

[TITLE] Good morning Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. We are going to be continuing our sermon series called wounds. Where we are looking at the hurts and wounds that we have in life and in our church community. We call them out confess them in order to find healing.

Today our scripture is going to be found in Psalm 13. So if you would like to follow along with us there. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, our passage is only 6 verses so lets read our entire passage together which comes from the book of Psalm chapter 13.

[1] SCRIPTURE Psalm 13

*“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
4 lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,”
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
5 But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
6 I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.”*

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

INTRO

[2] I don't know about you but I absolutely love the book of Psalms is covers such a wide range of emotions but when your study it, it is extremely complex in structure and meaning. The words that the authors choose, magnify an incredible amount of depth and insight into not only how the author relates to God but the complexity of God himself as the author sees it.

Today, because of the internal complexity, I am going to bring up a few words from the original Hebrew. I know on the surface it can seem like useless information or to others it might just go clean over your head. But I want to bring it up because I think that it can be really helpful to us, removed by language and culture. It provides a deeper perspective into the text and the heart of the author. So I hope that you find it helpful and not distracting, but speaking of author...

This Psalm has the title 'To the choirmaster. Psalm of David'. The word for Psalm here is 'mizmor' which mean this was a song that was sung in Hebrew most likely by the Levite priests. 'Mizmor' usually meant that it was to be sung accompanied by musical instruments. So for the next 30 minutes we are going to sing and chant this in Hebrew, Lee will you come up and play for us. I'm just kidding. I wouldn't subject you to my sing voice. That would be considered cruel and unusual torture and I'm pretty sure is a war crime.

This is a Psalm that is commonly attributed to being written David because of this title. Some would argue that the title could be translated as 'of', 'to', 'for', or 'by David'. So they will make that it could be some unknown author. I think there is a stronger case and evidence that it is written by David than there is against, if you want more information about that I have it in the sermon note on the app or we can talk afterwards about it¹.

I say all of that because I am going to refer to the author of this Psalm as David. If I didn't say that someone would come to me after and go 'well actually my study bible says...'. The rest of you wouldn't have thought any different if I called him David and didn't say anything. So, I know the case but I am going to say David.

Something that is common throughout the Psalms is this contrast between Lament and joy. Sometime as in the case with the Psalm today it's both, in the same chapter. Someone reading through this will notice there is no in-between. It is highest of highs or lowest of lows. Wither it is David or someone else writing them you want to prescribe Lithium for their bipolar disorder.

As funny as it is to joke about, in all seriousness, these emotional extremes, I also think it is one of the most beautiful things about the Psalms. It seems like there is a Psalm for every season of life and no matter how big the emotion or feeling of defeat or desperation they all point back to the character of God that brings comfort to the situation, thoughts or emotions. This Psalm is no exception.

Psalm 13 is a song of Lament and praise, as I said before it would have been sung by the Levites in the temple with musical instruments. Some Psalms, like this one, would be sung as they walked up the stairs to the temple, or while they would perform rituals or ceremonies. In ancient Israel, "Music was a medium through which the Israelites were able to worship, expressing thanks and praise, as well as publicly announced the LORD's presence."¹

It is the same today when we worship corporately at church, at least it should be. We here at Cornerstone, have begun to go through and re-evaluate the songs that we sing during our Sunday mornings. When we worship corporately, together as a body, they should be songs that are pointing praise to God and glory to him. Not about ourselves or how much God does for us but more of an expression for just how amazing he is.

[3] When we look at this passage this morning, we should keep that in mind, this was a song to sung by the priests as the praised and gave glory to God. So that is our lens for our passage. When we look at it we have to see this as 3 stanzas of a song.

The first stanza is verses 1 and 2. David is expressing his need to be delivered by God. Stanza 2 is an appeal to God to deliver him. And the 3 stanza is an expression of confidence that God is going to deliver him.

¹ Anderson, Mindy. 2016. "The Ritual Use of Music in Ancient Israelite Worship." *Studia Antiqua* 2, no. 1 (January). https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studiaantiqua/vol2/iss1/14?utm_source=scholarsarchive.byu.edu%2Fstudiesantiqua%2Fvol2%2Fiss1%2F14&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

[4] The intricate thing about this Hebrew song is this 3 in 3 structure. Even though there are 3 stanzas that develop through the song in its direction, within each stanza there are three parts that connect each stanza together.

