

Message Discussion Guide

FATHER TO THE FATHERLESS

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

April 25, 2010

Psalm 10

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Encourage learners to name some humanitarian trends that are occurring today. Ask: **Why do you think these trends are popular? What do you think is the motivation behind them? Is humanitarian aid without the Gospel effective—and vice versa?**

After a short discussion, explain that today we will look at God's desire to care for the needy.

Option 2

Ask learners the following question: **What words would you use to describe the work of adoptive parents, foster parents, or others involved in orphan and widow ministry?**

Encourage learners to discuss their descriptions briefly. Then, explain that today we'll discuss how our knowledge of God and the Gospel should affect our work in orphan ministry.

Review the Message . . .

Explanation of this Psalm...

- The way of the wicked...
 - They seek their own selfish gain .
 - They ignore the one true God .
 - They trust in worldly prosperity .
 - They live with deadly pride .
 - Their words are sinful.
 - Their works are evil.
 - They oppress the needy of the world.
 - They disregard the justice of their God.
- The God of the weak...
 - He sees their need .
 - He hears their cry .
 - He brings them hope .
 - Justice will reign.
 - Deliverance will come.

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Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read Psalm 10:1-11. How are the wicked described in these verses?
- What motivates them to act the way they do?
- What is their attitude toward God and His justice?
- How do they treat the needy?
- How does the author of this psalm feel about God's apparent apathy toward these wicked people? What is the root of his struggle with the wicked?
- Remind learners that the author is not asserting that God is actually hiding from bringing justice but is expressing his struggle with this situation. How does his honesty with his struggle reflect his belief that God doesn't like injustice?
- Enlist a learner to read Psalm 10:12-18.
- How is the author's cry to God an affirming statement of his trust in God's faithful character?
- What does the author indicate about God's heart for the needy in this passage?
- Although he begins the passage with uncertainty, what is the author sure of at the end?

Application

- In what ways do we get frustrated with the wicked in our North American culture? Who do we identify as "the wicked"?
- What do we most consider to be the root of wickedness in today's world? How is it the same or different than at the time this psalm was written?
- Do we allow ourselves the ability to be honest with God concerning our frustrations, or do we foster an environment of perfectionism in our churches?
- How can we be honest with God and respectful at the same time?
- What steps can we take to make sure that our honesty doesn't turn into skepticism toward God but drives us close to Him?
- How does our responsibility to the needy line up with God's heart for them?

Implications of this Psalm...

- The cross is the solution to _____ our _____ crisis.
 - We are _____ wicked _____.
 - We are _____ weak _____.
 - At the cross...
 - God judges our _____ sins _____.
 - God makes us His _____ sons _____.
- The cross is the solution to the _____ orphan _____ crisis.
 - In light of our wickedness...
 - We must recognize that we are not _____ rescuers _____.
 - We must realize that we are the _____ rescued _____.

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- In light of our weakness...
 - We now _____ see _____ their need.
 - We now _____ hear _____ their cries.
 - We now _____ bring _____ them hope.
 - As _____ families _____...
 - As a _____ faith family _____...

Discussion

- How did the justice of God and the grace of God go together to provide for the weak in Psalm 10?
- How does God's justice and grace go together to provide redemption for people through the cross of Christ?
- Who is the only One who serves as a rescuer in Psalm 10 and in the cross?
- What is the role of the ones being rescued?
- How is Jesus' redemption of humanity more than an act of humanitarian aid?

Application

- Which role in Psalm 10 do we see ourselves fulfilling—the wicked or the weak?
- Remind learners that we are both and have been rescued from our sinful state.
- How does our rescue by God reflect the way that we are to interact with orphans and widows—the oppressed?
- How is our role in ministering to orphans and widows affected by not considering ourselves to be rescuers?
- How does our ministry to orphans reflect God's work in our lives?
- Why do we *really* want to be involved in ministry to orphans? How is an altruistic motivation (that is, one that feels morally obligated to help others) one that is misguided?
- Why is a better health and financial situation not enough?
- What does righteous motivation for adoption and orphan ministry look like in our lives? What does complete unselfishness look like in adoption and orphan care?

How can we, as a church body, practically incorporate our church covenant into our lives with each other?

"Together, we will spur one another on to love and good deeds. We will meet with one another consistently, pray for one another regularly, and serve one another selflessly. We will share each other's joys and bear each other's burdens. We will edify one another with our speech and encourage one another with our example. We will humbly and gently confront one another and receive correction from one another in accordance with a New Testament understanding of church discipline and restoration. We will give cheerfully and generously to the support of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations."