

OVERVIEW

Title: Psalm 13 - How Long O Lord?

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores Psalm 13, focusing on how believers can maintain hope in God's deliverance even when it seems He is absent. The pastor emphasizes the importance of bringing questions and requests to God during times of suffering, while ultimately trusting in His faithful love and promises. The sermon connects David's experience to the broader narrative of God's redemptive plan through Jesus Christ, encouraging listeners to persevere in faith during difficult times.

Key Points:

- You can bring your questions to God without questioning His character
- Bring your requests to God persistently, trusting in His response
- Hope in God is grounded in His past faithfulness and future promises
- Waiting on God can strengthen faith even when circumstances don't change
- Jesus' sacrifice allows us to know God's presence and overcome our greatest fears

Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 13

Stories:

- The pastor's childhood road trips and asking "how long" repeatedly
- A student feeling disconnected from God despite recent baptism
- The parable of the persistent widow from Luke 18
- The pastor's experience with a home warranty company and broken AC
- David's possible enemies (King Saul or Absalom) as context for Psalm 13

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question

What is a time in your life when you felt like you were waiting for something, and how did it affect you emotionally and spiritually?

Simple Understanding

1. What is the main theme or message of Psalm 13 as discussed in the sermon?
2. How does the speaker describe the transition in David's emotions throughout Psalm 13?

Personal Reflection

3. Can you relate to David's feeling of being forgotten by God? When have you felt like God was distant?
4. How does reflecting on past experiences of God's faithfulness help you in current struggles?

Critical Thinking

5. The sermon mentions bringing questions to God without questioning His character. What is the difference between the two?
6. How does the story of the persistent widow in Luke 18 illustrate the importance of persistence in prayer?

Application and Action

7. What steps can you take to trust in God's promise during times of waiting or suffering?
8. How can our church community or small group better support each other in bringing our questions and requests to God?

Deeper Reflection

9. In what ways can the realization of God's deliverance through Jesus transform your perspective on your current challenges?
10. How can a deeper understanding of God's covenant love influence the way you approach difficult times in your life?

Practical Applications:

1. How can we incorporate bringing our questions and requests to God into our daily routines? What tangible steps can we take to ensure we communicate with God regularly?

Suggested Answer: Setting a specific time for prayer each day can help establish a routine. Keeping a journal to write down questions or concerns can also aid in bringing them to God. Practicing prayer before meals or during a commute might be helpful as well.

2. What are practical ways we can support each other as a community to carry each other's burdens as encouraged in Galatians 6:2?

Suggested Answer: Forming small accountability groups within the small group can offer a space for sharing burdens. Checking in through weekly text chains, offering help with practical needs, or creating dedicated prayer times for each other are ways to offer support.

3. How can we remind ourselves of God's past faithfulness when facing current struggles? What are some practical reminders that can help us keep this perspective?

Suggested Answer: Creating a 'blessing journal' where we regularly note past instances of God's faithfulness can serve as a reminder. Displaying Bible verses around the home or on phone backgrounds that speak of God's faithfulness can also reinforce this perspective.

4. When emotions feel overwhelming in times of struggle, what can we do to ensure our beliefs and trust in God guide our actions rather than our fluctuating feelings?

Suggested Answer: Regularly reading and meditating on Scripture can anchor us in truth even when feelings are powerful. Seeking counsel and accountability within a small group can also provide external perspective and support.

5. How can reflecting on God's covenant love and His promises in Jesus inspire us to live differently in our daily interactions and decisions?

Suggested Answer: Recognizing the depth of God's love can inspire us to approach others with grace and patience. It can motivate us to make decisions that align with God's will, such as forgiving others readily and serving those in need with empathy and generosity.

Supplemental Discussion Questions

How have you experienced seasons of feeling distant from God, and how did you navigate through them?

In what ways can we bring our honest questions and doubts to God without questioning His character?

How does the example of David in Psalm 13 challenge or encourage your own prayer life?

What role does community play in supporting believers through times of spiritual struggle or waiting?

How does understanding Jesus' experience of God's absence on the cross impact your view of God's presence in your own life?

In what areas of your life do you need to trust God's faithful love, even when you can't see the outcome?

How can reflecting on God's past faithfulness help us maintain hope in current difficulties?

What does it mean to you that God's love is described as 'steadfast' or 'faithful', and how does this impact your relationship with Him?

How does the promise of eternal life through Jesus change our perspective on temporary suffering?

In what ways can we cultivate a 'bigger view of God' in our daily lives, especially during challenging times?

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: Bringing Our Questions to God

Reading: Psalm 13:1-6

Devotional: David's raw honesty in Psalm 13 teaches us that it's okay to bring our deepest questions and doubts to God. When we feel forgotten or abandoned, we can cry out "How long, O Lord?" Just as David did, we can express our anxieties and fears to our Heavenly Father. This vulnerability isn't a lack of faith, but rather an act of trust. By bringing our questions to God, we acknowledge His sovereignty and our dependence on Him. Today, reflect on any questions or doubts you've been hesitant to bring before God. Write them down and prayerfully present them to Him, trusting in His unfailing love and wisdom.

Day 2: Persistent Prayer in Times of Trouble

Reading: Luke 18:1-8

Devotional: Jesus' parable of the persistent widow encourages us to be steadfast in prayer, even when answers seem delayed. Like the widow who continually sought justice, we are called to "cry out to God day and night" (Luke 18:7). This persistence isn't about wearing God down, but about deepening our reliance on Him. In times of trouble, our consistent prayers align our hearts with God's will and strengthen our faith. Consider an area of your life where you've grown weary in prayer. Recommit to bringing this concern before God daily, trusting in His perfect timing and loving response.

Day 3: From Despair to Praise

Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Devotional: David's journey in Psalm 13 from anguish to praise mirrors our own spiritual walks. Paul's exhortation in Philippians 4 provides a roadmap for this transformation: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." As we bring our concerns to God, our perspective shifts from our circumstances to His character. This leads to a peace that "transcends all understanding." Today, practice turning your worries into worship. For each concern you bring to God, also offer a word of praise for who He is and what He has done.

Day 4: Trusting in God's Faithful Love**Reading:** Romans 8:35-39

Devotional: The sermon highlighted God's "faithful love" or "steadfast love" – a concept so profound it's difficult to fully translate. This love, demonstrated ultimately through Jesus Christ, is unshakeable and unconditional. Paul's powerful words in Romans 8 assure us that nothing can separate us from this love. Even in our darkest moments, when we feel most distant from God, His love remains constant. Reflect on times in your life when you've experienced God's faithful love. How can remembering these experiences strengthen your faith in current challenges?

Day 5: Hope in the Midst of Suffering**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Devotional: The message of Psalm 13 and the sermon remind us that our current sufferings are not the end of the story. Paul encourages us to fix our eyes on what is unseen and eternal, rather than our temporary troubles. This eternal perspective allows us to have hope even in the midst of pain and uncertainty. Jesus, who experienced the ultimate separation from God on the cross, has secured our eternal hope. Because of His sacrifice, we can face our trials with the assurance of God's presence and the promise of future glory. Today, consider how your current struggles might be shaping you for eternity. Ask God to help you see your circumstances through the lens of His eternal purposes.