Generally, this is done so that the psalms remain intact. This is so that one section isn't focused on, over emphasized, or sung alone without the other parts. With this Psalm specifically he will ask questions in the expression of need, that are clarified in the appeal and answered in his confidence. This seems a little complicated but as we dive in it will make more sense this is something just to be aware of as we go through it. If its helpful you can mark these in your bible so that as we go through and come back to them it'll be easier to connect the dots. So, let's dive in starting in starting with the first stanza,

[5] BODY Psalm 13:1

*"How long, oh LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?"*

This first part is a cry of desperation. The way that this is being expressed is like a son would to their father. A son that has a deep emotional and psychological relationship with his father. This is the tone of this expression. Desperation like a child that is lost and is looking for their parent. Starting off with the phrase 'how long' is a common lament². This cry of lament and desperation, communicating this great need for God to act or intervene to end his suffering.

Think of it like a kid on a car ride even if the car ride is only an hour. 10 minutes into the drive, the questions start. 'Are we there yet?' 'How much longer?'. From the child's perspective it is this grueling torture to be stuck in the car. For them they are suffering. David is the child in the back seat. David is suffering and he is asking, 'how much longer?' 'can we done with this yet?'

He points out why this feels so desperate when says that he feels forgotten by God. This is what is called anthropomorphism (an-throw-pa-morph-ism). That's when we attribute a human quality or characteristic to God. In this case David is assigning forgetfulness to God. God is not like us and he is not forgetful. What we can see is that David knows the real reason that God feels far from him, but he is more comfortable with believing that God has forgotten about him than what is really going on.

He says that he feels forgotten because God has hidden his face from him. Its not that God is gone just that to David, God is hidden. According to the Torah, the first 5 books of the bible, God said that he would hide himself from the Israelites because of their sin. In Deut. 31:17-18, God said that his presence will be hidden from the people of Israel as a chastisement or discipline. This meant there was no communication from him, in dreams, through prophets or through casting lots.

We even see this same idea repeated for the individual in the New Testament in 1 Cor. 10:11. God hides himself from us as a form of discipline of our sin, or unrepentant sin. Not that he is gone but is hidden. God's discipline is common subject Proverbs says,

[6] Proverbs 3:11-12

*"My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,"*

² Ps. 6:30, 13:1, 35:17, 74:10, 90:13

*¹²for the Lord reproves him whom he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights.”*

Again in the new Testament Hebrews 12 the entire chapter is about the discipline that God enacts on his children. In this feeling of being forgotten or God hiding his face from David he believe it is God disciplining him for his sin. If that is what David believes is happening then that would explain verse 2. See how it compounds?

[7] Psalm 13:2

*“How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?”*

If God has hidden himself from David and has cut off communication then he would take counsel with his soul. This is the word ‘naphesh’ which refers to the immaterial part of himself. Since God is not communicating with him he feels alone. He has no friend to give advice and help him in his need for wisdom. David’s son, Solomon, references this truth in...

Proverbs 27:9

*“Oil and perfume make the heart glad,
and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.”*

David feels forgotten, abandoned, alone and in sorrow. Sorrow in his heart, this word for sorrow is ‘yagan’ which is illustrated not as sorrow being a tangible thing, but it is defined by its relation to Joy. That means ‘yagan’ is the opposite of Joy³. He uses it to give a full picture of his emotional turmoil. Something that he can only express as a child to a father that he has this deep emotional connection to.

It’s important to note that this suffering right now is emotional. There is no physical turmoil as of right now. Which is why he points out about his enemies in the next part, as if to say right now its just emotional but I need your deliverance or it can become both.

He says that he sees his enemies being exalted or elevated over himself. He sees that they have been successful. This would be David probably hearing word from other nations and messengers/spies about the lands or people that his enemies are conquering or the advancements that they have been making in their kingdoms. Their success presents a physical threat to David and the nation of Israel, because with each success they become more powerful and a more formidable foe.

As they grow stronger David in his emotional state feels that he has not grown at all. Like he is in the same place that he was or worse than were he used to be. He sees them being successful where he is failing and believes God is working for them and not for David, because he feels lost and alone.

This is a crisis of faith for David. David is wrestling with God about the problem of evil, like we talked about a couple months ago, Why do bad things happen to good people, or good things happen to bad people. In the mind of David every time he uses the word ‘Lord’ some translations in the English will have this ‘Lord’ in all caps it is the name of God ‘YHWH’. This name means the God of Israel.

