

# IS IT EVER OK TO COMPLAIN?

Psalms 3, 13, 17, 31, 57, 59, 142

Steve Mawhorter, Counseling and Adult Ministries Pastor

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**Note:** The following are the pastor's notes used in preaching this message. This is not a complete, word-for-word transcription of what was preached. These notes serve as a companion to the complete message, which is available by listening to the audio version. Bible quotes are primarily from NASB and ESV, respectively.

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## INTRODUCTION:

Why preach on complaining?

- Something that would help our church, coming from me, the counseling pastor
- My own story of my neck issue
- Walking down the street asking the Lord, and ding! There it was. Is it ever ok to complain? If so, how does that fit with:

Intro: dilemma between Philippians 2, 1 Corinthians 10 (Numbers), rejoice always, give thanks in everything. How does that square with the Psalms of Lament? How is it ok to complain as David did, when we are commanded not to, and we see God's discipline for doing so in the Old Testament?

I don't know what it's like

- to need a job
- to be infertile
- to lose a child
- to be diagnosed with cancer
- to be a single mom or dad

I do know what it's like:

- to lose a sister
- to be rejected
- to be in chronic physical pain
- emotional pain
- spiritual pain

When is it ok to complain? What should that complaint look like?

I want you to see today that a proper complaint will have four elements: a passionate cry, a legitimate complaint, a meaningful petition, and a confident assertion.

Turn with me to Psalm 13 where you will see all four. I'll also show you several other Psalms with these same components and, if there's time, we'll wrap it up with another Psalm with all four elements wrapped in a nice package.

Here in this Psalm, we're reminded that a Psalm itself can be considered a passionate cry out to God. The whole Psalm reads like one big cry out for help. Look with me as I read.

Psalm 13 lamenting over the oppression by his enemies

*"For the choir director. A Psalm of David.  
How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?  
How long will You hide Your face from me?"*

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*How long shall I take counsel in my soul,  
Having sorrow in my heart all the day?  
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?*

*Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;  
Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,*

*And my enemy will say, 'I have overcome him,'  
And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken.*

*But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness;  
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.*

*I will sing to the LORD,  
Because He has dealt bountifully with me."*

So, the first element in a proper complaint is a passionate cry

**I. PASSIONATE CRY** – what it means to “cry out,” who cries out in the Bible, where you see the cry in the Psalms, and how it differs from a simple prayer

**A. What Does It Mean To “Cry Out?”**

Many Hebrew words:

- Hamah – *loud* humming or murmuring, even to a growl or roar
- Shava – high-pitched *shout* for help
- Tsa’aq – *shriek* as if in grief
- Rinnah – *ringing or shrill*
- Qa’ra – to utter a *loud sound*
  
- To utter a loud sound, ringing cry, cry for help, call on the name of the Lord, call for help, cry out in need; *an audible sound*
  
- You don’t have to cry
  
- But, it’s more than a simple prayer (ever noticed that God seems to answer cries more than prayers?) or just thinking it in your head

**B. Examples Of Those Who Cried Out In The Bible?**

- **The children of Israel** cried out for deliverance. God responded, - Exodus 3:8 - “*...I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry...*” Then, when after finally being released, they were on the run and they looked behind them and saw the Egyptians coming after them. Not trusting God’s protection, they cried out to the Lord again. - Exodus 14:10 - “*As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD.*”

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- **Moses** cried to the Lord on behalf of Pharaoh, to take the frogs away - Exodus 8:12 – *“Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses **cried** to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh.”*
  - **The book of Judges** – repeatedly, the people would cry out for deliverance
  - **Hannah**, after being provoked over and over by her rival, living with an unsympathetic husband (aren't I better than ten sons?), she wept bitterly and prayed to the Lord. I think we would say she was crying out to God - 1 Samuel 1:9-10 – *“Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. She, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.”*
  - **Samuel** after seeing that Saul was a mistake - 1 Samuel 15:10-11 – *“... the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, ‘I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands.’ And Samuel was distressed and **cried out** to the Lord all night.”*
  - **Elijah** – the widow at Zarephath whose son had taken ill after he got there – 1 Kings 17:20, 21 – *“And he **called** to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord my God, hast Thou also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying by causing her son to die?’ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and **called** to the Lord, and said, ‘O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child’s life return to him.’”*

