

How to Lament - Looking Away From Ourselves to God

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Date: 24 September 2023

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[0 : 00] So, if you will, turn in your Bibles to Psalm 13. Psalm 13.

And as I read this psalm, I'll ask you to be mindful of the time, and by that I mean pay attention to how long it takes me to read this. Psalm 13.

To the choir master, a psalm of David. How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

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? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God.

Light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death. Lest my enemies say I have prevailed over him. Lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your steadfast love.

[1 : 09] My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me. So how long was that?

Less than a minute, I guess. It took David less than a minute to go from asking the Lord, will you forget me forever? To I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me.

That's a stunning change in a very short span of time. How likely is it that David's circumstances changed in less than a minute?

Granted, we don't fully know the context. We don't know what initially troubled David. He gives some clues here, but we don't know the exact circumstances. But he indicates that he's been waiting a long time for something to change, or at least it feels that way to him.

He asks how long, four times, in this very brief psalm, he's been waiting on the Lord for a while, it seems.

[2 : 17] Now, obviously, David's circumstances did not change from verse 1 to verse 6. He's in the same position at the end as he was at the beginning.

So why does the tone of this psalm change so drastically? What happened to David from verse 1 to verse 6? Well, let's find out.

Now, in case you haven't been here, we've spent the last couple of weeks considering the subject of lament. And I've said that we see a four-part pattern to laments in the Bible, particularly in the Psalms.

First, we see the lamenters turn to God in prayer. They don't wallow in isolation. They don't complain to their friends. First, they go to the Lord. Why?

I believe it's because they understand he is sovereign over their circumstances, not to mention their only hope. While they often express doubts and maybe a measure of unfaithfulness at times, they turn to God nonetheless.

[3 : 22] Second, they lay their struggles before God. We see a lot of raw emotions in their words. And as I said last week, we may see them asking questions or speaking in ways that, you know, come from their pain and in ways that perhaps they shouldn't, ways that betray a lack of faith.

But they are being candid about their struggles. As Charles Spurgeon says in his commentary on Psalm 13, It is not easy to prevent desire from degenerating into impatience.

Oh, for grace that while we wait on God, we may be kept from indulging a murmuring spirit. How long does not the oft-repeated cry become a very howling?

Notice the play on words there. How long becomes a howling? Spurgeon's clever like that. And what if grief should find no other means of utterance?

Even then, God is not far from the voice of our roaring. For he does not regard the music of our prayers, but his own spirits work in them in exciting desire and in flaming the affections.

[4 : 37] Now we'll come back to that last part. For now, I'll remind you again that lament won't necessarily be our default response to every trial. I think on the one hand, the struggles we see in the Bible's laments are universal.

This is why they resonate with us. Romans 8, Paul writes, For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it and hoped that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

According to Paul, creation personified. Even creation itself groans under the burdens of a sinful fallen world.

Even creation longs to be free from heartache and suffering and everything else we must experience here in this life, in a matter of speaking. On the other hand, it is possible for the saints of God to remain resolute in their faith.

[6 : 05] It is possible for us to be afflicted in every way, but not crushed. Perplexed, but not driven to despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken.

Struck down, but not destroyed. That was Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 4. David himself shows us this is possible. We talked about this a little last week.

Though the circumstances were very similar, if not identical, Psalm 13 has a very different tone than Psalms like Psalm 23.

In Psalm 23, David says, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. He doesn't seem disturbed at all.

Why? He says, because you, Lord, are with me. But as Spurgeon said, regarding Psalm 10, the presence of God is the joy of His people, but any suspicion of His absence is distracting beyond measure.

[7 : 11] Sometimes our pain is so great. Sometimes it lasts so long that we begin to feel as though God has abandoned us. It isn't true, of course, but when we feel that way, it can certainly be distracting beyond measure.

In those cases, lament seems to come quite naturally. Remember that the lament Psalms are not intended to be models of perfect prayer.

These are real cries from desperate, broken men in the throes of some kind of terrible tribulation. They are distracted. All they see is their pain, and they don't feel the presence of God, so they cry out in lament. Now, the third part of the pattern we see in these laments is people making requests. They've voiced their troubles, so they begin praying for what they think they need. Now, God may very well have a different answer for them, but they naturally pray for what they think they need.

