

# “When the Dust Cries Out”

Rev. Jimmy Latham

**Series:** *Psalms*

**Bible Text:** Psalm 9

**Preached on:** June 29, 2025

## **Christ Presbyterian Church**

Physical Address: 801 Roper Dr. Clarkesville, GA 30523

**Website:** [www.cpcclarkesville.org](http://www.cpcclarkesville.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.cpcclarkesville.org/sermons](http://www.cpcclarkesville.org/sermons)

Our passage this morning comes from Psalm 9, a psalm of praise and trust in God's righteous rules, so let us look together at Psalm 9. And as you turn there in your Bibles or in your bulletin this morning as it is there for you, let me remind us that each time we open the Bible, each time that we open this book, this living book, these are not just ancient words, it's not an old textbook, we're hearing from the living God, it is His word, it is trustworthy, it is true, it is light, and it is life. So let us come with open hearts and expect to hear from Him. Hear from the word of the Lord.

*1 I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.*

*2 I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.*

*3 When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence.*

*4 For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne, giving righteous judgment.*

*5 You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their name forever and ever.*

*6 The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you rooted out; the very memory of them has perished.*

*7 But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice,*

*8 and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.*

*9 The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.*

*10 And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.*

*11 Sing praises to the Lord, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds!*

*12 For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.*

*13 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,*

*14 that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in your salvation.*

*15 The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid, their own foot has*

*been caught.*

*16 The Lord has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.*

*17 The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.*

*18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.*

*19 Arise, O Lord! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you!*

*20 Put them in fear, O Lord! Let the nations know that they are but men!*

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let me pray.

*Father, we come before you this morning acknowledging, recognizing your sovereign rule over all the earth. Your justice is perfect and your love for the weak and afflicted is unfailing. As we hear your word from Psalm 9, open our hearts, open our minds to trust in your righteous reign, even when the world, as we look around, as we think about the last week, a world that feels uncertain or unjust. Prepare us now to hear from your word. May it remind us that though human strength may fail, you are always victorious. You are our refuge and defender. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Well, in 1932, farmers in Western Australia faced an unusual problem, emus. These large flightless birds over six feet tall and fast as racehorses. They migrated inland, tens of thousands of them. When they reached farmland, they didn't just pass through. They destroyed crops. They knocked over fences. They caused real economic damage, especially hard during the Great Depression. Desperate for help, these farmers asked the government to intervene. This is a true story. And the government's response, we'll send the army. In November 1932, the Australian military deployed soldiers with trucks, machine guns full of gear to fight birds. What happened next was almost unbelievable. The emus proved to be quite the match. They ran in scattered groups. They moved unpredictably and were surprisingly difficult targets. The terrain did not help either. The mud, bush, and rough ground made it hard for the soldiers to be able to aim effectively in every meaningful sense the emus won. Even the newspapers at the time couldn't help but laugh at the irony. Australian soldiers with modern weapons defeated by birds.

The Great Emu War is a reminder, a humorous one I know, that even the strongest human efforts can fail, governments can miscalculate, strategies can backfire, wisdom, strength, and resources do not guarantee success. Church, Psalm 9, offers us a better foundation.

*Verse 7, the Lord sits enthroned forever. He has established his throne for justice. He judges the world with righteousness.* He executes judgment with equity. God is not like us. His plans do not unravel. His justice does not misfire, and his rule is not fragile or reactionary. When human power fails, God's rule stands firm. He sees the suffering. He sees and defends the oppressed, and his justice is never outsmarted.

In a world of broken systems and short-sighted decisions, church, Psalm 9, it calls us to trust in the one who reigns in perfect wisdom and justice.

If I could throw out a big idea for our text this morning of this sermon, it would be that Psalm 9 gives us a clear vision of the righteous king. He is worthy of praise and victory, and worthy of trust and adversity, because he reigns in justice and he defends the weak. Really, this Psalm, this chapter 9 here, I believe that you see really two visions unfolding in the structure of this Psalm.