The Lord heard his prayer and healed the boy

- **Jonah**, while in the belly of a great fish, Jonah prayed to the Lord - Jonah 2:2 - *“and he said, ‘I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.’”*
- **Jeremiah** is known as the weeping prophet; a laughing stock among the people, mocked by everyone. I'm sure he cried out more than a few times - Jeremiah 20:7-8 – *“O LORD, You have deceived me and I was deceived; You have overcome me and prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me. For each time I speak, I **cry aloud**; I proclaim violence and destruction, Because for me the word of the LORD has resulted In reproach and derision all day long.”*
- **The disciples cried out** in fear when Jesus walked on water - Matthew 14:26
- **The demons** in Matthew 8:29 and Luke 4; Luke 8 (Gerasene demoniac), the man (he **cried out**) with a boy with an unclean spirit in him (Luke 9:38)
- **Two blind beggars** (Matthew 20:30; Mark 10:46-52) (blind Bartameus) at the road near Jericho, called out for mercy. The people shouted them down, but Bart **cried out** all the more, and Jesus had mercy on them, and healed them of their blindness.
- **Paul**

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- **Jesus** – Mark 15:34 - “*At the ninth hour Jesus **cried out** with a loud (megas) voice (phone), ‘ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ which is translated, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’*”

Who else cried out to God? Who didn't?

- **David** - The king of all criers himself. Listen to this one from David - Psalm 55:17 – “*Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice.*”

## C. Where You See The Cry In The Psalms

### 1. Sometimes the cry is subtle

**Psalm 13:1** - “*How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?*”

**Psalm 59:1-2** ... when Saul sent men and they watched the house in order to kill him. “*Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; Set me securely on high away from those who rise up against me. Deliver me from those who do iniquity And save me from men of bloodshed.*”

### 2. Sometimes the cry is right at the beginning (Psalm 17:1; 31:1-8; 57:1-2; 142:1)

**Psalm 17:1** - *A Prayer of David.*

“*Hear a just cause, O LORD, give heed to my cry;  
Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.*”

**Psalm 57:1, 2** - *For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.*

“*Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me,  
For my soul takes refuge in You;  
And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge  
Until destruction passes by.  
I will cry to God Most High,  
To God who accomplishes all things for me.*”

**Psalm 142:1** - *Maskil (an instructive poem) of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.*

“*I cry aloud with my voice to the LORD;  
I make supplication with my voice to the LORD.*”

### 3. Sometimes the cry is in the middle

**Psalm 3:4** - “*I was crying to the LORD with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.*”

### 4. Sometimes the cry is both at the beginning and in the middle

**Psalm 17:1** - *A Prayer of David.*

“*Hear a just cause, O LORD, give heed to my cry;*

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*Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.”*

**Psalm 17:6** - *“I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech.”*

In all cases, there is a cry and that cry is directed to God, not to another person.

I hope you can see that crying out to God is more than a simple prayer . . .

Robin Wassenaar’s story: she was jumped by a man, held captive for two days, and was beaten and raped. She was going to get beaten again with a broken coffee cup when she cried out . . . to a God she didn’t know; “Who’s going to take care of my daughter?” The guy got up, said he was sorry, and left.

A true, passionate cry comes from someone who, in their crisis, is:

- Humble
- Acknowledges their weakness and inability to solve it on their own
- Begging for mercy
- A believer in God’s faithfulness
- Ready to fully surrender
- Ready to let go of all their idols (If you can’t do that yet . . .)

**Psalm 66:18** - *“If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear...”*

**Jeremiah 11:11** - *“Therefore thus says the LORD, ‘Behold I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them..’”*

In essence, they cry out, “Uncle!” (remember that game when you were a kid?) They lay on their backs with their hands to the air, “I give up!”

I have met with countless men who were stuck in pornography or some other sexual sin – they cried out – the next morning, their wife found a text, or a letter, or he left the computer on with a picture there, or . . .

Maybe it’s time for you to cry out to God. Maybe you’ve “cried out” before, but it didn’t work. You can’t cry out “give me a better life” and continue in your sin and expect God to answer! Maybe you didn’t truly “cry out.”