[8 : 18] And finally, we see the lamenters end their laments with praise, voicing their trust in God and in His promises.

And the question for us today is, how does this happen? How does someone go from agony and confusion to this renewed hope in God?

How does David do it in only six verses? I chose Psalm 13 as our primary text today because we see the entire pattern of lament in only six verses, which makes it really easy to walk through and consider.

Again, we don't know David's precise circumstances here. In verse 2, he asks, how long shall my enemy be exalted over me? This could be a time when he was hiding in a cave from King Saul as King Saul was trying to catch him.

David could be talking about another enemy altogether. We don't know for sure, but he's clearly reached the end of his rope, if you will. He's waited a long time for help, and he finally cries out, how long, O Lord?

[9 : 33] Will you forget me forever? Now that's an interesting question because it actually doesn't make a whole lot of sense. English translators of the Bible have attempted to help a little bit by dividing one question into two as I understand it.

The original text reads as though David is asking, how long, O Lord, will you forget me forever? One question. He seems to answer his own question within the question, rendering the entire question kind of unnecessary.

So there's a couple of possibilities. Either he's asking two questions, or there's a bit of hyperbole here when he uses the word forever, or perhaps he's asking, Lord, how long will you forget me continually?

Almost as though it has felt like forever, and so far it has seemed like forever. Is that going to continue? In other words, David has waited a long time, it seems, to him anyway, for God to intervene, and he's asking, how long are things going to continue this way?

Regardless, David is desperate for help. We can see that. And where does he turn? How long, O Lord?

[10:51] He goes to Yahweh. Now, following the typical pattern, David begins by laying out his struggles, right? How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever?

And this seems to be the question at the heart of most laments. How long? How long? How long? Inevitably, when we face tribulation of any kind, we become very anxious to know how is it going to end?

When is it going to end? That's the desire we see in Romans 8, when Paul speaks of creation itself, groaning as it waits to be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the children of God.

That's why the children of God, that's why they groan, according to Paul. He says, we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for what? As we wait for the adoptionists, our adoptionist sons, the redemption of our bodies.

We all want to know, Lord, how long? When will this end? In fact, this very question is repeated throughout the Bible.

[12:00] In the Psalms alone, we find it in Psalm 6, Psalm 35, Psalm 74, 79, 80, 82, 89, should I go on? You get the idea. It's repeated a lot.

In Zechariah 1, 12, the angel of the Lord said, O Lord of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these 70 years?

Now, I don't know that I could prove it definitively, but it's very well possible that the angel of the Lord in that text is the pre-incarnate Christ, regardless, either he or an angel, he too has asked, how long, O Lord?

How long? In Revelation 6, even the martyred saints in heaven ask, O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

Now, it is possible for us to ask that question in an irreverent way.

[13:15] I don't know that the question itself, though, is inherently sinful. Impatience is never good. Doubting the Lord's faithfulness to His people certainly isn't good, but again, Romans 8 and other places indicate that we will necessarily have a strong desire to see sin and suffering vanquished forever.

Anyone who hopes in God will long to see salvation. We long to see God's promises fulfilled. We long to see the end of sin and suffering and injustice and death.

We want to see the end of these things. We crave it. Even so, it's important to remember that David's groaning in this psalm. That's only the beginning of his prayer.

It's just the start of it. It doesn't end here. In only six verses, he moves from this despair to deliverance. What changes? Again, it's not his circumstances. It's his perspective.

In the first part of this psalm, we might say David is looking inward. he's trapped in the fog of his circumstances. He can't see the sun above the clouds.

[14:30] He feels a little bit like I do right in the middle of January when it's cold outside and I haven't seen the sun in months and I begin to wonder, will I ever see the sun again? Will I ever be warm again?

And as my wife will remind me, of course you'll see the sun again. Don't be so melodramatic. You will see the sun again. But given enough time without it, you know, the mind has a way of bending toward the negative.

We can easily become a very pessimistic people. And this is especially true when we focus on ourselves. David is wrestling within himself.

In verse 2, he says, how long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? One literal translation of this verse says, I lay up counsels in my soul.

