



OASIS: “A Biblical Response to the Marathon Bombings” Psalm 10

Preface: Part of the nature of terrorist attacks is they interrupt all facets of life and it seemed fitting for us to interrupt our new sermon series to address the events of the week. You are encouraged to process all of this together as it is a needed element of community.

These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation). Please also note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night and some of these questions have been adapted from a previous study from last year. It's best to consider this a head-start and customize these studies to best fit your LC.

Study's BIG Idea: Though God seems distant while the evildoers seem to do whatever they please, the Psalmist tells us something different—that God will deal justly for the meek and against the evil-doer.

Psalm 10 (NIV)

- 1 Why, Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
- 2 In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.
- 3 He boasts about the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord.
- 4 In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.
- 5 His ways are always prosperous; your laws are rejected by him; he sneers at all his enemies.
- 6 He says to himself, “Nothing will ever shake me.” He swears, “No one will ever do me harm.”
- 7 His mouth is full of lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue.
- 8 He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush he murders the innocent. His eyes watch in secret for his victims;
- 9 like a lion in cover he lies in wait. He lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.
- 10 His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength.
- 11 He says to himself, “God will never notice; he covers his face and never sees.”
- 12 Arise, Lord! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless.
- 13 Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, “He won’t call me to account”?
- 14 But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.
- 15 Break the arm of the wicked man; call the evildoer to account for his wickedness that would not otherwise be found out.
- 16 The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.
- 17 You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,
- 18 defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

Introductory Questions

Where were you and how did you first hear about the terrorist attack at the Boston Marathon?

Describe the thoughts and feelings you experienced throughout the week?

(Feelings like anger, fear, resentment to name a few.)

It's natural to ask questions like, "Why do such evil things happen in our world?" and "Where is God in all of this?"

O – As seen in verse 1, the question of God's nearness in times of trouble have been asked throughout the history of humanity. What is the question really asking?

("God why do you allow evil to reign in this world?" "Why do the wicked seem to get away with injustice?" "Why do the innocent suffer? Where is the fairness?" "Why do you watch while I hurt?")

I – After thoughtful reflection, we see this question longs for the way of God's eternal presence as described in Rev. 21:4 where "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. Where there is no pain, no suffering, no death, no evil."

We call this heaven. And in essence, heaven is the answer to this question. But the life-long wait in experiencing this new reality in full allows us to experience suffering. However, it also allows us other feelings and experiences—can you name a few?

(The waiting allows us to grow in our trust in God. The waiting allows us to grow in our perseverance. The waiting allow us to share the hope and reason for our faith in Christ.)

A – What are ways we can serve those who ask the question, "God where are you?"

O – Verses 3–11 focus on the evildoers. Which verses resonate with you?

I – According to the Psalmist, the wicked see themselves as self-sufficient, accountable to no one, and act as though they are "untouchable." We see their actions as a form of defiant blasphemy--behaving as if they are their own gods. Is the Psalmist making the case to live a life of extreme selfishness or is he doing something else? If so, what?

(The Psalmist is actually making the case against the evildoers by exposing their failure of living a life in obedience to God and living in peace with their fellow neighbors. Further, the evildoer is rendered as the very worst of all things—an enemy of Yahweh Himself.)

A – How can we be sure to not live as evildoers?

O – Which words/verses encourage you the most in verses 12–18?

O – The Psalmist sees God as the one who is truly to be feared. He is the one that breaks the arm of the wicked (v. 15), the one who hears the desires of the meek (v. 17), and the one will do justice for the oppressed (v. 18). What feelings do you experience as you meditate on those thoughts?

A – How can we bring these encouraging words that "God will deal with those that strike terror no more" to those who need to hear them this week? At the same time, how can we balance this truth of God's greatness and also be people who follow Jesus' words of forgiving those who hurt us and loving our enemies?

Key: O – Observation. I – Interpretation. A – Application

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.