## **II. A LEGITIMATE COMPLAINT** – Let’s go back to the Psalms to see what David complains about

**Psalm 13:1-3** - *For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

*“How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,”*

**A. Oppressed By Ungodly And Wicked People** – when are you going to help me?

**B. On The Run From His Own Son Absalom** (2 Samuel 13-14),

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**Psalm 3:1** - *A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. “O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me.”*

### C. Being Pursued By Unjust Men

**Psalm 59:3-7** - *“For behold, they have set an ambush for my life; Fierce men launch an attack against me, Not for my transgression nor for my sin, O LORD, For no guilt of mine, they run and set themselves against me. Arouse Yourself to help me, and see! You, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, Awake to punish all the nations; Do not be gracious to any who are treacherous in iniquity. Selah. They return at evening, they howl like a dog, And go around the city. Behold, they belch forth with their mouth; Swords are in their lips, For, they say, ‘Who hears?’”*

### D. Of The Pain And Consequences Of His Own Sin

**Psalm 6:2-7** - *“Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed. And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD--how long? Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness. For there is no mention of You in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks? I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears. My eye has wasted away with grief...”*

### E. Moral Foolishness Of The Human Race

**Psalm 14:1-7** - *For the choir director. A Psalm of David. “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.”*

### F. What We Can Complain About?

From what we’ve looked at so far,

- 1. Lack of justice**
  - ✓ 10-15 years, out in three
  - ✓ false accusations
  - ✓ having your identity stolen
- 2. Our own sin** and suffering because of it
- 3. Moral decay of our society**
- 4. Protection under persecution** (On account of others’ sins against him - David had a lot of enemies). This made me think about the similarity of our enemies are:

Can I say with Paul . . .

- My flesh – Romans 7:18-19, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want . . . Oh wretched man that I am!”
- The spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak.
- Satan – Ephesians 6: 12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

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## G. What We Shouldn't Complain About?

### 1. Small stuff

- Can't believe my husband left his socks on the floor again!
- No clean underwear again?!
- Not about bad traffic
- Weeds in the lawn
- Kids that are difficult
- Stepping on a Lego
- The stock market
- The lack of success

Archie Manning – his dad committed suicide, he couldn't win the Heisman because he broke his arm, his first son could not play football after high school, never had a winning season in 12 years of NFL, ran for his life, but he never complained.

### 2. Directed at leaders (1 Corinthians 10; Numbers 16:41; 17:5; 21:5)

### 3. Directed at each other (Acts 6:1)

### 4. Matters of obedience (Philippians 2:12-14), "in all things" (pertaining to obedience) don't be sitting on the inside when you're standing on the outside.

- "I can't believe I have to . . . follow that dumb dress code, be nice to that person, forgive that person" etc.
- "You're telling me I have to stay married to this woman"

**"For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach." (Deuteronomy 30:11)**

- How do I know if it's legit?
  - Never questions God's justice, timing, sovereignty, love. Proud people have to know why.
  - Doesn't lead to more complaining.
  - Expects only what God promises to do, not what I want Him to do.
- Just go to the Lord with it. See where your prayer takes you.

Passionate Cry  
Legitimate Complaint

## III. MEANINGFUL PETITION

Let's look again at **Psalm 13**

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**Psalm 13:1-4** - *“How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, And my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken.”*

Give me some hope!!!

**Psalm 3:7** - *“Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God! For You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked.”*

**Psalm 17:2** - *“Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; Let Your eyes look with equity.”* - Justice

**Psalm 17:8** - *“Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings.”* - Protection

**Psalm 17:13** - *“Arise, O LORD, confront him, bring him low; Deliver my soul from the wicked with Your sword...”* - Take him down (Retribution)

**Psalm 57:1** - *For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. “Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by.”* - Grace, comfort, security

**Psalm 59:1, 5** - *“Deliver me from my enemies...”; “...punish all the nations, have no mercy on villains and traitors.”* - Deliverance, mercy for me, justice for you

**Psalm 142:6-7** - *“Deliver me from my persecutors... Bring my soul out of prison...”*

### **A. Some Meaningful Petitions From David And His Psalms Of Lament:**

- Help
- Understanding (**Psalm 73 and Proverbs 2:3**)
- Justice
- Deliverance
- God to be glorified
- Protection
- Salvation
- God’s grace
- His mercy
- Strength (**Psalm 138:3**)
- Consider my affliction
- Listen to me
- Don’t hide from me
- Teach me
- Guide me, and so on.
- Spiritual Victory (**Jude 9**)

A true, passionate cry and a legitimate complaint does not rule out God’s sovereignty, His goodness, faithfulness, or anything else we know about Him. In fact it claims His sovereignty, His goodness, and His faithfulness. Why else would you complain to Him if He can’t do anything about it?!



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## B. Why Don't We Go To Him More?

Why don't we cry out to Him and ask?

