



Psalms of David (Part 2)
How Long, O Lord Psalm 13
Shay Robbins

Happy Fall, Ya'll. Are you enjoying the weather? Fall in the Ozarks is the best. My name is Shay Robbins and I'm part of the teaching team here at woodland hills. As you guys know, as part of our worship every Sunday, we take an offering. Thank you for our enthusiastic giving.

We are in the Psalms of David series. I'm really excited about it. I'm excited to teach Psalm 13 this morning. I have long been a fan of David and I'm so excited to get the opportunity to just peel through a really practical Psalm, one that is going to connect and be relatable for us today.

Before I do that, I figured I'd give you guys a Robbins Family update. Some people like to laugh at the circus that is our life. I actually have a couple of different jobs. The one that takes up most of my time is a not-for-profit chauffer business.

I have six children who all have their own lives; therefore, it's my job to help facilitate their lives. Ashley Robbins is my dispatcher. In September, we had 47 games. That's a lot of action. I'd like to tell you that I'm good at my job, but my dispatcher would probably disagree. I'm always calling her like, "Where am I supposed to be?" and she's like "Did you read the text!" I'm like, "Well I scanned over it. There's just so many details that it makes me nauseous. In the midst of this, we've been caravanning all over the Ozarks, all these small, rinky dink schools. We've been to Blue Eye, Crain, out to hurley. Been to Chadwick. I actually hate that place. We go to Chadwick to get our beatings.

I have a new diet during this season too. Five out of seven days, I eat popcorn for dinner. What's fun as you are tooling around the Ozarks is you find out there are various levels and quality of popcorn. There are many flavors out there.

It's interesting to me that all of these concession stands are run by dirty little seventh graders. There is some adult there who is kind of overseeing the operation, but I'm like why is he touching my food? I think that explains a lot of the flavors you get in your popcorn.

Do I have any folks from Crain in here? They are probably out in the chapel or something. We went to Crain and I'm quite confident, two weeks ago on a Thursday they served fish sticks for lunch. And I'm pretty sure they recycled that oil because that popcorn tasted like fish. And I've been tasting it ever since. It's nasty, man. I'm looking at Kyle Turner over here. He's one of the coaches... We go out to Blue Eye to get our shellacking's too. Thanks a ton.

So, I'm one of the dads that stands over by the door on the side of the gym, and acts like they are calm, cool, collected, typically a masculine guy over there with a beard. Of course, we all know that beard is just a sponge conveniently located to soak up all the tears. I'm an emotional basket case over there. It's unbelievable how much control over my life and my mental health. But as I'm walking through all this roller coaster of emotions, I know you are too. That's the reality of this broken world that we live in. It's pretty dog gone hard, is it not?

I've long loved to study David. And interestingly, David is second only to Jesus in the amount of scripture that is devoted to him. In fact, he's mentioned a thousand times throughout the bible. There is a bunch of historical context where we hear the stories of his life in first Samuel and Kings and chronicles, but we can go to the Psalms and very uniquely, when we go to the Psalms, understanding the context or the narrative, that the Psalms were written, we can see into the heart of this man, and he happens to be a guy who is given the title – *A man after God's own heart*.

As you read through those Psalms, there's something like 70 are for sure associated with David and maybe more. As we read through those Psalms, we get a very raw and authentic picture of the state of this man's emotions.

Today, as we look at Psalm 13, you're going to see that this is a guy that is pretty raw and he, in no way, had it altogether. In fact, he was kind of a mess. To me, I actually really appreciate that. Because just in our religious nature, this is where we assume into airs. We feel like we have to put on a face and have ourselves altogether to interact with people. And especially, frankly, to interact with God.

When we read the Psalms, that kind of myth is debunked because God is a daddy, he's a heavenly Father. And he wants a raw honest conversation and relationship with you. That offers us endless hope.

Today, as we look at Psalm 13, we're going to unpack a very practical Psalm. There might be some of you guys out here who go to the Bible and as you read the Bible, it's hard to apply it. *How do I actually put this into practice or apply it to my life?* Well, no Psalm 13 is meathead proof, which is why they assigned it to me to teach. So, super practical Psalm.

