He's going to remember them. And then again, I said two forms. Verse 3, personal deliverance David has experienced. When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence.

For you have maintained my just cause. You have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment. You see the first person pronouns there? My enemies.

You have maintained my just cause. So David is looking back out over his life and he's recalling past times when God has come to the rescue. And David faced terrible circumstances throughout his life.

We have to assume at this point, we don't know exactly when this psalm was written, but we can probably realistically assume that it was written when David was actually reigning as king from Jerusalem. David could at that point look back on his life.

[40 : 05] He could remember how he was mocked as a boy when he came, as a young man, when he came into the camp. Mocked by his brothers, mocked by the soldiers as David stood and said, who is this uncircumcised Philistine that dare defies the armies of the Lord?

He heard scorn and ridicule. Worse than that though, David had been anointed king by a prophet named Samuel while there was another king on the throne. And Saul, throughout much of David's early years, Saul chased David, pursued David, tried to kill David.

David had to hide in the desert. David had to hide in caves. David had to beg for bread from people. David experienced real hardship in his life. Even after he became king, there was an uprising by one of his own children.

David was chased out of his own capital in Jerusalem. And he had to flee for his life from his own son. David faced the reality that within his family, he had one son kill another son of his who had violated one of his daughters.

David dealt with real adversity in his life. David dealt with real trouble brought on him by others, whether it be King Saul or his own family members.

[41 : 24] David faced real struggles. And David looks back on some of those struggles and he says, you've maintained my just cause. You sat on the throne in those times.

And when the time was right, you gave righteous judgment. And I think it's good and right for us to look back into our own lives when we're in the midst of suffering, when we're in one of those dark days, to be able to look back to where there was more light shown in certain periods of our lives and remind ourselves of when God rescued us.

Remind ourselves of the time that God brought His people to surround us and lift us up and hold us up through difficult times. Remind ourselves of perhaps when He healed us and we were released from a certain sickness or disease, whether it came miraculously out of the blue or whether it came through the hands of doctors.

Times in which God has intervened and helped us in the periods of distress and trouble that we were in. We don't need to forget those things. We need to remember them and recall them as real instances of God's deliverance for us and know that He can and will do it again.

But David does more than that. Sometimes, I think, we have trouble in the dark days of seeing the lighter days of our own lives.

[42 : 44] We have trouble reflecting back upon those and so David does more than reflect on his own life and David looks back into the history of Israel and he sees God's historical redemption of His people.

In fact, I believe that David has in his mind the conquest of the land of Israel when God brought the people of Israel into the land and God through them powerfully worked to defeat their enemies within the land.

Look at verse 5. 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. I think if we're trying to locate a historical event within the life of Israel, the most likely event would be the conquest of the land of Israel in which God brought Israel into the land.

He promised them and He helped them to defeat their enemies that were in the land. This was a real historical event. Not a mere story made up by somebody to explain where the nation of Israel came from but a real historical event that David looks back upon, that David recalls and in the midst of his present suffering that gives him confidence that God has the power and ultimately the willingness to eventually set things right.

[44 : 09] God will judge the world. God will set things right eventually. David knows that not only from his own experience, David knows it because that's what God has done in the past and we can look throughout the scriptures and we can see a record of God in history actually rescuing and redeeming His people over and over again.

There is the exodus from the land of Egypt as God brings the Hebrew people out of Egypt. There is of course the conquest of the land. There is the putting of David on the throne.

There is the bringing of the people back from exile in Babylon and there is the ultimate redemption that God has provided in the person of Jesus Christ. Not a figment of anyone's imagination.

A real historical figure who came into this world Son of God and Son of Man and bore the penalty for our sins upon the cross in our place.

That was a real historical event. that man was raised from the dead. That was a real historical event. Paul even goes so far as to say that if the resurrection was not a real historical event then we Christians are of all people the most to be pitied.

[45 : 25] Paul is absolutely certain of the historical reality of God's redemption in Christ and of the resurrection of Jesus which caps off that redemptive work on the cross Paul knows it to be real.

It really really happened and we can look back with the scriptures as our guide and see historical events throughout history in which God has rescued his people and we can know that the same God who did those things is the same God who walks with us now in our very very dark days.

So we need to remember and recall God's past deliverances of his people even of us. So recognize be real about suffering remember what God has done in response to suffering in the past and then in light of that truth about who God is what he's done in the past we need to rest in his promises. We need to rest. We need to not continue to be anxious we need to stop wringing our hands stop worrying that things have spun out of control just because they look chaotic to us they are not really chaotic we need to understand that we need to know that.

Take a look at our passage here we'll see a few places where we are told to trust in the Lord or we are told of God's protection over those who need it.

[46 : 56] Psalm 9 verse 9 again The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed 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.

The end of verse 10 he does not forget the cry of the afflicted. Down to verse 18 The needy shall not always be forgotten and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.

Chapter 10 all the way down to the middle of verse 14 To you the helpless commits himself you have been the helper of the fatherless.

