

**Text beforehand:**

**<sup>8</sup>Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. (1Ch 16:8 KJV)**

**Sing<sup>1</sup> beforehand: Psalm 46:5**

5-

*"Be still and know, all you who bide Me,  
That I am God, and none beside Me.  
I am exalted, and My might  
Makes haughty nations flee in fright  
. In all the earth I am exalted;  
By Me your enemies are halted!"  
The LORD of hosts is on our side:  
With Jacob's God we safely hide.*

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth<sup>2</sup>. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>. By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**Psalm 48:3**

-3-

*As we have heard, so have we seen  
Here in the city, God's domain,  
Which He establishes forever.  
The LORD of hosts forsakes it never.  
In Thy temple we have thought  
On the peace Thy hand has brought,  
And Thy steadfast love we ponder.  
As Thy Name, O God of wonder,  
So Thy praise, Thy exaltation,  
Reaches earth's remotest nation.*

**Scripture reading: Psalm 10**

**Scripture text: Psalm 10:1. Christmas 2009**

**<sup>1</sup>Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? (Ps 10:1 KJV)**

**Psalm 103:2**

2-

*O bless the Lord, who all thy need supplieth!  
Thy soul with good He fully satisfieth,  
And, like the eagle's, He renews thy youth.  
Jehovah doeth right, for He is holy;  
His judgments for the sore oppressed and lowly  
Are done in perfect righteousness and truth.*

Why does the Lord remain distant? Why does He not hear, nor see my problem?

In the remark there is something of a priest who, while seeing misery, remains at a distance because he does not want to be involved in it. In the parable of the good Samaritan, the Lord Jesus speaks of something similar (Luke 10:31).

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms taken from various translations of the Geneva Psalms on the following two websites: <http://www.genevanpsalter.com/>, <http://genevanpsalter.redeemer.ca/>

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 124:8

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:3

Christmas is a time of joy and peace. But, is that really true, or does the statement contain an element of dishonesty?

- Look at what our lives look like!
- Look at our news bulletins of the last couple of days: Another elderly person murdered. Armed robbery, hi-jackings, rape and break-ins increase.
- Do we really have joy and peace if we have to continuously protect ourselves from these things.
- With how much will the violence in families increase again over Christmas time due to the drinking-parties in some households?

The list of our miseries becomes longer than just those things which lie outside of us!

- There are even more things on our inside - take illness and family tensions as examples.

It is also not as if we do not pray that these things will not happen.

- It seems as if God is distant!
- From the side line it seems as if He is not interested in what is happening with us and around us.

Let us look at two things in this sermon:

- 1. Does the problem come from the outside?**
- 2. How does the Lord solve the problem?**

Is the enemy outside?

It seems as if Psalm 10:2 is applicable to our lives afterall:

**<sup>2</sup>The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. (Ps 10:2 KJV)**

- Whites are discriminated against with regards to jobs, burseries and what all else.
- Christianity in general is coming under even more attack - from outside of the church, for example in the work place, legislation and also in the public presses.

All these things are driven by human ideas and political planning in order to benefit some or other group.

- Clearly all these things are not a deployment of God's Council.
- Again we observe something of Psalm 10 in these matters:

**The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. (Ps 10:4 KJV)**

We can so easily and so eagerly point the finger at others when things go wrong. Hence this Psalm makes it clear that the trouble also comes from the inside. There are believers who's bussiness with the Lord is not what it should be!

**He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it. (Ps 10:11 KJV)**

Who does God hate and who not, because everyone cannot be right!  
Is the enemy truly outside of the church?

- What to make of the families with all sorts of problems: marriages that are not working out – simply because of sin.
- Children who break away from parents or existing systems.
- Viciousness between people who would not give each other space to breath - people who bear grudges.

*It looks as if God is far off! But we must not believe what we think it looks like! It is precisely not true.*

It is precisely when we do not want to listen to God, when we rebel against His will that we say: *is seems to me as if ...* or the other cliché: *The way I understand it is...* or: *The matter can also be differently interpreted...*

The problem is that we get caught up in the attacks on us and on our hurt and our often deeply rooted grudges, that we forget God.

