

TAKEAWAY:

This psalm is the testimony of a journey—suffering believers moving from restlessness to reassured trust. That journey was pioneered by Jesus of Nazareth himself, who walked the full path of faith-under-trial without sin. Every believer who has suffered can follow in his steps through this psalm.

INTRODUCTION EXERCISE:

Before diving into questions, ask each person—including the leader—to complete this sentence in one or two sentences:

"One time God showed up in my life that I still return to when things are hard..."

Instructions:

- No explanation required—just name it briefly
- Everyone participates (leaders go first to model vulnerability)
- This mirrors the psalm's movement from inward despair to outward gaze
- It establishes that this is a group that practices deliberate remembrance

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read of Psalm 77

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- What word or phrase from the first nine verses (vv. 1-9) most closely describes a season you have experienced or are experiencing now?
- Asaph is a worship leader—someone whose calling is to help others encounter God—and yet he is the one in spiritual darkness here. What does this tell us about the relationship between faith and suffering? How does it change your view of spiritual struggle to know that Spirit-inspired Scripture includes these words of doubt and pain?
- Verses 7-9 contain five honest, painful questions directed at God: "Will the Lord reject forever?", "Has his faithful love ceased forever?", "Is his promise at an end?", "Has God forgotten to be gracious?", "Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" Have you ever felt permission to bring these kinds of questions to God? Why or why not?
- Verses 11-12 begin with three "I will" statements: What is the difference between faith as a feeling and faith as a decision?

APPLICATION:

- This week as you reflect on the sermon and our discussion, practice remembrance. Even if it is hard. Go to the Lord with your fears, struggles and questions.

- Share your testimony with someone new this week. (Be sure to point it back to Jesus.)

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

Participating in the Suffering of Christ: Romans 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24; 1 Pe 4:13 discuss Christians participating in the sufferings of Christ. When Christians suffer, they're not pioneering a new path. Rather, they're walking a road already paved by the obedience of God's Son.

- Does Psalm 77 give us permission to be radically honest with God when we suffer? If so, why? If not, why?
- How does recognizing that Jesus experienced suffering, even feeling forsaken by God (Psalm 22:1), change the way you may view some of your harder moments in life?
- In what ways does Christ's solidarity with human suffering protect the Church from adopting a sanitized or overly triumphant version of Christianity that ignores pain?
- Read Heb 4:15-16 with Psalm 77 in mind. How does knowing you have a High Priest who sympathizes with your weakness alter the approach to the "throne of grace" during hard times?
- How can we actively use the Psalms, exactly as Jesus did on the cross, to voice their deepest pains?

God's unseen hand: Psalm 77:19 explains a deliverance by God even though the LORD's "footprints were unseen." Similarly, God is never mentioned by name in the book of Esther, though God's invisible, sovereign hand is considered the central theme of this book.

- What does the phrase "your footprints were unseen" teach about the often hidden, untraceable nature of God's providence in daily life?
- Why or when do you find it difficult to trust God who is often invisible to the physical senses? Share an experience where it was only realized by you that God had been guiding your path after the event had passed, because God's footprints were invisible during the crisis?
- How does the modern demand for absolute, empirical proof of God's workings contradict the biblical definition of faith?
- How can the church comfort but also disciple a fellow believer who is desperately searching for a "sign" or a visible "footprint" from God, but is currently met with an apparent lack of evidence?

Quotes:

- Martin Luther: "This Psalm is an excellent prayer, which teaches us how we ought to conduct ourselves in the time of great trouble and spiritual temptation; namely, that we must not despair, but cry to God, and remember His former lovingkindnesses."
- J. I. Packer: "The way to deal with depression and discouragement is to turn our gaze away from our own feelings and fix it on the objective reality of God's past saving acts, just as Asaph did."

GROUP PRAYER:

All space for everyone to prayer. Ask someone to start the prayer time and the leader can close the time when it appears everyone is done.

Hymn of the Week - How Great Thou Art

As we journey through the psalms this July, we want to incorporate some hymns that fit well with the psalms being preached. Pastor Shawn has helped establish some hymns for your life group to read through, sing together or meditate on. We will also provide a Spotify playlist of songs that will help anchor you in praise this summer.

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How Great Thou Art

1 O Lord, my God, when I in awe - some won - der
2 When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der,
3 But when I think that God, his Son not spar - ing,
4 When Christ shall come, with shout of ac - cla - ma - tion,

con - sid - er all the works thy hand hath made,
I hear the birds sing sweet - ly in the trees;
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!

I see the stars, I hear the roll - ing thun - der,
when I look down from loft - y moun - tain gran - deur
that on the cross, my bur - den glad - ly bear - ing,
Then I shall bow in hum - ble ad - o - ra - tion

thy power through - out the u - ni - verse dis - played;
and hear the brook and feel the gen - tle breeze;
he bled and died to take a - way my sin;
and there pro - claim, "My God, how great thou art!"

Refrain

Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior God, to thee: how great thou art,

how great thou art! Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior God, to thee:

how great thou art, how great thou art!