

## A Lament

Psalm 13 || Pastor Scott Mehl || 17 May 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,  
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.  
– CG Mission Statement*

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**Icebreaker:** Take a moment to tell one of the members of your CG why you are grateful for them.

**Worship:** Isaiah 49:13-16 (*Read aloud three times, spend time in reflection listening for God's invitation to you.*)

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### Sermon Summary for Psalm 13

What does it mean to follow Christ in the midst of suffering? It can be difficult; the Bible's comfort and advice can sometimes feel like empty platitudes. In large part, this is because we haven't learned to properly lament. God invites us to be honest with Him about our pain because to gloss over these feelings is a form of spiritual denial. Scripture teaches us to stop and repent when we see sin in our own hearts. In the same way, we are called to stop and lament when confronted with suffering. It is a spiritual discipline and will take time. Because lament is an act of faith, it engenders faith in our hearts, reminding us who He is and what He has done. These psalms are therefore an opportunity to express our grief as well as a resource to understand how to respond to suffering:

Lament acknowledges the reality of our pain. Lamenting begins with honesty. Evil exists in our world, and it shouldn't be ignored, downplayed or dismissed. Acknowledging the reality of our pain is the first step of dealing with it biblically. We don't have to pretend that things aren't as bad as they are. True hope begins with honesty.

It invites us to turn to God in the midst of the pain. David's call of "How long, O LORD?" is a prayer of faith. It's how we are to react – both in the face of suffering and because God can feel distant. Suffering tempts us to assume the worst – that God has abandoned us. But our loving Father calls us to bring even these worries before Him. The important distinction is that grumbling and complaining are grievances made *about* God... while lament is a grievance made *to* God. Lament is an act of relationship, and the truth is: He hears.

It calls us to ask for God's help. We don't lament when we don't feel helpless – because we think something earthly will be able to fix our problems. But where do we turn in the depths of our suffering? Do we turn to the One who hears and cares and can actually do something about it? God has exhibited His love and power to us through the Gospel. In Him, we have confidence that there is healing, there is hope, there is true redemption, there is comfort.

**Discussion Questions** (*It's better to wrestle deeply with a few good questions than to gloss over many.*)

- Will God forget us? What does the Worship passage Isaiah 49:13-16, tell us about this?
    - Compare the last line of the Psalm to the first line. Why are they so different?
  - Discuss the idea that biblical lament is a grievance to God, not against Him?
    - Why are we afraid to lament? What is the danger of not lamenting?
  - How can this Psalm be an encouragement to someone going through a deep struggle of faith?
    - What do you need to personally apply from this Psalm and the sermon today?
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### What Can We Be Praying For?

Bring your laments before God for all the losses recently experienced in this time of crisis. Follow your time of lament with a time of thanksgiving to God for graciously sharing His presence with us as we suffer.

### Engage & Experience

The Psalms of Lament have a pattern to them that moves from personal grief to remembering what God has done to praising Him. With the help of God's Spirit write out your prayer of lament using this pattern.