

Psalms 77

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 77 - and as we make our way to the 77th Psalm...

...I should take a moment to point out that - this is the fifth - of 11 consecutive songs - written by a seer named Asaph.

And it's here in this Psalm - where we find Asaph - crying out to the Lord in the day of his trouble.

Now - we aren't told specifically what sort of trouble Asaph was struggling with.

What we do know was that this was a time when the Lord was withholding His grace - from the nation of Israel.

And it's for this reason that Asaph sought the Lord with stretched out hands....

...as he presented his prayerful supplications to the God of Jacob.

As we make our way through the lyrics of this song - we'll soon see how Asaph shifted his focus...

...from the sadness and the sorrow of his sudden struggles - - to the joy that fills the hearts of those...

...who take the time to contemplate the Wonderful works of the God Who has never failed those who trust in Him.

And as we consider Asaph's example - found here in our text tonight...

...it's my prayer that we will all become those believers who seek the Lord...

...so that we can exchange our worries and our anxieties...

...for the peace that passes all understanding.

With this as our focus - let's turn our attention to the lyrics that we find here in the 77th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where Asaph writes...

Psa 77:1 To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

I cried out to God with my voice—

To God with my voice;

And He gave ear to me.

Psa 77:2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;

My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;

My soul refused to be comforted.

Psa 77:3 I remembered God, and was troubled;

I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - presenting special instructions - so that this song would be led by a Levite named Jeduthun.

And just to be clear - I should remind you that King David appointed three Levites to lead worship at the tabernacle.

There was Asaph - Heman - and Jeduthun - who was also known as Ethan.

And it's here in superscript section of this Psalm - where we find Asaph...

...identifying Jeduthun - as the worship leader who would lead this specific song.

Now - we aren't told why this song was dedicated to the choirs which were led by Jeduthun.

And yet - it is interesting to note that the name - Jeduthun - was a proper masculine name that means - praising.

And as we consider how Jeduthun was a man who was called to lead this song of praise...

...I encourage every man to realize that - praising the Lord isn't just for women.

You might not know this - but - the Bible is filled with men - who were passionate about singing songs of praise.

For example - King David was not only a mighty warrior - but - he was also a prolific Psalmist.

As a matter of fact - King David wrote more than 70 Psalms - which are found in the Bible.

And so - the guys who think that singing songs of praise to the Lord is emasculating...

...have failed to realize that the Bible is filled with examples of masculine men...

...who were passionate about praising the Lord.

Proof of my point can be found in the fact that Asaph - Heman - and Jeduthun were in charge of 288 men - who were skilled musicians.

Think about that for a moment - during the days of King David - three men were in charge of three choirs...

...which were populated by 288 skilled musicians - all of whom were men....

...who were passionate about praising the Lord.

And listen - Jeduthun - was not only a worship leader - but - he was also the Levite...

...whom King David appointed - to serve as the guard at the gates of the tabernacle.

That's right - Jeduthun and his sons were not only singers and musicians...

...but - they were also security guards - who were on point to protect the tabernacle of God.

With that being the case - I challenge every Christian man to realize that...

...the privilege of corporate praise isn't just an emotional time for the ladies who love to sing to the Lord.

Corporate praise should also be a time - for godly men - to proclaim the praises of the Lord...

...as we humbly bow our hearts - before our King.

With this as our goal - let's consider how Asaph began this Psalm - as he cried out to the Lord.

Notice with me again - there in verse 1 - where Asaph declared...

Psa 77:1 I cried out to God with my voice—

To God with my voice;

And He gave ear to me.

Psa 77:2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;

My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;

My soul refused to be comforted.

Psa 77:3 I remembered God, and was troubled;

I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah

Here in the first stanza of this song - we find Asaph - describing the way that he stretched out his hand to God...

...and the reason why was because - his soul was troubled - and his spirit was overwhelmed.

And as we consider how Asaph began this Psalm - we must not fail to notice...

