

The Suffering Psalm 13

Learning from the prayer of the suffering

The power of suffering is broken
when we **trust in God's love.**

1. Suffering has the power to destroy us.
2. Confident trust in God's goodness brings Hope.

This week what will you choose:
to believe only your present circumstances or
to believe God's promises to you in Christ?

O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever?
How long will you look the other way?
How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul,
with sorrow in my heart every day?
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?
Turn and answer me, O Lord my God!
Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.
Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, "We have defeated him!"
Don't let them rejoice at my downfall.
But I trust in your unfailing love.
I will rejoice because you have rescued me.
I will sing to the Lord
because he is good to me.

Psalm 13 NLT

Weekend of May 16, 2015

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Study Questions

1. Think of a time when you or someone close to you experienced suffering. What were some of the most distressing and difficult experiences associated with that?
2. In the NRSV, verse 2 is translated: "How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long?" Can you identify with David's words? How?
3. What role does fear play when we suffer?
4. When you read Psalm 13, the first two stanzas stand out as a lament or complaint to God. When you pray or talk to God, do you feel comfortable with lament? Do you feel that, as a Christian, you should always be positive and not let suffering bother you? Why?
5. In the middle of David's suffering, he could picture a future where God saved him. Do you find it difficult to see a future where God has saved you? Why / why not?
6. How does the death and resurrection of Jesus help you understand suffering and hope?
7. David trusts in God's steadfast love. What are some ways we can trust in God's steadfast love when we suffer?
8. The words: "I will sing..." are a declaration of David's faith and his choice to believe in God even when things looked bad. How does this inspire you to have faith in suffering? What will your declaration of faith be in the middle of your suffering? How can others help "see the light" in the dark valleys of suffering?

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The Discouraged Psalm 42; 43

Fighting for joy in the midst of discouragement

**“Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again —
my Savior and my God!”**

Psalm 42:5; Psalm 42:11; Psalm 43:5

- 1. The Beast of Burden**
- 2. The Gravity of Grace**

“For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Matthew 11:30 NLT

The story of Jairus' daughter.

Mark 5:21-43 NLT

21 Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. 22 Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, 23 pleading fervently with him. “My little daughter is dying,” he said. “Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live.”

24 Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. 25 A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. 26 She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. 28 For she thought to herself, “If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.” 29 Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.

30 Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my robe?”

31 His disciples said to him, “Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” 32 But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. 34 And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”

35 While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, “Your daughter is dead. There’s no use troubling the Teacher now.”

36 But Jesus overheard[a] them and said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid. Just have faith.”

37 Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn’t let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. 39 He went inside and asked, “Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn’t dead; she’s only asleep.”

40 The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl’s father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying. 41 Holding her hand, he said to her, “Talitha koum,” which means “Little girl, get up!” 42 And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed. 43 Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone what had happened, and then he told them to give her something to eat.

Study Questions

1. What would you say the difference is between ‘suffering’ and ‘discouragement’?
2. Lament is understandable for those who suffer, but what about those who are discouraged?
3. The Psalm repeats the idea “why am I so sad”. Why do you think our hearts can be discouraged even when our minds don’t understand why?
4. David says a prayer to: “the God of my life” (Psalm 42:8). What are some ways we can invite God into all the parts of our life. How are some ways you can invite God into your discouragement?
5. David says: “My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you...” (42:5). What are some ‘God-things’ you can remember in times of discouragement.
6. How do these two Psalms (42-43) help you in your discouragement? How do they help you help others?

Weekend of May 23, 2015

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The Elderly Psalm 90

Thinking biblically about growing older

1. The View on Aging

- Men and Women
- Work and Significance
- History and Literature

2. The Challenge of Aging

- Fearful Realities: Time, Judgement, & Death
- Aging Brings A Crisis Of Meaning

3. The Joy of Aging

- From Despair To A Delightful Relationship With God And Others
- From Passivity To Purposeful Living

Psalm 90

Lord, through all the generations you have been our home!

Before the mountains were born,

before you gave birth to the earth and the world,

from beginning to end, you are God.

You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals!"

For you, a thousand years are as a passing day, as brief as a few night hours.

You sweep people away like dreams that disappear.

They are like grass that springs up in the morning.

In the morning it blooms and flourishes, but by evening it is dry and withered.

We wither beneath your anger;

we are overwhelmed by your fury.