Rather than take counsel, I lay up counsels in my soul. This word is translated elsewhere as harbor. Harboring something. So, the idea is that David is giving himself counsel.

[15 : 40] He's giving himself advice. Throughout this prolonged trial, he indicates that maybe he hasn't sought the Lord's wisdom. Before this prayer of lament, perhaps he had not turned to God for help in any way.

Instead, he attempted to solve the problem himself. He's talking to himself. He's listening to himself. He's trying to figure things out himself. But as we can tell, he's not being successful.

He's not figuring it out himself. Now, you won't be surprised to learn that this was a bad idea to start with. Evidently, he couldn't solve the problem himself.

He's a man after God's own heart, isn't he? His life, not to mention his other psalms, proved that he trusted in God. He stood face to face with that champion of the Philistines, Goliath.

When the rest of the army of Israel was cowering in fear, he fully believed God would deliver him.

Yet, in this particular time of trial, he seems to have turned inward.

[16 : 53] And soon enough, he felt so alone and so isolated that even God felt like he was far from him. So now, David is not only bearing the burden of his initial problem, but he's also suffering under the weight of his own failure.

He's added sorrow to sorrow. He's dug the hole even deeper in what's left. He says, I have sorrow in my heart all the day. Taking counsel within myself, that's what I find.

Sorrow. All the day. His grief is unrelenting and he's grasping for some kind of relief. Now, I think one of the worst pieces of advice we could ever get is believe in yourself.

Believe in yourself. I'm not entirely sure what that means, but it's terrible advice on top of being just dangerous advice.

Our minds are darkened by sin. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick, right?

On our best days, we are still finite creatures. Those are our best days.

[18 : 07] When we turn inward, what do we expect to find? We find sin. The same sin that creates our problems in the first place.

You know, sinners are not really the ideal place to go for solutions to problems that sinners have created. Isn't that the Bible's overarching message?

church? In salvation, we need a righteousness that comes from outside of ourselves. We won't find it within ourselves. We must look somewhere other than ourselves because as Jonathan Edwards says, you contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary.

As sinners, we cannot be the answer to our sin problem. And I believe that is true also with our trials, with our struggles. We won't find deliverance within ourselves.

Now, despite all appearances at the beginning of this psalm, David, he knows this. He knows the Lord is always present despite the fact that he asked, will you forget me forever?

[19 : 21] In Psalm 9, he says, the needy shall not always be forgotten and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. He's answered his own question.

He knows the Lord will never, ever forget his people. He knows this. Though it isn't David speaking, Isaiah 49 tells us.

This is starting in verse 13. Sing for joy, O heavens, and exalt, O earth. Break forth, O mountains, into singing. For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

But Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me. My Lord has forgotten me. And the Lord responds, can a woman forget her nursing child that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?

Even these may forget, yet I, the Lord, will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. Your walls are continually before me.

[20 : 31] How likely are you to forget your children's names? And I don't mean in a moment when you're trying to get their attention, because you'll run through all kinds of names before you get the right one. But I mean, if somebody asks you, what are your children's names, how likely are you to forget them?

How likely are you to forget your children's names if they're tattooed on your hands? And every time you look down, you see them. Not very likely.

God will never forget His people. For reasons we can't always know, sometimes He may delay providing comfort, or allow His children to struggle longer than we would certainly like, but He will never forgive us.

He will never stop caring. In fact, God works these trials we go through for our ultimate good. Isn't that what Romans 8 tells us?

Paul says, for we know that to those who love God, all things work together for good. Recently, I had a conversation with someone about that promise in Romans 8, 28, and he asked, what do you think that verse means?

[21 : 41] And I said, I think that verse means that no matter what happens to God's people, the ultimate outcome will be good. And he asked, do you think that everything that happens is good?

And that's a different question. And I said, no. No, not everything is good. But kind of like Joseph's brother selling him into slavery, which was a tragic and horrendous event, God can make good out of the worst circumstances.

Better yet, He will make good out of them. Ultimately, finally, everything will be good. Now that I've mentioned Romans 8 again, let me point out something quite relevant in this chapter to our study of lament.