I had coffee with a good Friend, Doug Gabriel, this week. I have long admired him. He and I had this amazing conversation about Psalms. The conversations started in that I was kind of redirected to a guy named Samuel as I was kind of prepping and trying to think through, what did David... as King of Israel, where did he come from? Well, he came from the last prophet in the last great judge of Israel. It was a guy named Samuel's responsibility, both on a spiritual and a political level, to lead the nation of Israel, God's people, back into a wholehearted relationship with God. And there was a season of his ministry career where he achieved that. In fact, in first Samuel 7, there's a story where he actually rallies the people of God. And they came together, and they repented of their sin. And they rebuked their false idols. Samuel told them, "If you give God your whole heart, you're going to get the full strength of his support."

Well, while they are gathered together, the Philistines, their enemy, get word of it and they realize the nation of Israel is vulnerable right now. So, the Philistines came up and attacked Israel while there at this huge worship session. Of course, the people panicked. But Samuel reassured them *God will deliver us*. Sure enough, he miraculously did. He sent a thunderstorm for the ages. In fact, it thundered and boomed so hard that it disoriented the Philistine army and God delivered an amazing military route.

After that happened, Samuel does something that God had instructed Israelite leaders to do over the seasons, but he did it a little bit unique.

1 Samuel 7: 12 Then ***Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."*** So, in many occasions when God delivered the people of Israel, they would build a pillar of stones and it would be a reminder that when the people went back and forth in the generations that came, there would be a story of God's faithfulness that would reassure them and affirm who

God is and how strong he is as a deliver. Samuel uniquely named this Ebenezer, which literally means Stone of Health.

Why did God have the Israelites build ebenezers? What's his purpose in that?

His purpose is three parts.

Number one is this: To help them remember his faithfulness.

Number two: to strengthen their faith for the future.

Number three: To turn a private act of faith into a public testimony. He built that Ebenezer to help them remember, to strengthen them and then finally to testify to God's goodness.

In effect, what Ebenezers do is build confidence for the next battle.

So, I was thinking through that, and I knew Israel's history of building ebenezers, but I did a little research and asked the question: Did David build any Ebenezer? The answer is we really don't know. There is no clear writing on it, but what he did instead is David wrote songs that became Ebenezers.

As I'm sitting, enjoying coffee with Doug Gabriel, the realization comes on us, and Doug will tell you that his favorite thing to do... He loves to perform, loves to sing. His favorite thing to do... He says, "Lock me up in a room with a pen and paper. I love writing songs. "I said, I bet you have a stack of songs on your desk that are ebenezers for you to remember." His eyes light up and he leans forward and says, "I have thousands." Isn't that fun?

Well, guess what David did for us. The Psalms are filled with Ebenezers to help us remember, to strengthen us, and to testify to God's loving kindness. And they are right there for us in our time of need.

This morning, we are going to look at Psalm 13 and it's really simple. Six verses, and there are three sections. So, verses 1 and 2 is a lament, lament is a christianese word to pour out your sorrows, something we are all familiar with. Pour out your sadness, your frustrations, your fears, your confusion, your doubts. That is a lament.

Then verses 3 and 4, the next section is petition. A petition is simply asking for help through prayer.

And then finally, Verses 5 and 6 – He ends this lament psalm with a praise. And in that praise, Verse 5 and 6, he remembers God's loving kindness, and he worships God, the deliver.

So let's jump into the Lament. Verses 1 and 2 ***How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?***

How long will you hide your face from me?

***² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?***

Throughout scripture, when we see repetition, that is a literary tool to get our attention. Listen up, pay attention, give heed to this. And we see that David, four times, in two sentences, he says, How Long, Lord? How Long Lord?

How many of you are in a season like that? Maybe you're in one and maybe you're not, but we know everybody is familiar. We've been there. I can relate with the raw nature of saying, "Lord, what in the world.? How long is this going to last?"

Last fall, we talked through Revelation as a church on Sunday mornings. And then I had the fun assignment to do a large group Bible study that followed that. So, we spent six weeks, and we went in depth throughout Revelation, and we looked at the timeline for the end of the age. The hope that we have in Christ that he's written a beautiful story that during this season, this will be a season of difficulty and trial, but he is patient, and he has purpose in the season for each one of us.

But as I'm reading this, I have to admit to you that I really love my life. The Robbins family is mega blessed; we live a country music song. 90's country, real country. We're living where the green grass grows. That is our life. But I'm here to tell you it ain't all pretty. And as I'm studying revelation, and we were reading about the rapture this time where Jesus will come in the clouds and he will call up his believers. As good as my life is, there have been plenty of times where I've been ready, I'm waiting for the clouds to part and I'm just like "Take me now, Lord." I don't care how good life is, there is always something that's grinding on you, is there not? There's always something that's difficult

I want the church to hear and it's kind of the first point within the lament and it's you don't have to have it all together. God is a father, and he wants you to be authentically known, not just to him, but also to fellow believers and people you trust around you. You don't have to clean yourself up or get yourself together. The emotions and difficulties that you're going through are fair, and valid.

