

Discussion Questions

July 31, 2022



..BUT GOD

In the Midst of Anxiety and Despair ... but GOD

1. Read Psalm 88. Summarize what the author is feeling. What are the most difficult things he expresses?
2. Discuss why think God put Psalm 88 in the Bible for his people to use as a song for millenia?
3. Take turns modernizing a sentence or paragraph or two of the Psalm for today. If you were to put it in your own words what would it sound like today?

Is there any place of that that makes you unconformatable expressing this type of lament to God?

4. In hypothetical conversation with a friend suffering depression, how would you reply to the following question: If trusting God won't get me immediately out of anxiety or depression, what good would it do?
5. Discuss how we can we make our group a place of support and safety for those going through deeper struggles?



John 16:31–33

Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

Psalm 88

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. 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. 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? 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.

Derek Kidner - Tyndale Old Testament Commentary

The very presence of these prayers in scripture is a witness to God's understanding. God knows how men speak when they are desperate."

Charles Spurgeon commentary on Psalm 88

He felt as if he were as utterly forgotten as those whose carcasses are left to rot on the battlefield. As when a soldier, mortally wounded, bleeds unheeded amid the heaps of slain, and remains to his last expiring groan unpitied and unsuccoured, so did Heman sigh out his soul in loneliest sorrow, feeling as if even God himself had quite forgotten him...

...How low the spirits of good and brave men will sometimes sink. Under the influence of certain disorders everything will wear a somber aspect, and the heart will dive into the profoundest deeps of misery...

...It is all very well for those who are in robust health and full of spirits to blame those whose lives are sicklied over with the pale cast of melancholy—but the evil is as real as a gaping wound, and all the more hard to bear because it lies so much in the region of the soul that to the inexperienced it appears to be a mere matter of diseased imagination.

Reader, never ridicule the nervous and depressed, their pain is real; though much of the evil lies in the imagination, it is not imaginary."

Charles Spurgeon

You may be surrounded with all the comforts of life and yet be in wretchedness more gloomy than death if the spirits are depressed. You may have no outward cause whatever for sorrow and yet if the mind is dejected, the brightest sunshine will not relieve your gloom. ... There are times when all our evidences get clouded and all our joys are fled. Though we may still cling to the Cross, yet it is with a desperate grasp.

The mind can descend far lower than the body, for in it there are bottomless pits. The flesh can bear only a certain number of wounds and no more, but the soul can bleed in ten thousand ways, and die over and over again each hour.

I am afraid that all the grace I have got of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs is altogether incalculable. Affliction is . . . the best book in a minister's library.

I daresay the greatest earthly blessing that God can give to any of us is health, with the exception of sickness. If some men whom I know of could only be favored with a month of rheumatism, it would, by God's grace, mellow them marvelously.

Matthew 26:38

Then [Jesus] said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