Paul actually quotes one of the lament psalms. He quotes Psalm 44 when he says, for your sake, we are being killed all the day long.

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. But what I really want to draw your attention to is the fact that there's a familiar progression at the end of Romans 8.

[22 : 52] I'll read it starting at verse 35. We'll go back to Psalm 13. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written, for your sake, we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The life of every Christian is the same in this way. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Nothing. In the end, we will be more than conquerors through Him.

However, as Paul indicates, there's a certain amount of ugliness between now and then. Tribulation and distress and persecution and famine and so on.

[24 : 03] In other words, we can hardly be surprised by suffering in this world. That really shouldn't be our default response when trials occur. We shouldn't be surprised by them.

The Bible gives us every reason to expect them, especially as disciples of Christ. Just this week, I was speaking with someone about the pilgrim's progress and I asked him if he had ever read it and he said, I tried once years ago, but I really didn't care for Bunyan's interpretation of the Christian life.

Too much struggles, too much turmoil. So I said, well, first of all, I think Bunyan was spot on. But secondly, I would encourage you to read to the end. Finish it. The story gets really good. If only you make it to the end.

What was it that kept Christian in the pilgrim's progress going through all of that turmoil and through all of those struggles? It was the king's book. What was written in the king's book, right?

[25 : 19] It was the king's promises. Not to mention the king's help along the way and so on, but those promises. The same is true with us.

In hard times, we shouldn't turn inward. We should go back again and again to God's promises. Romans 8.28 being one of them. But here's another example.

In Isaiah 44, verses 21 and 22. Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant.

I formed you. You are my servant. O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist.

Return to me for I have redeemed you. It's a great promise. You will not be forgotten by me. Now getting back to Psalm 13, David, he's expressed his feelings.

[26 : 23] He's turned to God. He's lamented. Again, we see that he's been very self-focused. Look how often he says me or I in those first couple of verses. But then, he begins to kind of look outward.

He begins to turn away from himself a bit. Verses 3 and 4. Consider and answer me, O Lord my God. Light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say I have prevailed over him, lest my foes rejoice, because I am shaken.

What strikes me is this does not sound like the same man who stood toe-to-toe against Goliath. As a relatively young boy even. But again, this is David speaking from prolonged misery.

If King Saul is in fact the enemy in question, David has perhaps been on the run for years. He's tired. He's exhausted.

He's constantly fearing for his life day in, day out. I could be wrong, but I don't think David is being melodramatic here. This is an authentic prayer.

[27 : 39] And making matters worse, of course, is that David hasn't kept his focus on God. So again, he's dug that hole just a little bit deeper. In 1 Samuel 17, you may remember that David, he wasn't willing to fight Goliath because he had so much confidence in himself.

That's not what he indicates to us. You may remember how he asked, who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the army of the living God?

He wasn't thinking about himself. His mind was on the sovereign God of heaven through whom all things are possible. He wasn't frightened because he had a clear view of God in those days.

Goliath could crush David like he was nothing. And yet, David understood that even a giant is no match for Yahweh.

So David turned to God. Here in Psalm 13, he brought his struggles. Now he makes his request. He says, consider and answer me, O Lord, my God.

[28 : 54] In other words, he says, Lord, just look at me. Favorably, is implied, but just look at me. And so you can see how he's still in the midst of this fog.

He's maybe turned a little bit more away from himself. He's gazing outward. He's thinking more about the circumstances and the Lord and his involvement, but he can't seem to see clearly. And the Lord could very well interject at this moment and say, David, I am looking at you.

I never looked away from you. Obviously, though, David hasn't felt that. He's still in the fog of his despair. His despair is so great, in fact, he feels that he'll die unless the Lord intervenes.

When David says, light up my eyes, it may seem that he's become aware of his spiritual short-sightedness. But I believe he's still thinking about his physical situation.

That's the entire context of this psalm. He's tired, he's hungry, uncomfortable, he's fearful. He needs physical refreshment.

[30 : 02] He needs strength. And as we see, he needs a measure of spiritual enlightenment as well, but I don't believe that's what he's necessarily praying for right here. Even so, God's answer to his prayer is spiritual enlightenment.

God gives him a change of perspective. He clears the fog. So, now that David is looking outside of himself for help, he can see the true source of help.

