

Quarter one: The Book of Psalms

Lesson 2—Teach Us to Pray

Wednesday: From Despair to Hope

January 10, 2024

- **Last Week:** “How to Read the Psalms”
 - Overview of Psalms: authorship; purpose; literary structure; emotions; prayers; God-centeredness
- **This Week:** “Teach Us to Pray”
 - Studying the Psalms from the aspect of prayer
 - Structure & theology of praying the Psalms, especially in hard times

Memory Text: “Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’” (Luke 11:1, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** Fostering the Use of the Psalms in Prayer (Ryan)
 - How to read the Psalms in the context of prayer & the centrality of Christ
- 2. **Monday:** Trust in Times of Trouble (SQ)
 - Ps 44 – raw honesty with God; asking questions during suffering & under oppression
 - Hope, in the midst of pain
- 3. **Tuesday:** A Psalm of Despair (Daniel)
 - Ps 22 – Messianic Psalm – cry in deep despair
 - Praise & hope in the midst of turmoil & suffering
- 4. **Wednesday:** From Despair to Hope (Jill)
 - Ps 13 – transformation through prayer & the Spirit
 - Cry of despair to hope & praise in God
- 5. **Thursday:** Oh, Restore Us Again (James)
 - Ps 60 – praying Psalms of lament – whether in times of distress or not
 - What they can teach us

Wednesday: From Despair to Hope

Psalm 13

- *Transformation of “Sarah”
 - In mental hospital; power of reading the Word
 - Read Ps 91
 - Transforming power of
 - The Word
 - Prayer (praying the Word)
 - The Holy Spirit
 - Praise
 - See all exhibited in Ps 13

- **From Despair to Hope through Ps 13**
 - 3 parts to Psalm
 - Pain (lament) (Vs 1, 2)
 - Petition (Vs 3, 4)
 - Praise (Vs 5, 6)

- **Part 1: Pain**
 - Vs 1 – “**How long**, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? **How long** will You hide Your face from me?”
 - The problem
 - Abandonment - the apparent silence of God (only the perception of the psalmist)
 - God is not answering my prayers
 - Agony of waiting – “how long”
 - Anger at God
 - Restoration of relationships
 - Physical healing
 - Salvation
 - Finances

 - Hab 1:2 – “O Lord, how long shall I cry and You will not hear? Even cry out to You, ‘Violence!’ and You will not save?”
 - Martin Luther: “Hope despairs and yet despair hopes.”

 - 3-fold angst with God
 - God’s seeming delay in answering our prayers
 - A personal setback or trial in our lives or the lives of our loved ones
 - The evil & injustice in the world (which God seems to permit)
 - Why do bad things happen to good people?
 - Why is there pain?
 - The knowledge that God could prevent bad things from happening often leads to the expectation that He should.
 - When our expectations are not met, anger & disappointment & hurt follow

 - Anger with God
 - Sometimes, it’s obvious
 - Sometimes, it manifests itself with
 - Depression / sadness
 - Avoidance of God or spiritual things
 - Loss of hope
 - Less asking God for things in prayer

 - **Takeaway #1: Be honest with God in prayer**
 - Transparency in feelings
 - God can handle our emotions

 - Vs 2 – “**How long** shall I take counsel in my soul, having **sorrow** in my heart daily? **How long** will my enemy be exalted over me?”
 - Feeling oppressed & depressed – enemy is winning

- Addiction
 - Fear
 - Spiritual battle
- 4 times the lament – “How long?” breaks forth
 - Expresses fear, pain & loneliness
 - Continuous emotional pain; constant state of depression
- **Takeaway #2: Emotions are not wrong – it’s what we do with them**
 - Christians struggle with emotion, too
 - Fear, worry, anxiety
 - Depression, sadness
 - Anger, Irritation
- **Part 2: Petition**
 - Vs 3, 4 – “**Consider and hear me**, O Lord **my** God; enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; (4) Lest my enemy say, ‘I have prevailed against him’; lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.”
 - Shift from complaining to petition
 - From expressing himself to request
 - God, would You hear & help me?
 - No “and” in the Hebrew – even stronger: “Look, hear me!”
 - **Takeaway #3: Don’t be afraid to ask for help**
 - Even though he believes God has forsaken him, he still calls Him, “my God”
 - Tell God your needs, your requests
 - Don’t think, “He won’t answer, so I’ll not ask”
 - Be honest & ask
- **Part 3: Praise**
 - Vs 5 – “But I have trusted in Your **mercy**; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.”
 - Faith when I cannot see
 - Mercy = *hesed* = mercy, lovingkindness, steadfast love, unending love
 - **Takeaway #4: Choose to exercise faith, even when you cannot see or understand**
 - Faith is not dependent on how I feel
 - Faith is dependent on the object in which that faith is placed
 - **Ways to build faith:**
 - 1. Remember what God has done in the past
 - Nothing to fear for the future, except we forget how God has led us in the past
 - 2 Chron 20 – when going against enemy, reminded God in prayer of how He’d delivered in the past
 - 2. Exercise the faith you have
 - Rom 12:3 – to everyone is given a measure of faith
 - 3. Spend time in the Word of God
 - Rom 10:17 – faith comes by hearing/hearing by the Word

- Vs 6 – “I will sing to the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me.”
 - Praise & thanksgiving
 - Ps 30:5 – “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.”
 - Isa 61:3 – “To comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”
 - **Takeaway #5: Praise makes the enemy flee**
 - Praise is a choice
 - Praise can change my feelings
 - Praise can turn my attitude around
 - Praise can turn sorrow into joy

Psalm 13: From Despair to Hope

- **Part 1: Pain**
 - #1: Be honest with God in prayer
 - #2: Emotions are not wrong; it’s what we do with them
- **Part 2: Petition**
 - #3: Don’t be afraid to ask for help
- **Part 3: Praise**
 - #4: Choose to exercise faith, even when you do not see or understand
 - #5: Praise makes the enemy flee