...how times of trouble affect us - body - soul - and spirit.

Notice with me again - there in verse 2 - where Asaph cried out...

Psa 77:2a In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;

From this - we can see how Asaph was physically reaching out to the Lord - with his hands - all night long...

...as he consider the troubles that were consuming him.

And from this - we can see how Asaph's body was being affected by this trial.

Not only that - but it's there in the second half of verse 2 - where he also declared...

Psa 77:2b My soul refused to be comforted.

That word - soul - was translated from a Hebrew word - which was used in reference to...

...the immaterial seat of our appetites - emotions and passions.

And from this - we can see how the immaterial soul of Asaph was affected by this trial.

Finally - we should notice how Asaph referred to his spirit - there in verse 3 - where he declared...

Psa 77:3 I remembered God, and was troubled;
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah

That word - spirit - was translated from another Hebrew word - which refers to the breath.

And while many Bible scholars treat the soul and the spirit - as the same exact thing...

...what they fail to realize is that - the word of God is able to discern the difference...

...between the human soul - and the spirit.

Here's how Paul put it - in Hebrews chapter 4 - it's verse 12 - where he declared...

Heb 4:12 ...the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Here in this verse - we learn that the word of God is so sharp - that it's able to do what many Bible scholars can't do...

...which is to create a distinction - between the soul and the spirit of every person.

And while this distinction is difficult for us to identify on an intellectual level...

...Paul was assuring us that the word of God is able to help us - body - soul - and spirit.

Christian - listen - the troubles and trials that we face - - will affect our bodies - our souls - and our spirits.

Much like Asaph - there are times when we're struggling to sleep - as our hands reach out to the Lord...

...and there are times when our soul can't be comforted - - and our spirit is overwhelmed.

And it's at that point in time when we aren't too concerned about the proper way...

...to intellectually grasp the theological distinction -
between the body - the soul - and the spirit.

Whenever the overwhelming troubles of this world have affected your
body - soul - and spirit...

...I encourage you to spend some time studying the living and active
word of God...

...because the living and active word of God is able to minister
to every part of a person - body - soul - and spirit.

And one reason why is because - those who meditate on
the living and active word of God...

...will begin to shift their focus from the troubles and
the trials - to the truth of our Salvation.

With this as the goal - let's consider how Asaph began to shift his focus - here in
the 77th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 4 - where Asaph declared...

Psa 77:4 You hold my eyelids open;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

Psa 77:5 I have considered the days of old,
The years of ancient times.

Psa 77:6 I call to remembrance my song in the night;
I meditate within my heart,
And my spirit makes diligent search.

Psa 77:7 Will the Lord cast off forever?
And will He be favorable no more?

Psa 77:8 Has His mercy ceased forever?
Has His promise failed forevermore?

Psa 77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - beginning to shift his focus - from
fear to faith.

And while it's true that he was so troubled - that he couldn't speak...

...it's also true that he took the time to considered the days of old - and the years of ancient times.

In other words - Asaph began to recall the good old days...

...when the Lord was blessing the nation of Israel with abundance.

And we should notice how Asaph took advantage of his insomnia - by meditating on the goodness of God.

Notice with me again - there in verse 6 - where he declared...

Psa 77:6 I call to remembrance my song in the night;
I meditate within my heart,
And my spirit makes diligent search.

Rather than focusing on the troubles that were keeping him from falling asleep...

...Asaph began to think about the songs of praise that he used to sing.

And it was there on his bed - where he began to meditate on those songs...

...as his spirit searched out the spiritual truths of God's gracious love.

Now - as we consider Asaph's example - I wanna take a moment to address those who deal with their daily troubles...

...with the distraction better known as doomscrolling.

Rather than engaging in the spiritual discipline of diligently seeking the Lord through prayer...

...many Christians spend their time doomscrolling on their phones...

...in order to ignore the issues that are troubling their body - soul - and spirit.

