

Psalm 13

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[0 : 0 0] So we're going to be looking at Psalm 13 tonight. So our pattern has been over recent months to go through a psalm as we share the Lord's Supper together, and we are up to Psalm 13.

So I'm going to pray for us. Anderson's going to come and read. Seth's going to come and preach for us, and then we will sing again. So let me pray, and then, Anderson, you can come and read God's Word for us.

Father, we thank you that these are your words to us. Thank you that you're a good God who loves to speak. Please, we pray now, help us as your Word is read and preached to us to listen carefully for the sake of your glory and to do us good, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Psalm 13. How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

[1 : 1 2] Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death. And my enemy will say, I have overcome him. And my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love.

My heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me. Thanks, Anderson.

As was just said, we will be in Psalm 13. So I encourage you to get your Bible out, get your phone out. So we'll refer back to the text multiple times. I want to start us off today thinking about Christ, obviously, right?

So when Christ died on the cross, he said three words, right? It is finished.

And these three words ring throughout eternity as a rally cry for Christians. These three words signify what Christianity is all about, right?

[2 : 1 8] Christ came, he died on the cross, but he did not stay dead. He was raised three days later, defeating death, saying the words, it is finished.

And these words show how the story will end. See, when the great armies of heaven and hell gather at the end of days, it won't even be a contest.

The Lord opens his mouth, and the armies of hell are defeated. And so the words, it is finished, give the Christian confidence that whatever may happen, they can trust in God, right?

Now, some of you might be a little confused right now, saying, did he just get his notes out of order? It feels a little bit more like the end of the sermon instead of the beginning.

But anyway, best Sunday night ever. Let's wrap this up, take the sofa, and go home. But before you pack, I want us to ask the question, if this is true, if the words, it is finished, show and give the Christian confidence to trust God, why does it always feel like we have victory?

- [3 : 47] Why can't I even read the Bible sometimes without feeling distracted and getting distracted? How come I can't get some joy or victory over some of the seasonal depression that is happening right now in February?
- Why does it sometimes feel like we picked the wrong side? If you felt too scared to ask those questions before, I want you to take heart.
- You're not alone. But see, we get the benefit of somebody asking those questions. Multiple years ago, his name was King David. In the Old Testament, he had the nickname, a man after God's own heart.
- And yet, this man after God's own heart felt abandoned. And he felt left by God at times. But see, for our benefit, he wrote about it.
- And that's what we just read in Psalm 13, right? So when we're dealing with situations where we feel like we might be on the losing side, or we feel like we're that guy right there, we're on the edge of the cliff, and just a simple push will make us go tumbling down, I want us to remember the lip of Psalm 13.
- [5 : 02] Lament, intercession, lamentation, intercession, and praise. See, David is going to model that when you're under stress, there's three things that you can do.
- He's going to model that in this Psalm of lament, remember that there is an intercessor, and praise the Lord. So that first section, verses 1 and 2, are lamentation, because as we read earlier, this is a Psalm of lament.
- Just look at the first verses. How long is repeated four times? David is feeling that God is uncaring, distant, callous, and thoughtless.
- He's lamenting. And he's using some bold language to do it, if I may say so. If you first read, you might get a little antsy, right? Like, if David was sitting here in the room today, you might take the seat just one seat away, so that when the lightning strikes, you know, it doesn't hit you.
- But see, David here in this Psalm is appealing to God. And that's really what the definition of a Psalm of lament is.
- [6 : 22] It's an appeal. Its central aim is to appeal something to God. And David, well, he has a few appeals.
- He has a laundry list of things that have happened in his life, and we, unfortunately, can't get to all of them. But needless to say, David's been keeping receipts. And in these first two verses, he's saying to God, how long am I going to be separated?
- How long am I going to feel these feelings of separation from you, God? And as the pressure builds in our own lives, there are moments where we can get to where David is at here.
- We can ask, where are you, God? It's getting harder and harder to believe those words that you uttered on the cross of, it is finished. Where is this victory, God?
- And see, Psalm 13 starts here, in the same spot that any program that deals with addiction will start, right? What's the first step in any program that deals with addiction?
- [7 : 35] You have to admit that you have a problem. That's where the Psalm starts. But there's a key difference. You have to, for a lament Psalm, to follow what David is saying here, we have to, yes, admit to the Lord, but we have to realize that the solution doesn't come from ourselves.
- And see, the Bible doesn't mince words here when it talks about it. It's when we hit a problem, yes, admitting that we have a problem is a priority, and it is a good thing to do.
- But it is only the start. We must continue this process and realize that I can't fix this problem.

And there's no amount of clawing, scraping, or trying that is going to get us out of this pit of despair that we may feel. We need a hand reaching down into that pit.

We need an intercessor to pull us out. So read on with me as we go to the next session of intercessor, verses 3 and 4.

[8 : 51] They say, David starts the psalm by lamenting, what we talked about in verses 1 and 2.