1. We think He doesn't want to be bothered with us (Luke 18:7-8 – the unjust judge).
2. We have forgotten that He is our Father – crying out is our natural child-to-father response (when I was five years old and Dad would leave for work)
3. Maybe it's just pride – we want to think we can do it on our own
4. We're so well taught not to complain, that we think we're not even allowed to go to Him with a complaint.
5. Maybe we've camped out so much on the providence of God that we've forgotten that God loves it when we go to Him.
6. Maybe we don't realize our need

When a farmer in Michigan became prosperous, he rewarded himself with the most efficient, high-powered tractor he could buy. He was using it one day with a conveyor belt to lift crops into a barn loft. Suddenly his sleeve caught in the mechanism, and he was jerked into the path of the large wheel. He realized that in only seconds he would be crushed to death, as had happened to a neighbor in a similar accident only a few weeks before.

He cried out in a loud voice, "O God, save me!"

At that instant the engine stalled. A farmhand came running out and helped free the man from the belt mechanism. They checked the engine, but could find no plausible, mechanical reason for the stall. Together they realized that God had stopped the engine in response to the farmer's cry."

"As the farmer publicly gave this report, he also acknowledged that before this experience he hadn't felt his need for the Lord because things were going so well for him. Now he realized that every day was a gift from the Lord ."

If you've felt yourself hesitant to cry out to God, maybe this is why you haven't seen Him act.

Passionate Cry  
Legitimate Complaint  
Meaningful Petition

## IV. CONFIDENT ASSERTION

### A. Change In Attitude (I will vs. He will) – back to Psalm 13

**Psalm 13:5-6** – *"But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me."*

**Psalm 3:6** – *"I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me round about."*

**Psalm 17:15** – *"As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake."*

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**Psalm 57:5-10** – *“Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They dug a pit before me; They themselves have fallen into the midst of it. Selah. My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises! Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your lovingkindness is great to the heavens And Your truth to the clouds.”*

**Psalm 59:16-17** – *“But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness in the morning, For You have been my stronghold And a refuge in the day of my distress. O my strength, I will sing praises to You; For God is my stronghold, the God who shows me lovingkindness.”*

What if you’ve cried out like this and you haven’t had an answer yet to your prayer?

- It’s not a formula (“OK God, here’s my four steps. Now, You . . . “)
- God may get more glory later by a “wait” now
- To make you more fervent

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**, “red hot prayer means praying perseveringly; . . . the one who prays gathers force as he proceeds, and grows more fervent when God delays to answer.” (*Morning and Evening: Daily Readings*)

If you’ve been told wait, you’re not alone:

- Job, “I cry out to you, but You do not answer me” (Job 30:20)
- David, “O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear” (Psalm 22:2)
- Habakkuk, “O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? (Habakkuk 1:2)

If God doesn’t answer their cries, why would he answer mine? All these prayers were answered . . . later. I think you’re attitude will change more if your prayer life is more fervent and your answers are delayed. Eventually, your “I will” will build and you will praise Him more as you see His will unfold. Listen to these . . . and note how his I will has turned into a He will . . .

## **B. Crying Turns Into Praising** (He will)

**Psalm 13:6b** – *“I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.”*

**Psalm 57:3** – *“He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.”*

**Psalm 59:8-10** – *“But You, O LORD, laugh at them; You scoff at all the nations. Because of his strength I will watch for You, For God is my stronghold. My God in His lovingkindness will meet me; God will let me look triumphantly upon my foes.”*

**Psalm 142:7** – *“Bring my soul out of prison, So that I may give thanks to Your name; The righteous will surround me, For You will deal bountifully with me.”*

All of the Psalms of Lament will point you towards something about God (grace, mercy, love, strength, goodness, faithfulness, compassion) and that is what changes your attitude.

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A proper complaint will involve a passionate cry, a legitimate complaint, a meaningful petition, and a confident assertion.

## CONCLUSION:

Let's take a look at all four of these in one Psalm together wrapped in a neat package. Turn with me to Psalm 31:

### A. The Passionate cry (Psalm 31:1-8)

*For the choir director. A Psalm of David. "In You, O LORD, I have taken refuge; Let me never be ashamed; In Your righteousness deliver me. Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; Be to me a rock of strength, A stronghold to save me. For You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me. You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength. Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth. I hate those who regard vain idols, But I trust in the LORD. I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness, Because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul, And You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a large place."*

### B. The Legitimate Complaint (Psalm 31:9-13)

*"Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; My eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow And my years with sighing; My strength has failed because of my iniquity, And my body has wasted away. Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, Especially to my neighbors, And an object of dread to my acquaintances; Those who see me in the street flee from me. I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many, Terror is on every side; While they took counsel together against me, They schemed to take away my life. "*

### C. The Meaningful Petition (Psalm 31:14-18)

*"But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD, I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me. Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; Save me in Your lovingkindness. Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I call upon You; Let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol. Let the lying lips be mute, Which speak arrogantly against the righteous With pride and contempt."*

### D. The Confident Assertion (Psalm 31:19-24)

*"How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men! You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man; You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the LORD, For He has made marvelous His lovingkindness to me in a besieged city. As for me, I said in my alarm, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried to You. O love the LORD, all you His godly ones! The LORD preserves the faithful And fully recompenses the proud doer. Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD."*

I'm sure you've prayed before with no seeming answer, but have you cried out to him? Did you lay out a legitimate complaint with a meaningful petition? Did you sense your attitude change as you cried out?

