



Summer
through the Psalms

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Psalm 88: Psalms of Lament

And the Dark Night of the Soul

Psalm 88 NIV

*Lord, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.
May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.
I am overwhelmed with troubles
and my life draws near to death.
I am counted among those who go down
to the pit; I am like one without strength.
I am set apart with the dead, like the slain who
lie in the grave, whom you remember no more,
who are cut off from your care.*

- Psalms 88

*⁶ You have put me in the lowest pit,
in the darkest depths.*

*Your wrath lies heavily on me;
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.*

*You have taken from me my closest friends
and have made me repulsive to them.*

*I am confined and cannot escape;
my eyes are dim with grief.*

*I call to you, Lord, every day;
I spread out my hands to you.*

- Psalms 88

*¹⁰ Do you show your wonders to the dead?
Do their spirits rise up and praise you?
Is your love declared in the grave,
your faithfulness in Destruction?
Are your wonders known in the place of
darkness, or your righteous deeds
in the land of oblivion?
But I cry to you for help, Lord;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
Why, Lord, do you reject me
and hide your face from me?*

- Psalms 88

*15 From my youth I have suffered and
been close to death;
I have borne your terrors and am in despair.
Your wrath has swept over me;
your terrors have destroyed me.
All day long they surround me like a flood;
they have completely engulfed me.
You have taken from me friend and neighbor—
darkness is my closest friend.*

- Psalms 88

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65 of the 150 psalms
can be classified as laments

The Theological Purpose of Biblical Laments are to provide us blueprints for how we are to interact with God during these seasons of disorientation.

Laments are prayers that follow a pattern of

1. Address to God
2. Description of complaint
3. Request for God's help
4. Expression of trust in God

1. Address to God:

¹ *Lord, you are the God who saves me;*

Psalms of lament are prayers that orient us to stand face to face with God in the middle of whatever difficulties we are going through.

2. Description of our complaint:

2. Description of our complaint:

*³ I am overwhelmed with troubles
and my life draws near to death.*

*I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am like one without strength.*

*I am set apart with the dead, like the slain who lie
in the grave, whom you remember no more, who
are cut off from your care.*

*⁶ You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths.
Your wrath lies heavily on me; you have overwhelmed me
with all your waves.*

*You have taken from me my closest friends
and have made me repulsive to them...*

*Your wrath has swept over me;
your terrors have destroyed me.*

*All day long they surround me like a flood; they have
completely engulfed me.*

You have taken from me friend and neighbor.

At some level we hope if we're nice,
God will be more inclined to help us

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

- Psalm 22

Psalms of lament can
shape our experience of God
and help us voice our complaints to God
even in our darkest moments

3. Request for God's help:

3. Request for God's help:

¹¹ Please don't be far from me because trouble is near...

¹⁹ But you, Lord! Don't be far away!

You are my strength! Come quick and help me!

Deliver me from the sword!

- Psalm 22

we can ask God for specific ways
we would like him to help us

4. Expression of trust in God:

4. Expression of trust in God:

²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord...

- Psalm 22

they end in confidence of
God's presence and rule!

...darkness is my closest friend

- Psalm 88:18b

These times of spiritual darkness or silence are not sinful. They are not God's punishment for something we have done wrong.