And I would argue here that he keeps on lamenting, right? Look at his words. Look on me and answer. Don't let my foes rejoice. But if you look at the verse, there is a slight shift in his language.

He's moving on from just a general lament, a general despair, to saying that he needs something. What does he need?

He needs an intercessor. He needs deliverance. Look back at me with verse 3. David says, Give light to my eyes. He needs light to shine in so that he can see his way forward.

Right now, he cannot see any way forward out of the pit, and he needs somebody to give him direction. The most obvious example of this that we can apply to our own lives, right?

[9 : 58] Close our eyes. If we all close our eyes right now, what do we see? Nothing, right? It's dark. You can open your eyes. But when you open your eyes, why do you see?

It's not some philosophical question. It's simply because there is light hitting your eyes, right, so that you can see the way forward. It's because our eyes have light that we can see.

That's what David is saying. I need light to go on, God, but I can't provide it. I don't see a way out. It has to be given to me.

So we need somebody, even in our own lives, when we get into moments in the pit, we need somebody to intercede for us and give us light in darkness.

David needed the same thing. He needed somebody to reach down into that pit and pull him out. And that's what Christ does for us, right?

[11 : 10] That's what we talked about at the very beginning of this sermon. Christ reaches down into the pit and pulls us out. But what about the times when you're like David and you're stuck in the pit and there is no hand reaching down?

You would say, I'm a Christian. I've been praying to God. God, where is that hand? What do you do then? Why does it feel like I'm being punished, Lord?

Why is my problem not better? Can I say something that might not be comforting to anybody in the room? I don't know.

Genuinely, I don't know and we don't know why Jesus chooses to heal some and not others in his earthly ministry. We don't know why Paul, the Apostle Paul, was able to go to Rome but the Spirit wouldn't let him go to Asia.

And we don't know why even in today why God will heal some of cancer and let others die. See Isaiah 55, 8 it says, For my thoughts are not your thoughts.

[12 : 30] This is God talking. Neither are your ways my ways declares the Lord. So I don't know why God works in some ways and not others. However, what I do know is the process.

And because I know this process I can trust the result. You might be saying, Seth, what do you mean? I can illustrate it like this. Have you ever heard of somebody tell you not to understand what's in a hot dog?

You don't want to know the process of what it makes and what it takes to make a hot dog. Just eat it and trust the result. Right?

That's not what God says. See God says, don't look at the man behind the curtain. That's not who he is. See he shows us the process and because of his loving nature we can trust the result.

So let's think about this process. Why can I trust God when I am in the pit and it feels like there is no hand reaching down towards me. It goes back to what we talked about earlier.

[13 : 38] What happened on the cross 2,000 years ago. And see Jesus when he died on the cross he was resurrected and defeated death. We call that redemption. Because of his sacrifice if you are a Christian in the room you have been redeemed.

Romans 5.1 would say that. Therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice the past tense there.

Have been justified. See this is what happened when we became Christians. It's already been accomplished. Now if we look forward Colossians 3 gives us a picture of what's going to happen when we move forward.

Colossians 3 says when Christ who is your life appears then you will then you also will appear with him in glory. Future tense.

Right? You will appear. But what happens now for the Christian? What is happening now? Hebrews 7.25 says consequently he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives.

[14 : 59] He being their Christ. Christ always lives to make intercession for them. Always lives there is in the present tense.

Christ always is interceding for us. Tyler Statton he's a pastor out in Oregon he says intercession is the present action of Jesus that pulls at this story from both ends.

The salvation work accomplished in the past and the glory that awaits us in the future. Intercession stated as simply as possible brings forth the image of Jesus praying for us individually by name.

and as he does he wedges us tightly between forgiveness and glory enabling a deep inner rest sheltered by security hope and delight.

See God shows us the process of what is happening. He gives us a peek under the bonnet if you will. Redemption happens when we became a Christian.

[16 : 11] Glorification is what will happen when Christ comes back but intercession is what is happening now for the believer. And because of this knowledge of the process of what Jesus is doing as he's wedging us between glorification and redemption!

And because of the knowledge of the nature of God that we have we can trust his word and his intercessory work no matter whatever pit we are in. So because he's opened up the bonnet and given us the process we may be going through some tough times and say Lord I really feel like I could use a hand here to pull me out of this pit but even if you don't I can respond like David does in the next section in praise.

so if we look at that last section verses 5 and 6 and talk about praise let's read 5 and 6 again but I trust in your unfailing love my heart rejoices in your salvation I will sing the Lord's praise for he has been good to me if your neck is sore from the whiplash there of that verse you're not alone David was saying how long how long will you forget me forever God just a few verses earlier how does he go from that to singing the Lord's praises see David had a knowledge of God and he understood God's work but it wasn't just a head knowledge it moved to his heart see earlier I said Christians we have a knowledge that Christ conquered death and we said we believe this right but how do we move that knowledge from our heads to it's actually coming out of us when we're in the pit and we don't feel like there's a hand reaching down to save us see in modern