Here's the second point that I've got for you. Every season of difficulty has a different duration. Some end swiftly and others stretch our faith over time. Just this week, I was sideways with a contractor. It was like the longest 24 hours of my life. We were so far apart and there was much tension, I went to bed that night and I could hardly sleep because I could not figure out how to get out of this pickle. Fortunately, by the next morning, God made a way, and we both walked away happy. But at the same time, I have friends who tried to have a child for 10 years.

God never granted that wish. In fact, they discovered, through great difficulty and suffering, that there was one son they were meant to adopt and to give all of their attention to.

Then on the other hand, I've got a buddy who is in his mid 20's named Joe Shoecart who was born with cerebral palsy and he has been fighting that his entire life and as long as I've known him since he was 9 years old, we've been praying for his miraculous healing, but God has not given it to him. Then, this summer, Joe was diagnosed with cancer on top of that. I was thinking, What the heck, why Joe of all people? The answer is I don't know. Why Joe. Here's what I do know. I do know what to do when our hearts are aching When you find yourself in that impossible trial, the answer is you ask for help. Let's look at that petition in Psalm 13

Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death... That "give light to my eyes." You can probably understand this. It's like when you're so dehydrated and you finally get your hands on a cold glass of water and you drink that and you're refreshed, and it brings light back to your eyes. Or after you've gone without food and your body is screaming for calories, and you finally ingest some honey, and it brings you energy and lightens your eyes or like drinking coffee on every day that ends in Y. You know what I'm saying. That's where David is. He is worn out, he's exhausted, he saying, "Lord, I need refreshment."

⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him, "and my foes will rejoice when I fall...

I've been kind of hanging out on this Verse 4 and specifically the enemy saying "I have overcome you."

What Satan does is Satan wants to twist or do the opposite of what God wants to do. So, if God designs marriage between a husband and wife, Satan is going to try and redefine it and twist it in any number of ways. If God wants you to be involved in healthy relationships that encourage you. But what the enemy wants to do is put relationships in your life that tear you down and breathe poison into your ears and twist your thinking into negativity. Satan is always going to do that. And when you find yourself in the midst of a trial, what he wants to do is he wants to convince you that you should give up, you should advocate. That you have failed and there is no recovering from this. But do you know who owns this word? Jesus does. In the New Testament, the word Overcomer is a word that we need to personally take on.

This word overcomer in the New Testament, is the Greek word Nikao which means one who is victorious.

Let me show you these scriptures. Jesus, in John 16: 33, speaking to his followers... this includes us. He says I have told you these things so that in me, you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart. I have overcome the world. That word *overcome*, is in the perfect tense. What that means is when you have a perfect tense of overcomer, it means that his victory is complete and continuing. In other words, Jesus claimed his victory, and it is unstoppable, and you and I get to get in his wake, the wake of that victory, which is ongoing.

The next one is found in Romans: 8: 37 It says, ***know in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. In this context, the more than conquerors literally means we super overcome. We super overcome through Him who loved us.***

Here's the final one I want to show you. 1 John 5: 4-5 says ***for every one born of God overcomes the world this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the son of God.***

Here's what we do in light of that. We bring our petitions to God, and we do so from a position of strength even when it doesn't feel like it.

We always talk about the US Bus here and Ted will say, “You never want to put feelings in the driver’s seat of the US bus. Your feelings matter, but we like to maybe put them in the back seat because your feelings and your emotions will betray you. Not that those feelings don’t matter, in fact, they matter greatly, but when you find yourself in the midst of them, overcome by them, we’re reminded to bring our petitions to God from a position of strength as an overcomer. We are riding his wake

Then the final section here is praise. So, we have our lament, we have petition and finally, praise.

***my heart rejoices in your salvation.⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;
⁶ I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.***

God’s loving kindness never waivers. That word Loving Kindness is the Hebrew word Hesed. That Hebrew word is an amazing word. It’s a love that never fails, never stops, that cannot be compromised, that cannot slow down. It is continual, eternal, as steady as the tide, as faithful as the sunrise, certain as the season, and strong as gravity.