³ Jeremiah 8:18

David refers to him as such because for the people of Israel YHWH was righteous, just and Sovereign. Israel was His people and He was their God. From David's perspective if YHWH was a righteous and just judge, He should not be allowing the enemies of the king of Israel to be succeeding. By calling on YHWH and referring to his enemies it is a comparison of God's character. He is YHWH, the enemies of Israel should be the enemies of YHWH, yet it feels like God is working against Israel or at least not helping, hence being hidden from them. A few Psalms before this in another Psalm attributed to David he writes,

[8] Psalm 9:6-8

*"The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins;
their cities you rooted out;
the very memory of them has perished.
7 But the Lord sits enthroned forever;
he has established his throne for justice,
8 and he judges the world with righteousness;
he judges the peoples with uprightness.*

This completes the first stanza of the song. David has communicated that he needs God to intervene, in order for him to live, endure, or thrive he requires God's deliverance. Now that he has expressed the need he moves into the next stanza which is his appeal or his telling God what he needs or requests God to do.

[9] Psalm 13:3

*"Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,"*

The English word 'consider' is the Hebrew word 'habitah', it can also be translated as 'look'⁴. This is almost a term of endearment, one that establishes the dynamics of a relationship between two individuals. It means not just to carefully consider, but it is to give careful attention with a sense of affinity for, acceptance of, and pleasure in the object of that attention. He is saying to God, 'carefully examine me knowing that you love me and accept me'.

Then he says "answer me, O LORD (YHWH) my God;". This is an appeal to YHWH as a sign of Faith. He is acknowledging YHWH as his God, despite his feeling forgotten, despite his feeling distance he see and knows that YHWH is his God. Therefore is the only one capable of answering this appeal with this loving consideration.

David asks for God to "light up his eyes" before he perishes because of his enemies. This is a restoration of health or strength⁵. David is feeling this emotional paralysis and he needs God to restore his strength and health. Again is this sense of urgency. He believes that if God does not intervene then he will soon die. In that sense of urgency he appeals again to God's character...

[10] Psalm 13:4

*"lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed over him,'
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken."*

⁴ Gen. 19:22, Ps 5:11; 119:6; 119:53, Amos 5:22

⁵ This phrase is used also in 1 Sam. 14:27.

He knows that if his enemies were to defeat him or conquer Israel that they are going to respond in arrogance. David knows and appeals that if they conquer him, their arrogance will be in a mocking fashion, hence the dialogue of what his enemies will say. This is an appeal again to the character of YHWH. If he is defeated then his enemies will not only claim that they defeated David but they defeated YHWH, Himself. This is similar to the words of Moses in Deut. 32:27. Where Moses appeals to God for the arrogance and misunderstanding of the enemies of Israel should they be conquered.

David believes his enemies will prevail because David was shaken, this is the Hebrew word 'mot' is a lack of security or safety. His enemies will succeed and rejoice because David is not secured by God, at least David, in this moment, does not feel confident in his security. We see this word all over the book of Psalms because in the ones written by David and the ones that were not, YHWH is the God that causes the righteous to not be shaken⁶.

This again points to a potential crisis of faith for him. He believes that YHWH is God and goes to him with these struggles. He knows YHWH as the God that causes the righteous to not be shaken, but that is not how he feels right now. So, the question becomes is that no true, does YHWH not provide security to those who are righteous? The alternative is what David tried to avoid earlier is if YHWH does and David feels this way, then maybe he is not counted among the righteous like he thought he was.

In Stanza 1 David established his need to be delivered. Stanza 2, David makes his appeal to God to restore him so that God is not mocked by his enemies, and a reminder of God to provide him security. In this third and final stanza, everything seems to be flipped on its head. There appears to be this dramatic shift in David's perspective on his current situation.

[11] Psalm 13:5

*"But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation"*

This points to the past tense. He has been here before and in those times he trusted God⁷. The basis of this trust is not the results of the situations and circumstances that he had faced before. Because some of those situations were not good, Psalm 3 was written when he was hiding in wilderness from his son Absalom, who betrayed him and rebelled against him to overthrow Davidⁱⁱ.

The basis of this trust is the steadfast love of God. This steadfast love is the word 'chesed'. It is YHWH's unceasing covenantal love that is exemplified in his promises to the Israelites⁸. This is the unfailing love that might "turn God's anger" away from the sin of David or the people of Israel, so that God will save them.

Because of the enlightenment of God's steadfast love, enlightenment that was asked for in verse 3, he will rejoice in his heart in the confidence of the salvation that he knows and believes will come. He says the same thing earlier in chapter 9.

