

David was a man of God's own heart – But he was still just a man!

And just like us had the same emotions and feelings – God seemed far from him at times and he suffered as we do but in the end he continued to trust.

Slide 1. Psalm 13

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

²How long must I wrestle with my thoughts

and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"

and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶I will sing the Lord's praise,

for he has been good to me.

2. A Psalm of David

- One of the shortest Psalms of David- only 6 lines
- In poetic form, most probably set to music of the lyre and harp
- **To the director of music** indicates it was in the music list to be used in Israel's worship services, played or sung by a choir.

(Note: David in verse 6 desires to sing praises to his Lord)

Notice that David addresses and converses (pleads) directly with God – he is not complaining to someone else but to God - he is desperate and does not hold back.

Likewise if we have a problem with God (maybe in not getting an immediate answer to prayer), don't hold back, but tell Him how we are feeling – after all as we are created in his image he gave us the same emotions to use that He displays when dealing with His children:

Love, compassion, anger, frustration, despair, impatience, etc

3. A Psalm in 3 sections

- In summary the Psalm can be divided into 3 sections:
- 1. Starting with **discouragement** and **great despair**. v 1-2
- 2. Praying for deliverance from his **sickness, sorrow** and his enemies v 3-4
- 3. Finishing with **profound peace, trust, praise, joy**. v 4-6

A Psalm of great emotional transition from despair to joy.

4. Section 1: David's despair v 1 - 2

V1 How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long? Notice that this question is repeated **no less than 4 times**- David is calling out to God with intense and deep despair, with feelings of being left alone by God, forgotten, forsaken, apparently cast out of God's presence at his time of greatest perceived need- a sense of despair/frustration is evident.

Many commentators contend that David is under great stress, anxiety, feeling depressed and maybe even suffering from some on-going physical illness - from verse 3 "Look on me!"

We can all relate to these feelings when it seems that although believers, God seems far from us and it is normally at times of stress in our lives from on-going sickness, depression, loss of job, loss of partner, death in the family, inability to have children, separation, bankruptcy, or a court case, etc that it seems we have waited forever for God to help us, to answer us, to take away that impediment. There's despair, frustration and not a little impatience.

5. A comparison with Paul's Thorn

- Like David, Paul pleaded several times (3) for God to take away his thorn – believed to be a physical affliction or sickness - 3 times the answer was No! (2Cor 12:7-9) This traumatic experience made Paul realise and accept that God acts when He wills - and that His grace is sufficient – ***God does heal if it is in His will but sometimes God will not heal us - for His good reasons. His power is made perfect in our weakness so we cannot take the glory. We need to be humble and have total dependence on Him. He will never desert us!***
- Unlike David, Paul knew God's presence at this time and received a definite answer, whereas initially anyway God's presence seemed far away from David - he was not apparently getting answers at all, though he pleaded many times.

6. v 1b How long will you forget - hide your face from me?

- Of course God did not forget David or hide his face from him - but David felt like it - such strong feelings create their own reality – they feel true - but are not fact. This is especially true when we are inward looking.
- ***Balance feelings with facts - some ignore feelings in their relationship with God, but we have emotions just as God has eg frustration, anger, compassion, love (We are made in his image) while others live lives ruled by emotions - but feelings can be affected by our sin nature - we can't always trust our feelings as reality - being overly emotional can hide reality, and the facts.***

7. God will never forget us!

- ***God does not give up on us - He's right there when we really need Him - though we don't realize it at the time. He wants the best for us. Similarly God was not forgetting or hiding his face from David.***
- Isaiah 49:14-16 The people of Israel had similar feelings to what David was feeling:

But Zion (the people of Israel) said "The Lord has forsaken us and my Lord has forgotten us."

Isaiah replied from the Lord "Can a woman forget her nursing child and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See. I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands"

- ***In our state of mind we may feel God has departed from us - He hasn't – it's just our emotional state at the time. We may have moved but He never moves from us.***

8. Footprints in the Sand

One night I had a dream.

I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the LORD.

Across the sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand;
one belonged to me and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back
at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the
path of my life, there was only one set of footprints.