If this sounds like your life - then - I encourage you to realize that...

...doomscrolling before bed is actually a major cause of insomnia and poor sleep quality.

According to the reports - it triggers stress - it creates anxiety - and it delays sleep...

...by leaving the brain too stimulated to wind down.

As a matter of fact - one research review published in Applied Research in Quality of Life...

...analyzed three separate studies involving a total of about 1,200 adults...

...and according to the analysis - - doomscrolling is linked to worse mental well-being and life satisfaction.

Another study from 2024 - which was published in Computers in Human Behavior Reports reinforces those findings.

According to that study - doomscrolling evokes greater levels of existential anxiety...

...which creates a feeling of dread or panic that arises when we confront the limitations of our existence.

Simply put - those who attempt to ignore the trials and troubles of life - through the distraction of doomscrolling...

...will only make things worse.

That being the case - I encourage you to follow the example of Asaph...

...who spent time considering the days of old - as he meditated on the ways that God blessed His people in the past.

And we should meditate on the Psalms - - which help us to focus our minds on those things that are praise worthy.

And in this way - we will be able to overcome the fears that fill our hearts.

In order to make my case - let's consider the fears that filled the heart of Asaph.

Look with me again - beginning there at verse 7 - where Asaph asked...

Psa 77:7 Will the Lord cast off forever?

And will He be favorable no more?

Psa 77:8 Has His mercy ceased forever?

Has His promise failed forevermore?

Psa 77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?

Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - presenting six questions that stemmed from his greatest fears.

And as we consider these question - we can be certain that Asaph's greatest concerns...

...were based on the fear that the Lord would forsake the Children of Israel....

...by withholding His mercy and grace - forevermore.

Now - it's possible that you've struggled with the same concerns.

And there might be some here tonight - who have struggled to sleep at night...

...because - you're worried that you've exhausted the grace of God.

Maybe you're anxious - because you feel like the Lord has cast you off - forevermore.

If this sounds like something you struggle with - then I encourage you to consider what Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations chapter 3.

It's beginning at verse 22 - where the prophet declared...

Lam 3:22 Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.

Lam 3:23 They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.

Lam 3:24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"Therefore I hope in Him!"

Lam 3:25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,
To the soul who seeks Him.

Lam 3:26 It is good that one should hope and wait quietly
For the salvation of the LORD.

The goodness of God will never fail - because - His mercy is new every morning.

And it's for this reason that those who trust in Jesus can rest in knowing that - the compassion of Christ will never fail.

And while there are times when it might feel like He has forsaken us...

...we can rejoice in knowing that He never will.

If you're wondering how I can be so certain - let's consider the way that Asaph explained it - here in the 77th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 10 - where he declared...

Psa 77:10 And I said, "This is my anguish;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

Psa 77:11 I will remember the works of the LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
Psa 77:12 I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.
Psa 77:13 Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary;
Who is so great a God as our God?
Psa 77:14 You are the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength among the peoples.
Psa 77:15 You have with Your arm redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - shifting his focus from the fears that filled his heart...

...to the faith that was founded on the fact that - God has the power to fulfill every promise.

And in this way - Asaph quenched the fires of his fear - by focusing his faith on the wonderful works of God.

Notice with me again - beginning there at verse 10 - where he declared...

Psa 77:10 "This is my anguish;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."
Psa 77:11 I will remember the works of the LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - calling to remembrance - the powerful right hand of God Most High.

And not only that - but - he also took the time to remember the wondrous works of Yahweh...

...as he contemplated the incredible miracles that the Lord performed in ancient times.

Not only that - but - he also spent time meditating on the things that the Lord has done.

Look with me again - there at verse 12 - where Asaph declared...

Psa 77:12 I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.

Now - that word - meditate - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which was used of those who spend time - carefully
contemplating something - before reaching a conclusion.

And in this context - we find Asaph - contemplating - or
pondering the praiseworthiness of the Lord.

