

Here are some talking points to start using to get your group talking to each other and to start generating meaningful conversations. Remember, you want others to do most of the talking.

Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. Which part of the message was most impactful to you and why?

Start Sharing & Talking About the message. NOTE: Pastor may not cover all points in all services.

Setting/Open: As we discuss Psalm 88, written by Heman, a wise, talented, accomplished, and blessed man, it teaches us three things about darkness in our lives. As difficult as it is to read, God has allowed it to be included in the Bible.

Three Things We Can Learn From Darkness

Point 1 The Psalm gives us language and permission.

What permission does Psalm 88 give us? **A.** To wrestle with hard things with God in dark times.

Vv1-2 Heman begins the Psalm with what he knows about God. **Application:** **A.** During dark times, it's good to reflect on what we know and believe about God. **Ps 119:105.** **Secondly**, no matter how deep and dark our affliction, we can still talk to God. **Caution:** Don't be disrespectful to God in dark times; we don't have to vent our feelings. **Pro 29:11** But we can cast our cares on God. **1Peter 5:7**

Vv3-5 What are the two ways that darkness is expressed? **A.** Darkness on the outside surrounding us and darkness on the inside in our thoughts. He feels abandoned and rejected by his God. Who can relate to his anguish (distress)? Jesus could – **Luke 22:42-44** Jesus was being pressed.

V5 Heman felt adrift, as if he was already dead.

What does Psalm 88 teach us about God's mercy? **A.** 1) Even Christians face "real life" in this world. 2) Following Jesus does not keep us from having problems and disappointments. 3) We can think we are doing everything right, but our trials continue and we are in darkness. **John 16:33**

What is another way to see God's mercy? **A.** By eliminating false expectations about having a trouble-free life. We need to align our expectations with reality.

Point 2 Ask, is my faith trusting or transactional? Review **Mark 4:35-41** **Point:** If we know Jesus, our circumstances won't matter.

Vv 6-12 We may ask, did God cause our pain or allow it? Is pain personal (no) or practical (yes)?

During times of pain, it reveals our faith. Do we believe who God says He is?

What is a good thing we can do during times of trouble? **A.** "Selah." Pause, meditate & wait on God's word. **Application:** We need to be honest and reveal our heart to God. We have a relationship with God, not because he makes our lives easy, but because of what? **A.** He has made a way for us to be in relationship with Him, because He is gracious. **Eph 2:8-10**

Contemplation Point: Do we love God despite our circumstances or is our love transactional (conditional)? **Point:** "We don't know the future, but we know Him, who holds our future." We need to be people of faith & "endurance." **Rom 5:1-11**

Point 3 We have a Savior that is with us. **Matt 1:23** – Emmanuel = God with us in the flesh.

Vv 13-18 Heman continues to focus on God. **Ps 5:3; 55:17; 59:16** Heman felt forsaken; so did Jesus – **Matt 27:45 (Ps 22)** **Application:** Just as God used Jesus' feelings of abandonment for His glory, perhaps God is using our feelings of abandonment & pain for His glory. **Rom 8:11**

Start Praying & Start Doing. Talk to your group about (1) creating profiles on the Calvary App so your group can create a group chat on the app. Let Pastor Josh know so he can set your group up for you. (2) Encourage your group to read ahead. (3) Please remember to fill out the LIFEgroup meeting assessment form after your meeting. Here is the link: <https://bit.ly/LIFEgroup-Assessment>

LIFEgroups

Talk it over | week 3

discussion | study

Hello Darkness My Old Friend

Psalm 88

Pastor Ian Dizon