I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life
when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow and defeat.

This really bothered me, and I questioned the LORD about it,

“LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you,

You would walk with me all the way.

But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life,
there is only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why in times when I needed you the most, you would leave me.”

The LORD replied, “My precious, precious child,

I love you and I would never ever leave you.

During your times of trial and suffering, when you saw only
one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you.”

9. V 2 a How long must I wrestle with my thoughts, and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

- ***The more we think about our problems the more depressed we become and the more depressed we get, the more inward looking we get - a negative spiral of over anxiousness.***
- ***It is common to think that our troubles will last forever - we seem to be without joy, without hope and like David in despair and impatient.***
- ***When we are suffering - especially when stressed, depressed and inward looking we must reach out of ourselves and tell someone how we are feeling. And it's hard when suffering to look outwards.***
- ***Give it to God - speak to Him - be genuine in your concerns, be persistent, be emotional and although you may not get an instant answer or the answer you want - (You can't change God - but He can change you) – release your concerns to Him and wait on Him.***

10. Our story:

- ***After Christine and I got married we wanted to start a family but things did not go as planned- We suffered for 8 years through 9 miscarriages and had almost given up hope of children even though we prayed constantly. We felt that God had other plans for us and we put our time into Girls Rally and Sunday school. But, in God's time a miracle happened – Out of the blue we got a phone call and were asked if we wanted to adopt a baby- we were amazed – God had answered us in a way we did not expect – His ways are not our ways - and we were even present at the birth of our daughter Kelly – (who has produced our grandsons Eli and Lennox who come to church with us) We then had two boys Marcus and Andrew ourselves. God is good- we only have to wait on His immaculate timing. Like David, it is only when you look back that you realize it.***

- Jesus said” **Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light” Matt 11 v 28 – 30

11. v 2 b How long will my enemy triumph over me ?

- Several commentators believe that this Psalm may record an eventful period in David’s life when he was being pursued by Saul - shifting many times to escape and fearing he would be caught and killed.
- David was depressed and feared his enemy would overcome him and would rejoice in taking down God’s man - the worst part of defeat would be hearing them boast over it. (v4)
- He did not want to be defeated a) personally and b) for his Lord’s sake because David knew he had a special calling to lead God’s people - David’s enemies were the Lord’s enemies- and his people’s enemies.

And yet God seemed so distant from Him.

12. Section 2: David’s dependent prayer for deliverance v 3 – 4

Look on me and answer me-

Look on me- David was probably suffering from some form of affliction or sickness and prays for an answer.

- He felt that God was not listening before this and in desperation he persistently cried out to God.
- David felt God was slow to act, that evil and suffering were going unchecked - we can feel this impatience too.
- ***God is honoured when we are genuine, persistent and desperate in our prayer and asks us to wait on Him. He deeply desires our communication with Him.***

Recall Jesus’ parables on prayer :

- 1.The friend in need (the reluctant neighbour)
2. The unjust judge (the persistent widow)

13. Some points from the parables to consider:

1. *Our need to genuinely acknowledge our dependence upon God and have faith in Him.*
2. *To remind us of our position and to bring glory to God.*
3. *Persistence changes our hearts and minds, not God’s*
4. *Are our requests born of true conviction?*
5. *God is not a wishing machine for petty whims.*
6. *We should pray seriously and fervently for real needs.*
7. *We must wait patiently on His perfect timing.*

14. Conclusions about prayer:

- *Persistence in prayer does not mean endless repetition, ritual prayer or painfully long prayer sessions.*
- *Always pray means keeping our requests constantly before God.*

- *God may delay answers – but his timing is faultless and is always in our best interests.*
- *Persistence in prayer grows our character, faith and hope and our relationship with our God.*
- **Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil 4 v 6-7**

15. V3b Give light to my eyes...

- David had wisdom to know that though he felt powerful feelings, he wasn't seeing reality. His spiritual vision was clouded and dark so he cried out for enlightenment.
- ***Guys, ever tried to shave yourself in a dark steamed up bathroom, in front of a fogged up mirror? This was how David felt spiritually - he needed clarity and awareness.***
- ***This is a great prayer for David as well as us - We need the light of God to break through and give us spiritual wisdom and understanding- no matter what our problem.***
- Paul prayed similarly to the church in Ephesus in Eph1:18 **“that the eyes of your understanding be enlightened...”**

16. ...or I will sleep in death

David needed enlightenment because he feared God had left him – possible separation from God and spiritual death and even physical death from his enemies.