The first vision, and we'll be looking at verses 1 through 12, is remembering what is true.

David looks back on the deliverance with clear-eyed thankfulness, confidence in God's reign and awe at how he defends the weak. He says, I will give thanks to the Lord with, what? My whole heart. The word whole in Hebrew doesn't just mean our emotions. It refers to the entire inner life, our mind, our will, our desires. So when David says, with my whole heart, he's not saying, I feel grateful today. No. He's saying every part of who I am is choosing to remember, is choosing to respond to the goodness of God. David does not give partial thanks. He offers wholehearted worship and victory. His response, notice, is praise, not pride.

In times of triumph, church, I wonder, small or great, do we praise God fully or do we just move on? The verb, give thanks, is from the Hebrew yada, which also carries the idea of public confession. And so David, he's not just thinking privately. He is proclaiming God's deeds out loud. This kind of praise, it is not just an emotional overflow. It is not a mountaintop experience. It is not your camp high. It is deliberate. He recounts God's works. He remembers. He remembers who God is and he tells himself the truth in the face of opposition, fear and uncertainty.

Let me tell you what this has looked like in my own life. There was a season not long ago where I found myself sitting with my wife Callie and saying out loud what I was feeling in my bones, in my heart, in my mind. I said, I feel like I'm stuck here. I don't think this is going well. And I'll never forget what she said in response. She looked at me and gently but firmly said, I don't believe you. At first I did not know what to do with that, but then she said, I don't believe that that is your story. I don't believe that that is our story. That doesn't sound like truth. That sounds like the voice of the enemy, not the voice of God. And in that moment, Callie was not putting on some act. She wasn't brushing past the pain. She was not pretending that everything was okay. She was doing what Psalm 9 invites us to do, to choose to remember what's true, even when it does not feel true yet. Walking with her through that season felt like walking with someone who believed in God's future for me, even when I could not see it for myself.

And that's what praise looks like sometimes, church. It's not a smile on your face or a fake, everything's fine. It's faith that God is still on the throne. Even when your emotions, even when your circumstances, even when your heart, in your heart of hearts, you feel stuck. This is a model for us. God's word. This Psalm is a template. It is a model. It is a posture.

When we're anxious, recount God's faithfulness.

When we're weary, remember his deeds.

When life feels heavy, don't wait to feel inspired.

Choose to praise the God who still is on the throne. Praise is not pretending. It's anchoring our hearts in the one who holds everything together, especially when we feel like falling apart.

Look at verse three, *the Lord sits enthroned forever*. When your world feels chaotic and your prayers seem unanswered, do you still believe God is truly on his throne? You may say, well, yes, Jimmy. Not just in theory or in Sunday mornings, but deep down in your gut. Do you trust his kingdom is more real than the chaos surrounding you? By what you read in the headlines or social media. There have been seasons in my own life where I've wrestled with this, where I've felt confused and angry. I've wondered if God's reign was just a hopeful story. I was clinging to, but Psalm 9 reminds me God's throne, it's not a political office or fleeting power. It is eternal. It is righteous, and it is unshakable.

One of the clearest pictures of this kind of trust in God's reign comes from the story of Elisha in 2 Kings 6. You may remember when the Syrian army surrounded the city where Elisha and his servant were staying, the servant panicked. He woke up, he saw the vast army and cried out, alas, my master, what shall we do? Elisha calmly responded, do not be afraid. For those who are with us are more than those that are with them. Then he prayed, oh Lord, please open my, open his eyes that he may see. So Elisha is praying for this servant. And suddenly, if you know this story, he saw what had always been true, but was hidden. The hills were full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha, heaven's armies already present, already surrounding the danger.

God was already reigning, even though the situation looked hopeless at first glance.

