

Psalm 13-15

You know one of the things that are so appealing to us about the psalms is the fact that they're so incredibly human. Divinely inspired, yet true to the human heart, as we've said before; for every sigh there's a psalm. The entire spectrum of human emotion is represented throughout the psalms and so we find it incredibly easy to identify and relate to them, attach ourselves to them in one way or another. Whether it be on the one end of the spectrum of being incredibly down and in despair, or on the other end of being excited, ecstatic, overwhelmed and overjoyed in the Lord. Somewhere and in some way the Psalms hit home in our hearts.

As we look at the brief Ps Ch 13 we're confronted once again by that familiar feeling of forsakenness. We don't know exactly what was going on in David's life when he wrote this, it could've been any # of things, David had a life of extreme highs and extreme lows. Many people think this Ps revolves around David's flight from Saul since nowhere in it does David call for the destruction of his enemies. As a general rule when David felt like he was being hunted down, or it looked like he might be done in he would call out for God to defend him and destroy his enemies. But because he doesn't do that here many think that it's because David refused to come against Saul because God was the One who placed him on the throne. and Since God placed him there, David wouldn't seek to remove him, nor would he ask God to destroy him. He just waited for God to remove him in His time. But that period in David's life seemed to stretch on forever, for years he was fleeing for his life. and No doubt he often wondered how long it was going to go on, if he'd ever get any peace or cease being on the run. Be that as it may here we are in the 13th Ch of the book of Psalms. and In this brief Psalm we see his feelings (Vs1-3), his foes (Vs 4), and his faith (Vs 5-6). Or you could perhaps outline it as; his perplexity (or his problems), his petition, and his praise. WITH that we read, "To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David."

Vs1-3

These are David's feelings. and It's obvious that these are feelings of utter desperation, 4x's he asks the question, "How long?" Its like, "God this is going on forever, where are You, when are You going to do something about this?" and These are feelings that are familiar to every believer and if you haven't had them yet, just wait you will. There in Vs 1 he says, (Read)

He feels like God is neglecting him, or turning a blind eye to him, can't see what's going on with him and it's killing him. Now obviously we know that isn't true, God is very aware of our situation, He's watching over the details of our lives, yet we can feel this way nonetheless. and When you feel this way each day feels like a week, and weeks feel like months or years. It just seems endless, and it's not sin to feel this way, but you have to be careful what you do with your feelings when they are this way. I mean, David desires deliverance here, and you can't blame him for that, yet because of that it's easy to become impatient. It's not an easy thing to prevent desire from degenerating into impatience. We need the grace of God at work in our lives so that as we wait upon the Lord we might be kept from a murmuring spirit. But again at the root of David's despair is a sense that God is distant from him,

I'm sure he'd faced perhaps even tougher times than what he was up against here, but when you feel like God is really with you, you can endure the most difficult of days. However if you feel like God is distant from you it doesn't take much at all and we're strung out, stressed out, and everything else.

He says, "How long will You hide your face from me?" Its like, "Hey God, remember me? I'm still down here and I'm hurtin, I need You to look upon me, be merciful to me."

But here's the deal, God hasn't forgotten you. We read in Isa 49, "But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me.' '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;'" Isa 49:14-16 God doesn't overlook you, or somehow forget about you. Oh, you may feel like He does at times, but your feelings will betray you. They flip flop sometimes from minute to minute, that's why we trust in the Lord, we look to His Word, rather than allow ourselves to be led around by our emotions.

Now having said that I'm not saying that we shouldn't ever be affected by our feelings, there's definitely a balance there. The fact is that God created us with an emotional capacity, He created us in His image, and God at times feels anger, He feels grief, He feels joy, and love. and So in one sense our feelings are a gift from God, an expression of His image in us. So to completely shutdown and refuse to allow our feelings to enter into our relationship with God is wrong. Yet at the same time to be blindly ruled by our feelings, or give them a dominate place in our lives so that regardless of what God's word says, "This is how I feel and so it must be right," is equally wrong. I've known people who've told me that if they believed God was leading them a certain way, yet they were shown in the bible something that clearly contradicts their direction they'd go with what they believed God was showing them rather than what the bible was clearly telling them. In a situation like that you're just asking for trouble, because even though God gave us feelings, they're affected by our fallen sin nature, can't always be trusted. The bible says. "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered." Prov 28:26 Which is to say it doesn't really matter what your heart is telling you. If it doesn't correspond to the word of God you're to reject it.