We can think that God has left us - maybe even loss of salvation – of course never true - He promises to never leave us.

...and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall. v4

David, as God's man, could never face being over-run by his enemies – maybe he felt that Saul's pursuing army was closing in – he feared he would be killed and his foes boasting over it.

17. Section 3 David's declaration v 5 – 6

But I trust in your unfailing love...

- Somehow, by God's grace and by his persistent prayer David's demeanour suddenly changes. God had given him peace and enlightenment and he has come to a place of confidence and trust.
- He remembered he really did trust God and as the fog was lifted from his eyes he was once again aware of God's love for him – he felt God's presence again.

My heart rejoices in your salvation...

NB David's feelings were directed towards God and not himself and he rejoiced in the salvation that God gave him. ***This is the same for us - if we are a believer we can rejoice in our salvation - saved by God's grace! And turn our thoughts from ourselves to our amazing God.***

18. V6 I will sing to the Lord...

- David was a singer and musician and the best way he knew to rejoice and praise GOD was in singing and playing music.
- Singing to the Lord would express and increase his joy.
- The power of music can be profound when we worship God. It seems to inhabit our whole being and connect our spirit with the Holy Spirit.

19. ...for he has been good to me.

- David had good reason to rejoice and sing because God had been good to him - ***and indeed he has been good to us.***
- What a transition from David being despairing, stressed discouraged, sick and depressed, overwhelmed by his feelings and believing that God had forgotten him. Yet through prayer and enlightenment, David could now see God's goodness - a total change in perspective.
- ***It is the same for us. Through prayer, patience and trusting totally in Him, whatever our circumstances, God will be with us. When we become outward looking, rather than inward looking, we can, like David, see God's goodness – sometimes it is only when we look back at what God has done in our lives that we fully appreciate how good God has been to us. God loves His children.***

Many may at this point be saying “All that is fine and I can relate to it but... I’ve been pouring my heart out to God – I’ve been persistent and trusted God and yet my suffering remains, my grief, sickness or bad situation just won’t go away and I end up like David, questioning God “Why me, O God ?” “Where are You?”

We can feel confused, frustrated, emotional or impatient and like David we feel we don’t understand our God. But we must remember that we cannot see the whole picture – we are only seeing a few points of light through the fog and not the whole picture that God sees. He has our best interests at heart in a fallen world - He loves us dearly. And God, for good reason does not always remove our suffering – recall Paul and his affliction. Sometimes we just have to wait on His timing.

Some points to remember...

1. The world is as Jesus predicted – He was telling the absolute truth when He said in John 16v33

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows” But he also offered his assistance in getting through them **“Take heart, because I have overcome the world” John 16v33**

You have only to look at the news nearly every night with statements like “59 innocent people killed at concert- shot by an insane gunman with machine guns- 527 injured”

All this bad news shows us that Jesus was right! It is estimated that 90 % of suffering comes from human causes: wars, genocide trafficking, murders, torture, racial cleansing, abuse of all sorts, etc Atheist regimes over the last century have murdered more than 100 million people.

2. God suffered too – The God who allows us to suffer for a season in this fallen world suffered too.

When it comes to human suffering – he gets it - he fully understands what we are going through - He understands our weaknesses for he faced the same testings that we do - He took on the sins of the world and became a curse for us – and he offers his comfort and help for all who reach out to him and receive him.

3. God can bring good out of bad –remember that **“God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” Rom 8v28.**

Many things that happen in our lives are bad - but God can use them for good or bring good out of them - and we may not see the good right away- many suffer for long periods without seeing anything positive- (as David did) but remember we are not seeing the whole picture:

- 1 He can use suffering to deepen our character
2. He can use suffering to reshape us – to mould us to be more like Jesus
3. He can use suffering to give us a more spiritual and eternal perspective.