- We can sometimes not accept and acquiesce.
- Some of us have personalities that want to fight and be wronged - hence we cannot answer with God's truth.
- Is it not perhaps true that we can sometimes carry on with regards to what has happened to us, to such an extent, that we are ourselves now longer with the truth, and therefore can also no longer exhibit the image of God which is true knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

## **2. How does God solve the problem?**

What is the truth? God is not far! It is precisely in the Lord Jesus that He came close.

- For precisely that – christmas – His becoming man was nesenary.
- He made His presence physically visable.
- He physically went to die so that we could see what happens while He sustains the burden of God's wrath against our sin.

He is not far - His Spirit is poured out upon us, to lead us in the whole truth!

- Therefore we must stop blaming the devil for everything -
- And stop ascribing everything that goes wrong to God's election.
- Even though both these things are true, something else is also true: *God sent us into life with responsibility!*

We may not hide behind the devil for all manner of miseries. We may also not reproach God that His decrees are the cause of everthing!

Christmans is indeed the time when we must look past all these miseries and self induced troubles. Look at the Lord Himself!

What do we see? We do not see a God who blames.

**I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; (Isa 51:12 KJV)**

God only works with us towards the future.

- Each one in a different manner and in different circumstances.

- That is why the following verse is written in the Bible:  
**Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? (Ro 9:20 KJV)**

The Lord Jesus was satisfied with all the hardship meted out to Him. He lived through it and endured it, precisely so that we could be freed in the eternity thereof!

- As man, the Lord Jesus also never said to God: Why did I, who am the Almighty God, have to come in poverty to this world!?
- He also never said: Why did I have to be a carpenter's son instead of a palace child!

*He did indeed pray that the cup of the cross pass from Him, if His Father was willing – but God did not will it to pass!*

Therefore, if we wish to celebrate Christmas - the Lord's bodily entry into our earthly history - then we must also realise the consequences thereof!

- God is not far. He is here.
- But that does not mean that He will keep the obligation laid by my calling on me!
- We will have to do that ourselves.
- The world looks that bad, precisely because we make it that bad - - the world is a mirror image of our own thoughts and planning.

Christmas teaches us that God is close by.

- So close that we can repent. So close that we can listen.
- So close that with His power, we can get through any tension and fear.
- He is so close by that we can make a difference to all the misery if we do it in His Name.
- So close that He was punished so that we could be changed, so that we could be good.

But then we must not try to push everything away from ourselves and lay it at another's door. Then we must accept our own responsibility and with God's truth answer that which is wrong - it is for this that our Lord Jesus came and died for us!

**Amen**

Prayer.

Psalm 10;1, 6, 7

1-  
*Why dost Thou stand far off? O LORD, arise!  
 Why dost Thou hide Thyself in troubled days?  
 Dost Thou not hear it when the poor man cries?  
 For on Thy poor the wicked sinner preys,  
 His heart with heated arrogance ablaze.  
 Let them be caught in schemes of their own making  
 With all who in their evil are partaking.*  
 -6-  
*But Thou dost see our troubles and our woes  
 And Thou shalt take our cause into Thy hand.  
 The hapless flee to Thee; Thou shalt oppose  
 The evildoers' proud and wicked band,  
 For Thou hast been the orphans' help and stand.  
 Break Thou the arm of him who evil cherished,  
 Seek out his wickedness till he has perished.*  
 -7-  
*The LORD is King, He reigns for evermore;  
 The heathen soon shall perish from the land.  
 Thou wilt incline Thy ear and wilt restore*

*The weak and weary by Thy mighty hand,  
The orphaned and oppressed shalt Thou defend,  
That mortal man, aroused by hate and error,  
No more may strike the earth with fear and terror.*

<sup>14</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.<sup>4</sup>

**Amen.**

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<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:14