Vs2

I want you to see something here. What was the net effect of David seeking counsel with in himself, looking in with in himself for a proper resolve? "Having sorrow in my heart daily." When you're discouraged, when you're depressed the last place you need to be looking for answers is in yourself, the last place you need to seek counsel is in your own soul. Because in so doing we have a tendency to become fatalists, sorrow compounds upon sorrow. We're to look to the Lord, seek His word, search out His heart. When I sit there and consider my troubles it's just depressing, as I look to and lean on and seek to draw from the Lord; as I pray over my problems and cast my cares upon Him, then there's that sense of release whereby I submit my struggles over to Him, they're His now and I can just rest in Him.

Our problems have a way of putting us on our face before the Lord, and that's good, but when we withdraw into ourselves and try and figure it all out and work out a solution apart from the Lord, that's bad. and Often times we get ourselves into an emotional train wreck because we sit there and stew on it for so long. Trouble is like a pill that life hands us, and the Lord would just have us to swallow it, but instead we make it worse by rolling it around in our mouths and chewing on it and we just torture ourselves with it.

and As he brings to attention his concern for his enemy being exalted over him it shows us the 3rd way in which David is discouraged and in despair. 1st of all he's discouraged in his relationship with God, feels like God is distant from him. 2^{ndly} he's down on himself and with in himself, as he takes counsel with in himself he finds the result to be only sorrow compounded upon sorrow, no real resolve, he's at a dead end with in himself. and 3^{rdly} with regard to his enemies. and So David feels as though he's overwhelmed and depressed spiritually, personally, and circumstantially.

Vs 3-4

Here David draws attention to his foes, 1st of all his feelings, now his foes, or 1st of all his perplexity, now his petition, "Consider and hear me O LORD my God;" and Of course what we're seeing here is that realizing there's no resolve in himself he turns to the Lord as both his recourse, and his resource. and He when he says, "Consider and hear me O Lord," it's not that he's asking for 2 different things, it's like emphasizing his desperate plea. He's just crying out to the Lord and that God might hear him and give ear to him.

We should draw encouragement from this because he's obviously been seeking the Lord for sometime and has felt as though God wasn't really attentive to him. Yet he didn't grow tired of petitioning the Lord, it just caused him to cry out all the more passionately, and desperately. and Desperate prayer, passionate prayer, is a good thing, asking and asking again, and asking again is good. When Jesus said, "Ask and you'll receive, seek and you'll find, knock the door will be opened to you." Those words, "Ask, seek, and knock" are in the present tense, He was saying, "Ask, and keep asking, seek and keep seeking, knock and keep knocking, don't give up, don't give in." and I think that often times the reason our prayers lack power is because they lack passion, or any real sense of desperation, it's like the power of our prayer lives is betrayed by it's lack of passion. Because when we pray apart from passion (and I don't mean emotional fervor by passion, but rather a heart felt and sincere fervor)(not getting all whipped up into a frenzy, but having a heart pursuing the Lord sincerely), but when we pray apart from passion it's almost like we're asking God to care about something that we don't really care about ourselves. and It's not that passionate prayer persuades the heart of a reluctant God, but rather it demonstrates that our heart cares for the things He cares for.

David knew that he was feeling a certain way but that it wasn't true to the facts. He felt like God was distant, the fact is that God never leaves us nor forsakes us. and So he says, "Enlighten my eyes" "God help me to see things for what they are." and I think that no matter what the situation you can never go wrong with a prayer request like this.