Brothers and sisters, the story reminds us that God's rule is not something we wait for. It is something that is already here. Often the problem isn't God's absence, but it is, I believe, our blindness. So when your circumstances scream otherwise, what will you cling to? The latest headline, your feelings, or the eternal king who never fails? This is a call to choose to believe, even when your heart wants to doubt, because trusting in God's eternal reign, it changes everything. It does not fix every problem instantly.

But what I'm trying to say this morning is that by anchoring your soul, anchoring your heart and your mind in the truth, in what is true, even though you may not be able to believe it because of what is in front of you, even when storms come to have faith, God defeats David's enemies, but more importantly, he reigns eternally and righteously. Unlike earthly rulers, his throne is established for justice.

Look at verses nine and following. *He does not forget the cry of the afflicted*. This reminds us that God is, he's not a distant monarch sitting on a throne far removed from our pain. He is near to the broken hearted. And he is a stronghold in times of trouble. He does not forget the cries of those the world ignores.

Let's look closely at verses nine and 10. *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 word stronghold here, translated, refers to a high inaccessible fortress, a place of safety that enemies cannot reach. And this isn't a generic encouragement, it is a vivid image of God as a secure refuge, especially when things feel unstable. The repetition emphasizes God's personal protection, not just general providence.

And verse 12 goes further, *he who avenges blood is mindful of them. He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.* This shows us that God cares for the weak and this care, it is not passive. He acts, the phrase, he avenges blood, connects to God's role as a just judge. He does not ignore violence and justice or suffering. In Hebrew thought, the cry of the oppressed always reaches God's ears. Think of Exodus 3.7 or Genesis 4.10, I love what the Puritan John Owen said about God's care for his people. He said, "the Lord hath an eye upon the afflicted, the fatherless and the widow, and will not suffer their cry to go unheard."

God's justice is not about just cosmic order, it is deeply personal.

Do you believe that this morning? The God of this universe, he sees every tear, every silent pain, every whispered prayer. Kelly Kapik, writer and theologian, professor in his book Embodied Hope, which is in your bulletin, he captures this beautifully. He says,

"God's justice is not an abstract principle, but it is deeply intertwined with God's presence among the vulnerable and suffering. In Christ, God enters our pain and becomes the champion of the weak."

This means, church, that when we suffer, and we will, when we feel forgotten, and we will, God is not indifferent. He is our champion, he is our defender, he stands with the weak, the overlooked.

This implication, I cannot stress enough, is profound. If this is who our God is, then this should define how we live. So here's the question, if God sees and cares so deeply for the suffering, both ours and those around us, how should that shape the way that we live?

Do we mirror his heart by noticing the forgotten, by listening to the cries of those in pain?

Do we refuse to look away and just to grow numb?

In my own life wrestling with suffering, both personal and with those I love, this truth has forced me to ask myself this question again and again and again.

Am I quick to trust God's presence in my pain?

Am I willing to be his hands and feet to those who feel invisible?

This takes us to the second vision of our text, a vision in adversity.

We'll be looking at verses 13 through 20, from worship and victory to trust and trouble. David now prays in the tension of this present suffering, but he still sees clearly, notice, the character of God. Starting in verse 13, *be gracious to me, oh Lord, see my affliction*.

Let me take you to a cold December day in 1873, a man named, I always say it weirdly, apologies if I say it weirdly now, Horatio Spafford, he stood on the deck of a ship in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and at the exact spot where his four daughters had drowned just weeks earlier when their vessel collided with another sank. Earlier that year, the great Chicago fire had ruined him financially, now his wife had survived the shipwreck and sent him a telegram from Europe with just two words, saved alone. Spafford immediately set sail to join her and it was in that moment of heartbreak, looking out at the waters that had swallowed his children, that he began to pen the words that you and I have sang.

When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll,  
Whatever my lot thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

That was not denial, nor was it delusion, I believe for Horatio this was faith in affliction, a soul broken by grief yet choosing to cry out to God who sees. Just like David in Psalm 9, *be gracious to me, oh Lord, see my affliction*. David isn't spiritualizing his pain, he's not covering it up with cliches and platitudes, he's pleading from a real place of hurt, but he's doing it in faith. That is the key. He knows the character of God.