Then — after taking the time to meditate on these
incredible truths...

...Asaph went on to declare the deeds of the
Lord.

Look with me again - beginning there at verse 13 - where he proclaimed
the praises of the Lord - by declaring...

Psa 77:13 Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary;
Who is so great a God as our God?

Psa 77:14 You are the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength among the peoples.

Psa 77:15 You have with Your arm redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

Here in these verses - we find Asaph glorifying God - as he
described the wondrous works of the Lord.

And while it's true that the Lord revealed His magnificence - at
the tabernacle there in Jerusalem...

...it's also true that the Lord revealed His strength to the
children of Israel...

...by redeeming the descendants of Jacob and
Joseph.

With all of this in mind - Asaph was certain that the Lord would not cast them off forever.

And as he considered the greatness of God - he was convinced that the Lord will fulfill His promises...

...to those who rest in His mercy and grace.

And in this way - the fearful anxieties of Asaph were replaced...

...by the confident expectation of eternal salvation.

In order to drive home his point - Asaph decided to direct our attention - back to the Exodus of Israel.

With this as our focus - let's pick up our study of the 77th Psalm - beginning there at verse 16 - where Asaph declared...

Psa 77:16 The waters saw You, O God;
The waters saw You, they were afraid;
The depths also trembled.

Psa 77:17 The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound;
Your arrows also flashed about.

Psa 77:18 The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind;
The lightnings lit up the world;
The earth trembled and shook.

Psa 77:19 Your way was in the sea,
Your path in the great waters,
And Your footsteps were not known.

Psa 77:20 You led Your people like a flock
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Here in the final Stanza of this song - we find Asaph - recalling the might miracles that the Lord performed...

...during the days when He freed the Hebrew slaves - from their Egyptian captivity.

He sang about the day - when the Red Sea was parted by the Power of God.

And He sang about the day - when the Lord used lightning and thunder - and an earthquake...

...to fill the hearts of the Egyptians with fear.

Asaph also sang the praises of the One - Who raised up Moses and Aaron - to lead the children of Israel - like a flock.

And as he considered the way in which the Lord delivered His people from their Egyptian masters...

...we must not forget that - the Lord freed the sheep of His pasture...

...by sacrificing the Paschal Lamb - which was a prophetic picture of our Messiah - Jesus.

Remember - Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

And the Passover Lambs that were sacrificed on the night before the Israelites were set free...

...were all prophetic placeholders - that pointed to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we consider the way that the Lord Jesus was sacrificed - so that we could be set free...

...we can exchange our fears - with faith - and yes - even in times of trouble.

I like the way that Paul explained it - in Romans chapter 8 - it's beginning at verse 32 - where he declared...

Rom 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Rom 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Rom 8:36 As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Rom 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christian - listen - God the Father sent His only begotten Son - to receive the punishment that we deserve...

...so that we could be saved by faith in His substitutionary sacrifice.

With that being the case - we can have incredible confidence in knowing that...

...the trials and troubles of this world - can NEVER separate us from the love of our Savior.

And in this - we can rest - as we rejoice in the wondrous works of the Lord.

With all of this in mind - I encourage every Christian to exchange your fears - for the faith that fills the hearts of those who meditate on our Messiah.

Let's consider how Paul put it - in Philippians chapter 4 - it's beginning at verse 6 - where he declared...

Phl 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Phl 4:7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Phl 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Phl 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Rather than focusing on the trials and troubles of this world...

...let's prayerfully bring our anxieties to the Lord - and then - leave them there with Him.

Then - as we focus our minds on those things that are true - noble - just - and pure...

...the peace the surpasses all understanding will guard our hearts and minds...

...through Christ Jesus.

And as we meditate on those things that are lovely - those things that are of good report...

...as well as those things that are virtuous and praiseworthy...

...the God of peace will bless the believer - who will simply rest in the loving arms of our Redeemer.

COMMUNION