[12] Psalm 9:13-14

⁶ Ps. 15:5, 16:8, 62:6, 112:6

⁷ Psalms 11:1

⁸ Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 34

*“Be gracious to me, O Lord!
 See my affliction from those who hate me,
 O you who lift me up from the gates of death,
¹⁴ that I may recount all your praises,
 that in the gates of the daughter of Zion
 I may rejoice in your salvation.”*

This rejoicing is a contrast to what was said in verse 2. He was in a place that was opposite of Joy but has now found complete joy. He rejoices because of the steadfast love and salvation found in YHWH. The final verse in this stanza reads...

[13] Psalm 13:6

“I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.”

This is David entering into worship. Even though the salvation he is rejoicing in and the tangible feeling of God’s steadfast love have not come yet, David is going to worship God. It is not out of the answered prayer that he worships but because of YHWH being a God that is faithful to his promises. David has seen God’s fulfillment of those promises. Through them David has been dealt with, bountifully by God.

This dealt with bountifully is the word ‘gamāl’, which means to deal out, to do good that is full and complete. God when he has dealt with David in the past, it was good and it was full and it was complete. David has expectant hope and trust that he will do the same thing in the future and for that he will sing praise to him. This is a reference to Psalm 5...

[14] Psalm 5:7-8

*“But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.
 I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.
⁸ Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me.”*

[15] David ends this Psalm with trust gratitude and praise. This is why that structure of 3 points across 3 stanzas is important. There is this dramatic shift in David’s approach that it could seem out of place and potentially written off. Without it however its depressing, there is this cry of desperation and asking for God to help and nothing to encourage or pull someone singing this out of this deep emotional turmoil.

Music is a powerful thing, especially when it is used as a tool to communicate with God and sing praises to him. Without the third stanza its depressing. Think about it like listening to sad, dreary music all day. It brings you down. The inclusion of this third stanza turns that completely around and brings about praise in the emotional turmoil. Even though the shift from verse 4 to verse 5 & 6 is drastic it was necessary.

Some will advocate that David, as he is writing this appeal received what he is asking for. In that moment of quill on papyrus, or whatever he was writing this song on, that he received the restoration he was asking for. While entirely possible I think the reason for it is much simpler than that. I think David was not just reminded of these things, but he thinks like the prophet Habakkuk did. David looks in hindsight to all of the other times that maybe he felt like this, when he was in the cave hiding from Saul, or going to battle against his son or whatever.

In those moments God proved himself to be exactly who he said he was. David then gains assurance and confidence of all of the things that he feels he needs to be delivered from. Which in turn could have given him that feeling of restoration.

GOSPEL

That is what is so incredible about the message of the gospel. It is not a one and done message. It is not that we accept it once in our life and then we go on from there. It is a message and a story that needs new life in us every moment of everyday.

The message of the gospel is this that we were enemies of God, lost in our sin. We had no way to pay the price. God then became poor in spirit emptying himself in order to take on flesh and live a perfect life. Only to be killed in one of the most gruesome and violent ways possible so that the wrath over your sins can be satisfied.

With the payment of sin taken care of by Christ's death, in his resurrection we have been equipped with righteousness from his son to become not just forgiven but in right standing with God.

This is the beautiful part, when we accept and believe in Jesus Christ we now have a relationship with God that is like David, like a son with a deep emotional and psychological connection to the Father. One could argue that we have an even deeper and closer relationship than David because we have the Holy Spirit living within us because of Christ. Something that David did not have. We are a temple for the Holy Spirit.

This is the 3 in 3 structure. Just for reference sake stanza one is the need, stanza 2 is the appeal and Stanza 3 is David's confidence. This structure shows the complexity and deep connection that we can have in relationship with God. Not just in how we relate to each other but how he works within us to glorify himself.

[16] Each stanza grows in understanding of how God operates. Each line in the need stanza is clarified by the appeal and answered in the confidence. It creates the ties from each stanza to the next to keep them together and the confidence that David points out is an answer to each of the needs and appeals.

- A- David felt God had forgotten him (need). He realizes God did not forget but was considering David's situation/circumstance (appeal). David once again is trusting God like he did when he felt this before (confidence).
- B- David's heart is grieved about his situation and that of the righteous (need). His sorrow will be overturned if he is enlightened (appeal). David's heart rejoices in the reflection of YHWH's character and reputation (Confidence).
- C- David's enemies appear to be exalted over him (need). David appeals to God otherwise he will be overcome (appeal). David sings and knows that God will deliver him (confidence).

Each stanza address each of the needs/concerns individually and completely. This is why they interconnect themselves because each stanza cannot stand by itself. They hinge on each other. When they are in place and sung together in complete and full representation, it illustrates not only that God is worthy to be praised, but that praise to the God in heaven is not dependent on the turmoil, sorrow, and emotional anguish that we presently find ourselves in.