2 Cor 4 v 16-18 - the things we cannot see last forever- the spiritual far outweighs the temporal.

4. He can use pain to grab our attention to teach and direct us.
5. He can use pain to lead us to himself.

The cross gives the ultimate meaning to suffering - we do not suffer alone - Jesus suffers along with us Ps 34v18 “the Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”

Lyrics by the group **Daily Planet** go like this:

Questioning the notion that God is full of love

Is a tempting road to take when you forget about His blood.

But I choose to still believe Him, His heart is kind and just,

I’m only seeing half the picture, for the other half I’ll trust.

NOTE I cut out this story as I felt sermon was getting too long

Here is a true story ... I hope you can relate to it... Julene Kapao writes

The diagnosis took 10 mins "You have MS - multiple sclerosis" the doctor said, and with that began a cycle of grief, that included shock, denial, anger, depression – and finally acceptance. I was just 31 years old and had a one year old and a 3 year old. I was an active member of my church and the school I worked at. How could this be happening to me!

My disease wasn't just debilitating, it was life changing - I went from avid reader, speaker, joy seeker and active mum to being fully dependent on others to care for me and my family. The reality of dire illness (anything in the category of pain, suffering and hurt – which I know some in our church community are going through right now) is never pretty. But I am stronger now and I've learnt to fully rely on God through the process. The biggest step was accepting God's presence, his warmth and to keep living. It's not that I was dying, however, in reading my bible I saw death as something temporary – a mere impediment to my long term future. The best part of my life was still to come. The bible assured me there would be an end to death and all the pain and tears that we experience in this life.

The entire experience of being so sick energised my sense of the spiritual. I recall Jesus' words in John 10 v10 The thief (satan) comes only to steal and kill and destroy , but I have come that all may have life, and have it to the full" I realised that living on this sin-soaked planet, despite my circumstances, I had the source of life. I hadn't done anything to deserve what happened to me which was simply the result of the imperfect world we live in – I am forced to live with it but will not be dominated by it. My sickness has driven me closer to Christ and all that he promises.

MS literally means "Many scars" My scars, both literal and metamorphic are hidden in my brain and along the pathways of my nerves. Many people's scars are on their emotions and psyches and are just as invisible, but no less real. But for one man Jesus, the scars of sin are quite visible – on His hands, feet and side. They remind us that sin will not impose its suffering on us forever. While I would never willingly choose to suffer from MS – and would gladly welcome healing –I'm grateful for the spiritual lessons this disease has taught me.

And one final story... I was listening to Joyce Meyer on the TV recently. She related this story about her little dog Duchess, who she had for 17 years.

In the region where Joyce resided there were many thunderstorms and intense lightening strikes that went along with the booming thunder.

Duchess, like many dogs in a thunderstorm (or on Guy Fawkes night in NZ) was shaking with fright and it was only when so frightened one night with a thunderclap right over the house that Duchess had an accident – her bowels loosened and she did a poop on the carpet. How could Joyce be mad at her – she simply sat down and called her over “Come to me Duchess, come to me” Duchess came to her to be comforted and patted. Within a few minutes Duchess had calmed down and 5 min later was happily playing with her bone as if nothing had happened – but who had to clean up the mess? Joyce did and removed the stain with an aerosol carpet cleaner and deodoriser.

Joyce went on to say that when we are in a mess – when we are anxious, frightened, suffering, sick or depressed. When we are in the pooh as it were, Jesus simply says to us “Come to me, come to me and I will comfort you”

Matt 11 v 28 Jesus said” Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

And who is going to clean up the mess? Jesus our Lord and Saviour. As Joyce put it “The Blood of Christ covers all stains”

Ps 34v18 “the Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”

- Give it to God
- Release your concerns to Him and wait on Him, for He loves you dearly.

In closing: Lets listen to the Utube song **Come to Jesus (and live)** by Chris Rice

Please sing along if you wish - as David did when he realized how good God was – rejoice in your salvation. Amen