English there's a difference between know and believe right what does know mean means you can recall something it's what we test for most teachers do right but what does believe mean believe means we can hold on to something you would hold to it but in Hebrew that's not the case the Hebrew word here is yada which means a relational knowing the example is how do I know my life loves me well I would say when I'm sick she takes care of me when I'm hungry she doesn't let me starve she does feed me I would say she puts away my shoes that I can't ever find the shoe rack for even though I leave them just wherever around she loves me that way and puts them away I would say she works a job right now that keeps us in this country see when you would ask how do you know your wife loves you

I would show and I would tell you by the way she shows me I know she loves me because I have experienced her love and that's a true meaning of the Hebrew word here right in Genesis you go all the way back to the first book of the Bible when Adam and Eve are having children what does the Bible use as the word he says no right the Bible says no why does it use this term because knowledge in the Hebrew is relational it's intimate and spiritual knowledge for us needs to be the same it needs to be inhabited experienced and lived that's what the psalmist is saying in verses five and six David didn't just know of God he experienced him he was experiencing being held between grace and glorification look back at it verse five but I trust in your unfailing love my heart rejoices in your salvation

[20 : 26] I will sing the Lord's praise how David how can you sing the Lord's praises you are in the pit three verses earlier you said give me light or I will die because of the end of verse six for he has been good to me I know you didn't sign up for a grammar lesson here when you came but again look at the tense of that word has been David didn't just write this song he didn't just believe this song he knew it why because he had experienced it before the knowledge of God had moved from his head to his heart and that's what the passage calls us to do today don't just think of God as some person in the sky that you send your prayer request up to and hope you don't get denied almost like a mean boss right instead experience him and that leads us to the question the obvious question is how a great example of this is civil rights leader

Martin Luther King Jr. see in March of 1965 Martin Luther King Jr. stood on the Alabama courthouse where two years earlier the governor of Alabama George Wallace had uttered these words segregation now segregation tomorrow and segregation forever Luther was not on these steps by accident just two weeks prior in Selma Alabama some protesters had gathered together to protest segregation and the lack of voting rights for African Americans and as these protesters peacefully gathered to march the 50 miles from Selma to the capital of Montgomery they didn't even make it out of town before they were stopped tear gassed beaten all by law enforcement over 50 people were hospitalized on what has become known as Bloody

Sunday by the people that were supposed to keep them safe so two weeks later when Martin Luther King Jr.

is on the steps at the Montgomery courthouse the moment felt heavy the path ahead looked dim and the hope for change seemed small where did King go where could he go he went to Psalm 13 listen to these words as they come from Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. I come to you this afternoon however difficult the moment however frustrating the hour it will not be long because truth crushed to earth will rise again listen to this familiar refrain how long not long because no lie can live forever how long not long because you shall reap what you sow how long not long truth forever on the scaffold wrong forever on the throne yet that scaffold sways the future and behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow keeping watch above his own how long not long because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice how can Martin Luther King Jr.

[24 : 26] stand before people the very people that witnessed over 50 people beaten and hospitalized and say not long repeat the familiar refrain of David here in Psalm 13 because he knew God he knew that the laments of this life would not last he knew that God was interceding on his behalf he knew that praise would be drawn from his lips because God had been faithful in the past and God is the ultimate provider of justice and you may be saying Seth that's great I'm not Martin Luther King Jr.

and I'm not David I don't think I can make it out of the pit in my life I don't think I can stand this silence from God anymore I don't know how to take this head knowledge that I have of God and to make it into heart knowledge and again as I said earlier the deal is I don't know exactly how to do it for you either there's no specific amount of formulas that you can get to no specific amount of prayers fasting church attendance that is going to get you heard by God in terms of have your prayers of lament be heard and you getting taken out of that pit but I can say when I've done what

David does in this psalm which is lament remember my intercessor and praise him even when I don't feel it I can feel the knowledge of God grow inside of me not just in my head but in my heart so if you're an unbeliever in this room and you say I would like to have that relationship I would like somebody that would cover me have a strong foundation I don't have that somebody that wedges me in safety there is a free offer of grace on the table today I beg of you please take it come talk to me talk to Steve Jen is in the back as well we love to talk to you about this the good news from this passage it doesn't take anyone special if we use our lips to lament remember our intercessor and praise

God then we can say like Martin Luther King Jr. that the world is full of sadness Yes but the arc of the moral universe bends towards justice why because our God is in the shadows let's pray father in heaven thank you for today thank you for the opportunity to come and just open your word father you are indeed our ultimate intercessor God your son died on the cross and uttered those three words it is finished and you give us victory Lord it may not always feel like how we want it to feel but God we know that your plans are not like our plans and your ways are greater than our ways so help us to trust us trust you in that it can be hard!

Lord you are the creator of the! we love and trust you pray these things in your name
Amen