[17] David's conclusion is that no matter what is going on God is more than deserving of his praise and gratitude and for 3 reasons, Who God is (Steadfast Love), what he has promised to do (full and final salvation⁹), and what he has already done (dealt bountifully with me).

APPLICATION

For many of us hearing all this, David's situation feels all too familiar. Maybe it is because you are in a place where you feel like God has forgotten you. You are struggling with sin, and You feel God has turned away from you and its more comfortable to feel forgotten instead of under discipline.

Maybe you just feel alone. Like God is not with you and left you to fight without him. In your loneliness you deceive yourself into thinking that God is too busy for you.

Or you feel like all of your enemies are closing in around you. It feels like they are succeeding and you are the same. Feeling helpless and unprotected. If not personally, with current events in what is happening to Israel. Terrorist organizations are succeeding and God's people are being killed are they rising up and we are soon under threat.

We all feel like the kids in the backseat of the road trip Jesus has taken the wheel and we are suffering asking are we there yet?

Any parent that has been in that situation knows this but for those that haven't here's what happening in that moment. For the kids the even hour-long road trip feels like an eternity. Even if though you tell them it won't be much longer, they still dramatically complain as if they were undergoing waterboarding. As a parent though we know that if they would just trust that we as parents know where we are going. With that trust they would have an opportunity to relax in the backseat. They would have the opportunity to observe and enjoy not only the world that is passing them by outside the car, but also the opportunity to build upon the relationships with the people inside the car.

When our family used to go on long trips before we had Gracelyn, crystal liked to drive. For her she can't sleep in the car and she gets bored, and she gets car sick if she looks at her phone while the car is moving. I used to love it when she drove. Then I could unplug or at least not feel singular focus in driving. I could focus on the conversation. One time we did a study on the entire book of Acts on our way back from Texas. I was free to read the passages to her and pull up commentaries on my phone or turn to other passages. It was awesome because I didn't have to worry about being in charge of the journey, Crystal was following the GPS and I trusted her to drive.

When we have wounds by others and especially when we feel like we have been wounded by God, the first thing that comes into question, is that trust. We no longer believe that the driver knows what he is doing, we start to worry about all of the things that could go wrong or question the things that we have no control over. We start to question, 'how long O LORD?'

There is nothing wrong with the question. That normal to wonder from a place of curiosity or to appeal for confidence in the journey. So, if we are going to have those questions, God is the person to take it to. We can appeal to him for enlightenment, seeking understand for the present circumstances, even acknowledging the hurt of feeling forgotten, alone or in danger.

⁹ Psalm 12:5

[18] We should ask the questions and acknowledge the hurt, but trust God when he answers 'soon'.

We don't do it because we must. This is not a dictatorship; you have the free-will to respond the way you see fit. However, we should respond in the same way David did, with praise and worship. We do it not out of obligation but for the same reasons David did.

[19] We do it because of who God is, the God of steadfast love¹⁰. We do it because of what he has promised to do as the God of our eternal salvation. Salvation that we get to experience now because it is full, final, and complete salvation¹¹. Finally, we worship and praise for what he has already done, because he has dealt bountifully with us always¹².

The season of life you are in might be really hard. In the hardship turn to your father acknowledge the hurt. Ask the questions but trust God. Because when you ask 'How long O LORD?' 'When will this be over?' he is saying, 'soon'.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

COMMUNION

¹⁰ 1 John 4:7-21

¹¹ Romans 10:9-10

¹² Proverbs 10:22

ⁱ Of book 1 in Psalms (ch1-41), 37 of those Psalms are attributed to David by the title of the passage, titles that would have been included in the original manuscript. The Bold titles are not and were added by the editors and publishers at different times. The exceptions to book 1 would be chapter 1, 2, 10, and 33. Throughout the book of Psalms there are several chapters that are linked to very specific events in David's life (ch. 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 62, 142)

ⁱⁱ Absalom was the Son of David from Maacah. Absalom was the son that found out about Amnon (His half-brother from Ahinoah) raping his sister Tamar. Absalom devised a plan for revenge and had Amnon killed (2 Sam 13). He later in secret devises this plan to remove his father David from the position as King of Israel (2 Sam 15:1-12). He forces Israel to be split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom Judah (2 Sam 16). David at first hides in the wilderness from his son (2 Sam. 15:13-37). But Absalom is murder in battle by David's general Joab with three spears (2 Sam 18:1-18). David grieved the death of his Son even with all that he had done (2 Sam. 31-33).