That our eyes just be enlightened, that we might have wisdom and understanding. Remember Paul's prayer request for the Ephesians? "...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power..." Eph 1:17-19 "God give to me the proper perspective." He was asking for a renewing of his spirit, he didn't want the enemy to get the upper hand and gloat over his demise, not just because of who he was, but for God's sake. He didn't want God's name smeared around as though He was unable to take care of His own. "So God restore me, renew me for Your name's sake."

Vs5-6

Of course here we have his faith, his praise. From feelings, to foes, to faith, from perplexity, to petition, to praise. and I drew attention to this last week I want you to see it again. David went from the blues to being blessed, from feeling forsaken and feeling forgotten to standing firm in his faith. and What was the means through which this transition took place? Prayer. and I don't know why we so often buy the lie that says, "It can't be that simple, it'll take months of prayer and fasting to achieve a breakthrough. To gain victory over my addiction, my depression, my situation." But this Ps (along with several others) suggests otherwise, in the amount of time it took David to pen just 6 Vs he found relief, he found release and he found victory. It doesn't have to be a long, laborious, and tediously drawn out process.

Remember Jesus said, "Don't think that you'll be heard because of your lengthy prayers, your many words." and As if to underscore the principle when His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray He modeled for them a prayer that about 68 words long. Some time went by (1 ½ yrs or so) they asked Him again, probably figuring they'd mastered that they were ready for something a bit more complex and mature. So He gave them an outline along the same lines only it was shorter, about 59 words or so. and I think one of the things He was simply seeking to communicate was, "It's not as difficult as you think, you don't have to be all wordy, just give to God the position and the passion of your heart." and If you'll begin to do that I think that like David you will discover that if you'll just pull away and pray, give God your worries, your anxieties, your depression or discouragement, you'll find that God will give you His peace. It's true prayer changes things, not the least of which will be you; and me as I give Him the cares and concerns of my heart.

Ch 14

Vs 1-3

Of course if this sound familiar to you it's because Paul reached back into this Ps in order to demonstrate the depravity of man in Romans Ch 3. But with Paul the Holy Spirit expanded it just a bit beyond the atheist to include all of mankind apart from Christ. There are none who are good, none who seek after God. Apart from Christ we're just altogether corrupt, seeking our own agenda, but God has so loved us that He sent His only begotten Son to save us.

We weren't looking for God, we were going the opposite direction away from God, but God was seeking after us, He called out to us and we responded to Him.

But here in Vs 1 where we read, "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." Then we read, "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works." Remember what we developed Sunday morning regarding belief and behavior? In the 1st ½ of Vs 1 we read what they believe, "...there is no God." In the 2nd ½ we see the corresponding behavior, "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works." What we believe is directly related to how we behave, if we seek to convince ourselves that there's no God, then we have no reason to believe we'll be called to give an account of our lives. and If there's no accountability then I cast off restraint and do whatever I want to do, and if it's vile, or corrupt in its nature, what difference does it make (ultimately) to me? After all, there's no God.

Now I want you to realize that the fool here in this context doesn't have a problem in his head, but rather in his heart. It's not that he's/she's lacking in intelligence, they simply don't have any spiritual wisdom or insight. The natural man can't discern the things of the spirit, and quite frankly has no desire to. and It's not that there's no evidence to persuade him otherwise, (even creation itself with all its complexity, and variety) it's that he doesn't want to submit himself to his Creator. The evangelist Billy Sunday used to say, "Sinners can't find God for the same reason criminals can't find policemen—they aren't looking!"

Vs 3 says, "They have all turned aside," they've turned their backs on God and have refused to fulfill the purpose for which He created them, to walk with Him, draw near to Him, and glorify Him in their body and in their spirit.

Vs4-7

The wicked take advantage of the weak, they exploit the poor, they don't call upon the Lord, they shame the counsel of the poor.

But the day is coming when God will deliver His people, and Christ will rule and reign with a rod of iron establishing righteousness on the earth, That's what Vs 7 is looking forward to, not the Babylonian deliverance, but the ultimate deliverance when Christ will cleanse the earth and rule in righteousness.

