

MORNING SERMON OUTLINE
IN DESPAIR? CRY TO GOD & HOLD ON TO HIM

Psalm 88

Psalm 88 is not found in our Psalter readings, nor is there any hymn for it in our hymnal. Why not? Probably because it is so dark. But God put it in the Bible for a reason – for the blessing of His people, when we find ourselves in dark places with seemingly no hope.

1. A prayer to God from a very dark place.

From beginning to end – a sustained & unrelieved despondency

- life-long afflictions (not specified) – vs.15
- abandoned by friends & acquaintances, alone – vv.8,18
- sees all of this as the Lord's doing – vv.5b-8,14-18
- sees himself under a curse from God – vv.4,5
- no relief from God despite persistent & fervent praying –vv.1b, 9b, 13
- He feels himself rejected by God, trapped & helpless (8a).
- He cries constantly – v.9a

Overwhelmed by his troubles without relief, he expresses no hope.

Similar to, but contrasting with other Psalms, such as Psalm 13.

Have you been in this dark place? Do you know anyone who is?

2. Why is such a Psalm in the Bible?

“All Scripture is God-breathed & profitable for our instruction ...” 2 Tim. 3:16

So God's Spirit directed the psalmist in his prayer,
and God put it in His Word. Why?

In general: The Psalm = Spirit-directed responses to God that give us models for our praises, worship, testimonies, and prayers.

The Psalms are both God-centered and thoroughly human.

We can identify with them in all circumstances of life.

Psalm 88 = a model of **honesty** with God (no glossing his true heart)

Therefore = an encouragement to us to be honest with God.

Is this truly a Psalm of despair and hopelessness?

- He call God by His covenant name “LORD” – and claims Him as “the God of my salvation” – vs.1
- His desire is to praise God's character & attributes – vv.10-12
- He is **praying!**

NOT rejecting God, Not bitterly denouncing Him to others

His prayer springs from FAITH in spite of all.

How? Because God IS HIS God & works in his heart by His grace.

Though he thinks God has abandoned him, God has not. Ps.73:22,23

The basis of his faith? NOT his experience, but God's Word & works.

How blessed WE are, because we see Jesus! The fulness of God.....

3. See Jesus in this Psalm – His suffering for us.

Go back to point #1. We see the sufferings of our Savior foreshadowed.

He was “despised & rejected, a man of sorrows” (Isa.53:3);

He cried, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” (Matt.27:46).

The Psalmist suffered that we might learn, Jesus that we might be saved.

By His wounds we are healed. In His resurrection we have living hope.