You spread out our sins before you—

our secret sins—and you see them all.

We live our lives beneath your wrath,

ending our years with a groan.¹⁰

Seventy years are given to us!

Some even live to eighty.

But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble;

soon they disappear, and we fly away.

Who can comprehend the power of your anger?

Your wrath is as awesome as the fear you deserve.

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Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.

O Lord, come back to us!

How long will you delay?

Take pity on your servants!

Satisfy us each morning with your unfailing love,

so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives.

Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery!

Replace the evil years with good.

Let us, your servants, see you work again; let our children see your glory.

And may the Lord our God show us his approval

and make our efforts successful.

Yes, make our efforts successful!

Study Questions

1. Read Psalm 90. What are your thoughts after reading this Psalm?
2. If you could go back and talk to your younger self, what would you say? Why would that be important? Do you think you would listen to yourself?
3. What do you think it means to "number our days"?
4. One writer says that life is "ever renewed but ever fading." This is a common idea in the Bible (cf. 37:2; Isaiah 40:6ff.; 1 Peter 1:23–25); How does Jesus' handle this in Matthew 6:28–30.
5. How do Ephesians 5:15-16 and James 4:13-15 help in understanding the concept of making the most of our time?
6. Aging is uncomfortable for most people. What is the most 'uncomfortable' or fearful thing about aging to you? How do you envision God helping you in those moments.
7. Many people are unsatisfied with their lives. How do the words of v. 14 help us put first things first in our lives?
8. How does v. 17 give us hope in this life?
9. How does the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus help us understand this Psalm differently than the original readers (particularly in the areas of wrath, judgement, and hope)?



The Guilty Psalm 51

The road less travelled brings FREEDOM from guilt.

The Path of Hope

1. Believe the truth about sin.
2. Believe the truth about God.
3. Believe the truth about change.

Psalm 51

1 Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.
2 Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin.
3 For I recognize my rebellion;
it haunts me day and night.
4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your sight.
You will be proved right in what you say,
and your judgment against me is just.
5 For I was born a sinner—
yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.
6 But you desire honesty from the womb,
teaching me wisdom even there.
7 Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
8 Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.
9 Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
11 Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.

13 Then I will teach your ways to rebels,
and they will return to you.
14 Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves;
then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.
15 Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.
16 You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.
17 The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.
18 Look with favor on Zion and help her;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
19 Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit—
with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Study Questions

1. Read 2 Samuel 11 & 12 and list all the sins David committed.
2. Why do you think David says: "Against you, and you alone, have I sinned...?"
3. When Nathan confronts David, he tells him a story. David experiences a profound sense of moral superiority and wants to lash out. Why do you think we sinners are so quick to judge others and think ourselves as morally superior?
4. Have you ever heard stories of other people's sin and reacted this way?
5. Since David reminds us that all sin is ultimately against God, how does the cross of Jesus help us form a more godly response to the failure of others?
6. How do you feel when you know you have done something to disobey God? What do you do about it?
7. David wants more than forgiveness, he wants to be transformed. Why do you think the desire to change is important in a prayer for forgiveness?
8. This Psalm has 6 parts: Appeal (vv. 1, 2); Confession (vv. 3-5); Restoration (vv. 6-9); Renewal (vv. 10-13); Worship (vv. 14-17); Invitation (vv. 18,19). Which part resonates with you most right now? Why?
9. Using David's prayer as a model (Psalm 51), write your own prayer for forgiveness.



The Young Psalm 119:9-16

"How can a young person stay pure?
... I have hidden your word in my heart"

The question every youth must ask...

How can I stay in a relationship with God?

"How can a young person stay pure?" v.9

"I have hidden your word in my heart" v.11

Create mind-space for God's word so that it impacts my choices creating good character

God's story changes our story

Psalm 119:9-16

How can a young person stay pure?

By obeying your word.

I have tried hard to find you—

don't let me wander from your commands.

I have hidden your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you.

I praise you, O Lord;
teach me your decrees.

I have recited aloud
all the regulations you have given us.

I have rejoiced in your laws
as much as in riches.

I will study your commandments
and reflect on your ways.

I will delight in your decrees
and not forget your word..

