



PSALMS

the songs Jesus prayed

OVERVIEW FOR PSALMS

Jesus grew up with a Psalter - book of songs (hymnbook) that were sung as prayers. The Psalms were written in response to the composer's experience of God's presence or perceived absence during a specific episode in life. Each Psalm is written with a general form so that others could use the Psalm to address similar experiences through song and prayer. The Psalms provided a means and a template which formed and trained God's people how to approach God with every kind of experience known to man. God wants us to come to him with our whole being.

There are several different genres that provide ways for us to express our hearts to God and provide a means to commune with God. Through praying and singing these Psalms, God will meet us and transform us in the process.

PART 3: LAMENT SONGS

Read the text: Psalm 22

To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.

Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
“He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”
Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.
On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.
Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.
Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.
I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.
For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—
I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;

they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
But you, O Lord, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!
Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dog!
Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!
I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.
From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.
The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live forever!
All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.
For kingship belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.
All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.
Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people

yet unborn,
that he has done it.

The Psalms of Lament are the songs of the helpless, the broken, the besieged, the drowning, and sometimes the hopeless. These songs are the heart cry of people who desperately need God to bring help and relief in the midst of oppression, darkness, depression, and anxiety. These honest Psalms are possible within the covenant relationship God has created with his people...they can be completely real with God and cry for help knowing that his love is for them and will not depart, even when it feels like it has. They give us words to cry to God when we experience dark days.

1. How have you experienced suffering and pain in your story? If you're willing, take a moment to share this. Have you brought that pain to God in prayers of lament? If not, what do you think has kept you from doing that?

2. What tends to describe the way you relate to God when hard things happen? Do you grow distant from him, get quiet and internalize your struggle? Do you yell, cry, start talking to Christian friends about what's going on in your soul, or move away from others? Do you start looking into the Bible for answers, turn on the TV, or grab the game controller, etc.? Be honest, what's your tendency? Depending on your answer, is there a distortion of what's true about God and your covenant relationship with him in Gospel? Ask the others in your DNA to share with you a truth about your Gospel relationship with God that you need to meditate on or be reminded of so that you move toward God and not away from him. It will be helpful if you could identify a verse that would anchor your meditation. You might want to be accountable to memorize it so that truth reinforces your movement toward God with these kinds of tough, gritty, and honest conversations when you experience suffering.

3. Pastor Alex offered four guardrails for bringing your suffering and heartache to God in Lament. Read through each guardrail together. Discuss how each of these might be key for praying lament to God. Discuss which of these is hardest for you and how you might grow in this. Share one next step you want to take to learn to bring your lament to the God.

- A. You must do the hard work of putting into words to God what you're experiencing in your soul when you suffer. Use your words!
- B. Be patient. You must sing your lament until you don't need to anymore. It's our work to wait for God. It's his work to shift our soul towards prayer and praise.
- C. You must invite the participation of your faith community into your experience and suffering. They are a part of how God works to shift our soul toward prayer and praise.

- Warning for Faith Communities: Don't be quick to move people out of their struggle.
 - Listen to them
 - Ask questions that draw out their heart
 - Speak to God on their behalf
 - Encourage them to endure
 - Don't forget them

D. And after God shifts your soul, then you must sing his praises until they stop pouring out of you.

Reading the Psalms This Week

This week, pick some of these Psalms of Lament to read and pray. If you're in a place of darkness, anxiety, or depression, let this Psalm give you words to help you cry to God for help. If you're not, imagine being the Psalmist and learn to cry to God in moments of distress.

Psalms 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12*, 13, 14, 16, 17, **22**, 25*, 26, 27, 28, 31*, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59*, 60, 61, 62*, 63, 64, 69*, 70, 71, 74, 77, 79*, 80, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 94*, 102, 108, 109, 120*, 121*, 123*, 126*, 130*, 140*, 141*, 142, 143