Spafford's story reminds us faith does not mean we're spared from tragedy, it means we believe God is still on his throne, even in the deep. So don't wait until you feel okay this morning to come to God, even as Hobie preached last week, just the reality of bringing our raw and unfiltered honesty before God to come to God while the waves are still crashing. Bring your brokenness, bring your grief, bring your honest cries, he knows you, he sees you.

Verse 15, *the nations have sunk in the pit that they made, in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught*. This verse, it's beautiful, it paints a vivid picture of divine justice that is both poetic and unavoidable. The nations here represent the wicked powers and systems opposed to God's righteousness. Their downfall, it is not arbitrary, but it is a consequence of their own schemes. The pit that they made, the net that they hid, this language recalls *Proverbs 26:27, whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling*. The wicked here, they entangle themselves by their own malice and their own injustice, demonstrating that God's justice operates with perfect wisdom and inevitability. Their fate is a direct result of their rebellion against God's order.

And then look at verse 16, *the Lord has made himself known. He has executed judgment. The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands*. His justice is not hidden, nor is it delayed. It has been made known and executed. The echoes of the prophet Isaiah are in play here, Isaiah 33:22, which proclaims, *for the Lord is our refuge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king*.

*He will save us.* It underscores divine justice is not only certain, but as I said earlier, it is personal. It is personalized. The wicked fall by what they themselves have crafted.

Verse 17, *the wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.* Sheol, the realm of the dead. It is here, the final destination for those who reject God. This is a sober reminder that forgetting or rejecting God has eternal consequences. The Psalmist's words parallel with Paul's words in Romans 1:18, where *the wrath of God is revealed against those who suppress the truth.*

Verse 18, *but the needy shall not always be forgotten and the hope of the poor shall perish shall not perish forever.* Interestingly, in stark contrast to the fate of the wicked, the Psalm closes this section with a confident affirmation of God's care for the vulnerable. The needy and the poor represent those who rely not on their own power or on corrupt systems but on God's steadfast justice. Think of *Luke 6:20, blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God.* Or *Proverbs 29:7, the righteous know the cause of the poor, but the wicked does not understand such knowledge.*

The hope of the afflicted is not tied to political powers or human institutions, but firmly fixed on God's justice. This gives us church, not only hope, but it also gives us sobriety. God's justice is real and unavoidable. We either take refuge in him or we fall before him. Even in our confession of sin, as Hovie reminded us, we come every Sunday and the posture is, are we going to confess what is true? Are we going to continue to operate and act as if we are our own gods or to act as if these things have not transpired in the recent weeks?

Verse 19, *let the nations know that they are but men. They are mortal and their power is not absolute. Selah.* David's final plea, it is not a call for personal vengeance or human retaliation. Instead it is a prayer for God himself to act decisively and to bring the nations back to reality, to show them that no one is beyond his rule. This is a, what I believe, it is a call for a holy humbling, a reminder that every human being, every government, every nation, every mortal is subject to God's sovereign authority.

Now bear with me for a moment. Few names in pop culture have stirred more attention, admiration and controversy over the last two decades than Kanye West. Musically some would say he's a genius. His albums reshaped hip hop. He's won dozens of Grammys. He's built a billion dollar fashion brand and at one point he boldly declared himself to be the greatest artist ever created. But the very pride that fueled his ambition also began to consume him. Over the years Kanye's public behavior grew more erratic. He made disturbing comments. He alienated friends. He torched business relationships. And perhaps most tragically he seemed to believe that he did not need accountability. That he could say or do whatever he pleased and remain untouchable. He went from a global aberration to widespread backlash. Companies like Adidas pulled their name from sponsoring him. His fortune plummeted, relationships fractured and while his mental health was certainly a part of the story, the deeper thread in the danger that we see in the life of Kanye is pride unchecked. Of believing we are above the need of correction, of humility or dependence ultimately on God.