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In moments, seasons of life, when gripped with fear, anxiety, and trouble, the right step toward seeing God do amazing things is to simply cry out - to use our voice in fervent appeal for His help, and then wait for Him to do His work.

Years ago, The Dallas Morning News tells a story about a man named Sherman Jackson, who was a little late to church one night, but that's ok. He had quite a story to tell.

“Sherman, 36, and his 7-year-old daughter, Alexa, had stopped for gas on their way to church....As they were about to drive away, a 30-ish man said he needed some help. He offered Sherman money if he'd help him jump-start his car

Sherman said no, but then felt guilty and said yes, putting Alexa in the back seat.

They hadn't gone far when the man reached into his pocket, pulled out a gun and stuck it into his rib cage saying, “OK, man, this is for real. You give me all of your money right now, or I'm going to unload this gun on you.”

Sherman was terrified, of course. And mad at himself for putting his daughter in danger. He said to the robber, “Here's all my money. Take it all.” But the robber didn't believe him. “That's not all. Give it all to me,” he said, shoving the gun harder into Sherman's ribs.

It just so happened that Sherman kept Gideon Bibles in his car with a dollar bill tucked in each one. He gives them to the homeless. The gunman spotted one of those bills sticking out and began to scream at Sherman: “You lied to me! There is more money here.”

Just then, something came over Sherman, and he began to pray out loud. “Father in heaven, hear my cry and deliver me from this present evil.... ”

He felt a sudden calm. He said he lost all consciousness of “concern and worry.” A boldness took over. He slowed the car and began to make a U-turn. The gunman screamed, “What are you doing?” Sherman said, “I am not taking orders from you anymore. This car is being turned around.”

The robber put the gun against Sherman's chest. “You don't get it, man. You mean nothing to me. I'll pull this trigger.”

Sherman cut him off and said, “No, you don't understand.” “Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. My Jesus is stronger than your gun.”

He could see the gunman tug on the trigger. The hammer drew back. But Sherman didn't flinch. He pulled over and stopped. “I want to tell you about Jesus,” he said to the gunman. The man wavered a moment, lowered his gun, and then dropped his head. When he looked up, he was crying. “I'm so sorry, man. I'm so, so sorry,” he said. “I was going “to shoot you.”

Sherman said, “Don't worry about it. I forgive you,” And then he began to tell the man about new life through belief in Jesus.

Sherman urged the man to go on to church with him, but he declined. He asked Sherman to drive him to his car at a store. Along the way, the man began to tell Sherman about all his problems. He said his name

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was Mike and reached out to shake Sherman's hand. Sherman continued talking to him about starting life anew with God.

As they neared the grocery, Sherman said, "And by the way, Mike, I want my money clip back."

"Do what?!" Mike exclaimed. But then he meekly handed it over.

"And," Sherman went on, "you are keeping this New Testament, and you are going to read it like you never read anything else before. And I'm going to be praying for you, Mike, that God will come into your life."

They pulled alongside Mike's car. "He got out with the gun in one hand, the Bible in the other hand, and tears in his eyes." And Sherman drove on to church.

A few weeks later, Mike was captured and is now in regular contact with Sherman."

A proper complaint will have four elements: a passionate cry, a legitimate complaint, a meaningful petition, and a confident assertion.

Practical Application:

1. Take your Bible and find another lamenting Psalm and see if you can identify the elements that you've seen today.
2. Write out your own Psalm.
3. Read Psalm 107 on your own. Four different types of people are listed:
  - a. The aimless wanderer who is fainthearted (Psalm 107:4-6)
  - b. The rebellious who are now helpless (Psalm 107:10-13)
  - c. The fool who is now depressed because of his sin (Psalm 107:17-18)
  - d. The adventuring risk-taker who is now in misery (Psalm 107:23-27)

If you're fainthearted, helpless, depressed, in misery, cry out to the Lord. "[Psalm 107:13 NASB] *"Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses."* Four times in that one Psalm.