And then verses 17 and 18 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.

this is who God is and we need to rest in these realities we need to rest in these truths about who he is. He is a God who cares for the fatherless.

[48 : 04] He is a God who cares for the afflicted. He is a God who hears when we cry out to him. He is a God who knows exactly when and how to set things right.

The oppression of this world will not endure forever it will eventually come to an end. We can know if we've trusted in him that he has not forsaken us.

He does not forsake his people even if we feel forsaken. Rest in the truth that he has not forsaken us in the past and because of that he has not forsaken us now nor will he ever forsake us in the future.

We have this solid firm hope beneath our feet even in the darkest of days that God is with us and he will not forsake us.

If you read the story in the book of Genesis of Joseph it's one of my favorite stories particularly in the Old Testament. Joseph was one of the sons of Jacob one of the sons of Israel but disliked by his brothers because he was favored by both his father and the Lord so that his brothers plotted evil against him.

[49 : 21] They determined initially to throw him in a pit and let him die then they decided they could make money off of him if they sold him as a slave so they sold Joseph as a slave. He was taken to Egypt put on the slave selling block and sold again served for a number of years he actually progressed and he became a well known servant of an official in Egypt till eventually he was betrayed and lied about thrown into prison where he languished for years years languishing in prison but eventually he got out eventually Joseph rose to a place a position of power and authority in Egypt so that when God's timing was right God used Joseph to redeem all of his people and to rescue his people from famine and sure destruction but I imagine that as Joseph was at the bottom of a pit ready to starve to death or in chains being sold to strangers or in a deep dark prison in a foreign land

I imagine in those moments that Joseph found himself looking for God's deliverance trusting that the promises that God had made to him years before would eventually come true but not seen any evidence of it one of the most remarkable things about the way the story of Joseph is told in the book of Genesis is throughout the several chapters that that story covers at the end of the book of Genesis God is rarely mentioned and yet we have one repeated phrase throughout the life of Joseph in those dark days and it's this the Lord was with Joseph that's it Joseph survived those days because of the presence of God with him and the presence of God did not mean immediate release from prison the presence of God did not mean immediate return to his homeland so he could be embraced by his father for decades his father believed him to be dead no the presence of God meant for

Joseph that in the midst of darkness he could cling to God's promise he could be upheld by the Lord in the midst of suffering and that there would be a day when God finally set things right and that day came but if you were Joseph in prison or at the bottom of a hole that day feels like it may never come and all you have is to rest in the promises of God and that's all we have sometimes in

the midst of suffering resting in the sure promises of God remembering how he's been faithful to his promises in the past and resting in the present in those promises in the New Testament we're told by the Apostle Paul that God works all things for good to those that love him and are called according to his purpose you know what David and Joseph have in common besides the fact that they suffered much and were eventually delivered by God what they have in common is that way we're called by the Lord and they love the

Lord that's what they have in common David's called a man after God's own heart Joseph remains faithful to the Lord in a foreign land full of idols these were men who knew the Lord who had been called by him and to him and the promises of deliverance the hope that David has in these psalms is available but it is only available to those who are called according to God's purpose it's only available to those who have trusted in the promises that culminate in Jesus the Redeemer it is available to those only who have trusted in the real historical person of Jesus who in real history died for our sins and rose again hope is available in the midst of suffering but it is really only available to those who trust in Jesus which is perhaps why so many times many people find themselves utterly utterly despondent because they don't have the hope of knowing he's working all things to good because he's called me he loves me and I love him he's made me promises absent that hope

I don't know how to endure through the things that we'll face in this life the last thing I want you to see from these two psalms is that we ought to respond to God's redemption even before that redemption comes we ought to respond in praise verse 1 psalm 9 I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart I will recount all of your wonderful deeds I will be glad and exult in you I will sing praise to your name O Most High verse 11 sing praises to the Lord who sits enthroned in Zion tell among the peoples his deeds verse 19 arise O Lord let not man prevail let the nations be judged before you over in psalm 10 verse 12 arise O Lord God lift up your hand forget not the afflicted verse 16 the Lord is king forever and ever the nations perish from his land praise calling upon [55 : 15] God praising God for his past deliverances his coming deliverances praising him for all that he has done and will do for us respond respond in the only way that's appropriate the great gift of the book of Psalms is that it leads us in response to the truth of God's word oh it gives us truth yeah seeing that here but it leads us in response to God's word you know I've heard expressed by a lot of people good solid bible loving Christians that they are skeptical of the danger of music and worship because it's true music can be used to manipulate emotions to stir up feelings that are not based in the truth of God's word that is true and so some people are skeptical of music we'd like to have as little as possible and as bland as possible sometimes but what we're seeing in the

Psalms is poetic highly stylized beautiful music in response to the Lord music is not merely a danger because it can twist our emotions music music is a gift because it is a means by which we express our emotions in response to what God has done and will do and so I'm going to pray Justin's going to come up and we're going to respond in praise as we reflect on all his past deliverances of us let's pray to come up and we'll see you in a moment!