Ch 15

Now again as for exactly what the circumstances were that surrounded this Ps we don't know. Some think perhaps as David was having the Ark of the Covenant transported back from Kirjath-Jearim and you remember they were transporting the ark on a cart pulled by oxen and they were celebrating and dancing and sacrificing and along the way the oxen stumbled and the ark looked as if it were going to slip off the cart. and So a man by the name of Uzzah reached up to steady it with his hands and as he did the Lord struck him dead instantly. and David was afraid, the ceremony ceased and the ark was turned aside into the house of Obed-Edom.

But that little incident caused David to really seek the Lord, study His Word and He learned that the ark was to be transported not by a cart but carried on poles on the shoulders of the Levites. God has instructed us in His word as to the way we're to approach Him, how it is we're to worship Him. and We're not to do anything we want and as long as we mean well it's ok. No, He's prescribed the manner in which we're to worship Him, (in spirit and truth). and He cares about and is concerned with the details, it wasn't "good enough" it needed to be done in the way that honored His word.

Anyway it's possible that out of that event, came this Psalm. and You should realize as we read through it that it's not a prescription for being saved, but it's a description declaring how those who are saved ought to live. It's not what we need to do, but who we become in Christ, this is the overflow of Christ in our lives.

Vs1-5

It's not the key for how to be saved, it's the characteristics of the one who's already saved. They'll seek God's presence, they'll obey His precepts, they'll trust God's Promises. and There are characteristics both to the positive and to the negative about the man, the woman of God. To the positive we find that the godly will be people of integrity, honesty, and sincerity. Vs 2 tells us he walks uprightly, that is, he'll be blameless in character, devoted wholly to the Lord, not given to compromise.

Not only is there blamelessness in character, there's righteousness in conduct, there's honesty, we read in Vs 2 he, "works righteousness." Not crooked in their business deals but seeking to be fair with everyone all the way around. (This is just practical stuff)

Not only will they be blameless in character, and righteous in conduct, they'll be truthful in conversation. He "speaks the truth in his heart." Remember Jesus said that the words of a man revealed what was in his heart, from out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. and The righteous will speak the truth, in love.

To the negative (Vs 3) the righteous won't backbite, won't do evil (or willful wrong) to his neighbor (meaning whoever it is that's around them at the moment). and He won't take up a reproach against his friend, that means he won't give ear to gossip. It's kind of like this, "He speaks no evil, does no evil and hears no evil." He just won't give place to it.

But he honors those who fear the Lord, he doesn't take advantage of a brother or sister in need. and If he swears to his own hurt, he won't change for his own benefit.

Now the bible teaches us that we're not to swear at all, but the idea here is that he'll be a man of his word. His "yes" means "yes" and his "no" means "no."

"Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved."

The idea there is that of being established a sure foundation, Jesus communicated this same idea when He spoke of building our house on the rock, storms came, winds blew, waves beat on the house but it stood because it was founded on the rock. and The rock solid foundation is laid by being both a hearer and a doer of the Word of God.

Someone whose life is being led by the Spirit and subjected to the Word will look like Ps 15.

Now I've never counted them but I've been told that there are 613 laws in the OT. Here David narrows it down to 11. When Micah came along he narrowed it down to 3. "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" Mic 6:8

When Jesus came along He simplified it even more, broke it down to a single word, "Love." He said if you love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. and You love your neighbor as yourself, all the law and the prophets are hung on those 2. Loving God takes care of your vertical relationship (and it's the most important) loving man tends to and takes care of the horizontal. So in short the righteous life is the life that lets the love of God flow into it and out through it to those around it that they might be blessed by it.

Prayer Points:

Lord we want to lead righteous lives, may we be open reservoirs that You might pour Your love not only into but also out through that those around us might be blessed by us in Your name and for Your glory. God may you enlighten our eyes, give us wisdom, sensitivity to Your Spirit and discernment, and I want to pray for any here who may be despairing or discouraged; Lord that they wouldn't resist Your healing touch. That they wouldn't think it has to be a long and drawn out ordeal to be restored, but that even now as we're bowed in our hearts before You, acknowledging You as our recourse and as our only resource, Lord renew, refresh, recalibrate, revive. For Your name's sake and for Your glory.