Listen to Psalm 9 as it ends with this plea. Verse 20, *let the nations know that they are but men*. And Kanye reminds us, it's not just the nations, it is us.

You and I are not invincible. You may feel bulletproof, but you are not. We are not sovereign over our lives. We are not in control. The illusion of self-reliance whispers, you don't need help. You've got this. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps. You're enough. But the gospel screams, no, you need Jesus. And that's not weakness, church, that is wisdom. Proverbs 16:18 says plainly, *pride goes before destruction in a haughty spirit before a fall*. That fall may not come on a public stage, but it will come because we weren't made to carry the weight of glory. Only God can do that.

So what about you?

What about me?

Where are you building your identity?

Are you building it on performance?

Are you building it on your resume?

Are you building it on the clothes that you wear, the car that you drive, the friends that are in your court?

Where are you acting like God's throne is optional and yours is permanent?

Psalm 9 calls us back not to shame, but to clarity, to humility, to rest. Because when you stop pretending to be sovereign, you can finally rest under the one who truly is. Let the nations know, let Kanye know, let us know we are but men. And that's the beginning of wisdom.

David's prayer, as you see it unfolding, it is ultimately evangelistic and hopeful. He longs for the world and for each of us to gain perspective, to see reality as it truly is, that we are creatures, not creators, that God alone is king, that our only true hope is to bow before him in humble reliance, dependence, submission to who he is.

I love what James 6 reminds us all of. *God opposes the proud but gives what? Grace to the humble*. Proverbs 3:5 calls us to *trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding*.

Beloved Psalm 9 does not give us a vague comfort or a shallow hope.

It gives us a clear and a compelling vision, a clear and a compelling vision of a righteous king, a king who is worthy of praise when life is sweet and worthy of trust when life is hard.

It tells us that in both victory and adversity, there is one who reigns forever. There is one whose justice never ends and whose care for the weak never fails.

So what should we do with this twofold vision? When the dust cries out, when injustice prevails, when you feel small, when you feel betrayed, when this week you have felt anger in your heart over something that has transpired, forgotten or afraid. God's word in this Psalm calls us to lift our eyes, to remember what's true.

To give thanks, not because everything is perfect, but because your God, our God is faithful.

To trust in his throne, not because the world is calm, but because he reigns, to rest in his nearness, not because you are strong, but because he defends the weak.

And when adversity comes, church, when adversity comes, and it will, it always does, cry out. Cry out like David did, not with despair, but with faith in a God who sees. Remember that God's justice is not asleep.

Humble yourself for God is King.

Don't place your hope in politics, power, your own performance. Don't carry your griefs alone. Don't pretend your strength is enough.

Instead, anchor your life in the one who sits enthroned forever. Let your praise be honest. Let your prayers be bold. Let your faith be grounded because Christ Jesus, the righteous King has come. He has borne your weakness. He has suffered your injustice and he is risen and reigning. Let the dust cry out and let us as people do the same. Would you pray with me?

*Lord, you are the righteous King who reigns forever, high above all the nations, yet near to the lowly. We thank you for your justice, that it is not distant or delayed, but present and real, shaping history and reaching every, even the hidden corners of our hearts. You see the afflicted, you hear the cries of the weak, and you never forget the needy. You are our stronghold. Forgive us, Lord, for the pride that causes us to rely on ourselves. Forgive us for the forgetfulness that leaves you out of our praise and our pain. Teach us to trust you, not only when we see victory, when life is pleasant, when things are peachy, but especially when we walk through adversity. Would you humble us? Would you strengthen us by your spirit, through your word? Help us to remember what is true, that Christ is King, his kingdom is unshakable, and his grace is enough for every moment. Make us a people who cry out, not in fear, but in faith, not in complaint, but in confidence. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, our champion and King. Amen.*