"50% of youth who
grow up in evangelical
churches leave in their
young adult years"

Study Questions

1. Why do you think having a pure heart is required to have a relationship with God (cf. Ps 24:3,4)?
2. In Psalm 119:9-16, what is the value of God's word?
3. How do you think memorizing God's word helps a person remain pure?
4. Recent studies have shown that people need to have "truth-tellers" in their lives who are willing to tell us when we are making bad decisions. How is God's word a "truth-teller" for you?
5. All people have character flaws. How can internalizing God's word (giving it mind-space) help shape our character?
6. What are some good habits you have (or want to have) relating to studying and memorizing God's word?
7. Of all the bible verses you can recite by memory, how many did you learn when you were young? How can you relate this to Psalm 119:9-16?
8. Dallas Willard once wrote: "Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs." What do you think about Dr. Willard's claim? Do you think Psalm 119:9-16 agrees or disagrees? Why/why not?
9. How much mind-space do you give God's word? What habits can you create to give more space to God's word in your life?
10. What value do you place on God's word when making decisions?

Weekend of June 13, 2015



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The Idolator Psalm 95

Seek first the Kingdom of God - Jesus

Psalm 95:1-7

1 Come, let us sing to the Lord!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come to him with thanksgiving.
Let us sing psalms of praise to him.
3 For the Lord is a great God,
a great King above all gods.
4 He holds in his hands the depths of the earth
and the mightiest mountains.
5 The sea belongs to him, for he made it.
His hands formed the dry land, too.
6 Come, let us worship and bow down.
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker,
7 for he is our God.
We are the people he watches over,
the flock under his care.

- 1. What is the central message of my life?**
 - Winning matters most.
 - I have to make it happen.
 - My happiness is essential.
 - Money, sex & power are great.
- 2. Looking beyond the obvious** (vv. 1-7)
- 3. Does my life show that I believe God is the “great King above all gods”?** Seek first the Kingdom of God - Jesus

Weekend of June 20, 2015

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Study Questions

1. What is the best kind of worship experience for you that brings you to a Psalm 95:1-7 experience?
2. How does Romans 12:1-3 help us understand the connection between worship and everyday living?
3. Why do you think a Psalm so filled with praise and adoration ends with a warning?
4. Often people think of idolatry as worshipping a statue or object. How does Colossians 3:5 challenge this?
5. If any thing we make into an ultimate thing is an idol, that means anything can become an idol to us (even good stuff). What is the biggest danger of becoming an idol in your life? What can you do to protect yourself from idolatry?



Summer Service Times

Begins in July with a combined service.
Sundays at 10 am - Allison Campus
Sundays at 11 am - Brentwood Campus
Except for Holiday Combined Services - See below

Summer Combined Services

Sunday, July 5 10:30 am Allison Campus	Sunday, Aug. 2 10:30 am Brentwood Campus	Sunday, Sept. 5 10:30 am Allison Campus
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The Lonely Psalm 139

God is with me. I will not fear.

1. The Labyrinth of Loneliness

- Will anyone miss me? (*social*)
- No one gets me! (*psychological*)
- Am I all alone? (*existential/philosophical*)
- I'm ashamed. (*theological*)

2. The Inescapable God.

"And when I wake up, you are still with me!" (*v.18b*)

Life changing truth: God is with me. I will not fear.

3. Preparing for "Our Gethsemane" of Loneliness.

- Sin
- Pain
- Rejection

1 O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.
2 You know when I sit down or stand up.
You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
3 You see me when I travel and when I rest at home.
You know everything I do.
4 You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord.
5 You go before me and follow me.
You place your hand of blessing on my head.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!
7 I can never escape from your Spirit!
I can never get away from your presence!
8 If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I go down to the grave,[a] you are there.
9 If I ride the wings of the morning,
if I dwell by the farthest oceans,
10 even there your hand will guide me,
and your strength will support me.

11 I could ask the darkness to hide me
and the light around me to become night—
12 but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.
To you the night shines as bright as day.
Darkness and light are the same to you.

13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.
14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.
15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.
16 You saw me before I was born.
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.
Every moment was laid out
before a single day had passed.

17 How precious are your thoughts about me,[b] O God.
They cannot be numbered!
18 I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!
And when I wake up, you are still with me!
19 O God, if only you would destroy the wicked!
Get out of my life, you murderers!
20 They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name.
21 O Lord, shouldn't I hate those who hate you?
Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?
22 Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies.
23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
24 Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Psalm 139 NLT