As I was thinking about this, I was thinking of this word picture that came to my mind. Imagine if you lived in a world where there was no gravity, where every time you walked out of your house, you had to hold onto rails or else you would float away, never to be heard from again. Imagine the anxiety and the caution and the control that you would exercise on a daily basis. The stakes so high. Imagine the fear you would have for your kids just going outside to play if there was no gravity.

Well, imagine in the same setting that you were saved from that, and you were given the gift of gravity and that gravity was unstoppable. There would be a season where you would walk out of that house and you’d still hold onto the rails and you would let go only so briefly, just to make sure. *Am I still firmly planted on the ground? Am I safe?* When your kids run out, you’d still be at the picture window with anxiety coursing through your veins. Is gravity going to work today?

But over time, you would come to trust gravity. You would begin to put your faith in it. It would become natural to count on it.

I think that’s very similar where we have a relationship with Jesus, saving faith with Jesus. That when we walk through these trials, it’s easy to doubt, it’s easy to try and control all the factors or to get anxious or to not sleep. But over time, as you’ve been tested through trials, when a new trial comes, you get to look backward, and you get to see

those Ebenezers that have been in your path that remind you of God's faithfulness and provision that he gives you a new wave of strength to endure.

I've got some dear friends that go to church with us, Josh and Amanda Cushion. Josh and I became buddies – my son and his son are on the same football team. His son is three times the size of my son. His name is Bear – rightly so. We became buddies. Josh and his wife are veterans. They are amazing people. God, over the last year or so has breathed new life into their marriage. They've literally been transformed through God's miraculous help.

Last spring, they had a massive breakthrough and only a matter of weeks later, Josh was diagnosed with very rare and very serious stomach cancer. So, over the last several months, they've been fighting. A couple of weeks ago, I was sitting down with them after a service in Chappel. I was just looking at them, and they were verbally processing life. There is plenty of lament going on in their life, as you can imagine. But sitting there before them, I'm here to tell you there is a sparkle, a light in their eyes, that wasn't there two years ago. They've been transformed. Specifically, Amanda. I can't even hardly believe it. Her countenance, the way she looks the way she talks, you can just see God's strength in her.

On Friday, we were at Bible study, and we sat down... We are walking through a John Eldredge study. I like studies because they give you some things to guide some fruitful, meaningful conversation. We sat down and Josh started talking and we just pushed our books and our Bibles aside because God was literally flowing through him. He's got 50 years of Godly wisdom that he has accumulated in the last three months. It's supernatural what God has done in him, spiritually. And yet we are still crying out that God would do something supernatural in him physically. What do you do when you find yourself there?

This is the last thing I want to leave us with as a church, and that is that the broken-hearted overcomers say, And it's important for us to take on both of these, Sometimes we just front as the overcomer. Sometimes we are a hot mess, and we are only brokenhearted. But the follower of Jesus is equally both. The broken-hearted overcomers say, "Lord, give us the grace to prevail.

Paul writes Timothy and says, ***be strong in the grace that is in "Christ Jesus."***

One of my favorite passages... I quote it to myself often. Greg Bettis told me about it 20 years ago in a boat. 2 Corinthians 4:16 – therefore, we do not lose heart, though our outer man is decaying, our inner man is being renewed day by day. For, momentary, light affliction, is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison. While we look not at that which is seen, but that which is unseen, for that which is seen is temporary and that which is unseen is eternal.

There are going to be times in life where life taste like fish sticks when you want to eat some popcorn, but God is good.

I want to say one more thing. Last week, I was sitting out at 10:00 am in the courtyard. I was looking at all the people flowing in and out of here. I was just amazed at how diverse the people groups are. I thought to myself, knowing that I would be up here today.

I want to tell you guys a couple of things personally.

Number one – you need to know that God loves you.

Number two – no matter what you have going on, this is a safe place for you.

Number three – this is a church that is big enough for you to float in and to float out.

Maybe get a couple of nuggets of encouragement, but then to make no personal connection. What I want to charge you with today is this church, by design, there are systems in place to help you. We want to help you. There is a prayer team up here, outside the chapel, in front of the big screen, there's a welcome Desk out there and we cannot read your mind. We don't know what's happening in your spirit. But this church is literally standing here with open arms. We want to love you and to care for you and to help you. You don't have to go through this alone. If we can't help you, I urge you to just come down and have a visit. We'd love to chat with you and help.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we come to you, and we confess our sins corporately. We thank you for forgiving us again and again. Thank you that we are made whole because of Jesus. We ask God for your help. Holy spirit, come help.

It's in Jesus' name that we pray... Amen