He sees God. We might divide the psalm this way. First, David looks inward. Second, he looks outward. And finally, he looks upward. By the grace of God, he looks upward.

Verses 5 and 6. But, is this the same psalm? But I have trusted in your steadfast love. My heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me. The modern psychologist might just diagnose David as bipolar. From a secular world view, David's drastic shift in tone here, his change of thinking, it doesn't make a lot of sense.

[31 : 20] Nothing has changed. There's no reason for this. Again, he's gone from asking, how long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me.

I like what Matthew Henry says about this change. He writes, what a surprising change is here in a few lines. In the beginning of the psalm, we have him drooping, trembling, and ready to sink into melancholy and despair.

But in the close of it, rejoicing in God and elevated and enlarged in his praises. See the power of faith, the power of prayer, and how good it is to draw near to God.

If we bring our cares and griefs to the throne of grace and leave them there, we may go away like Hannah, and our countenance will be no more sad. David, or God, I should say, hasn't removed David's trials here.

But he has clearly changed David's thinking, his perspective of the whole thing. By the end of this psalm, David is practically a new man. He's facing the exact same troubles as before.

[32 : 37] Yet he's singing God's praises. What happened? Let me make several points here. Part of this is reiterating, but first of all, David, he turned away from himself, right?

He got out of his own head, if you will. He got out of his own way. He stopped counseling himself. He stopped listening to his own counsel. In short, he stopped relying on himself to solve his dilemma.

That's step number one, always. Maybe you can relate to this. I know in my early Christian life, I struggled to pray as often as I should. Despite the Bible's instructions to pray without ceasing, I often hesitated in part because I didn't want to bother God with every little thing.

You know what I mean? Granted, we should pray for more than ourselves and what we think we need, but I struggled to pray because I felt that any time I had a need, my needs were always so small, so insignificant.

Other people have much greater troubles than I do. How can I ask the Lord for help with this little thing? Well, again, the Bible is clear. Pray without ceasing.

[33 : 50] Again, not every prayer will be a lament, lament, but we are encouraged to pray. We are encouraged to live in constant and consistent fellowship with God, and a big part of that, a big part of that is going to be continual prayer.

We may still be tempted at times to kind of shrink back into ourselves when things get tough, when we're having a hard time, but it's probably less likely to happen, don't you think, when it's our habitual pattern to always be turning to God.

Well, second, David, he turned to God. Turned away from himself, he turned to God. He knew from whom salvation comes. Back in Psalm 3, he wrote, salvation belongs to the Lord.

No other. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Now, he may have let himself get trapped in the fog of his despair for a while, but he knew better. He knew where to seek help.

More than once, he had witnessed the power of faith and prayer in his life. He knew the grace of God. He knew the steadfast love of God. In fact, you'll notice that the thrust of this lament is not about if the Lord will help.

[35 : 14] It's about when he will help. How long, O Lord? So even when David's faith appears weak, he still believes salvation is coming, and more to the point, he knows God will be the source of that salvation.

Third, he lays his struggles before God. While some people don't seem to turn to God until they're in desperate need of help, perhaps we're occasionally guilty of waiting to pray until all is right in the world.

If the Psalms of lament teach us anything, Psalm 13 in particular, it's that we should never wait. We should always turn to the Lord. I'll remind you again what Hebrews chapter 4 says.

This is verses 14 through 16. Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

[36 : 33] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, that find help, find grace to help in time of need. That passage very directly teaches us to turn to God in times of need.

Don't delay, don't hesitate. In fact, don't go timidly. As though you're afraid, God may not answer my prayer. I discussed this last week.

Go to the throne of grace with confidence. With confidence. To be clear, that's not confidence in yourself. That's not confidence in your prayer. We can approach God confidently because we have this great high priest in Jesus, the Son of God.

There's our confidence. Fourth, David makes his requests. By the way, we can actually see David's faith growing stronger throughout this psalm.

He goes from not calling upon the Lord to asking the Lord when he will help to having the confidence to make specific requests. And furthermore, you'll notice that he goes from addressing God as Lord to, this is verse three, O Lord my God.

[37 : 49] There's a personalization added to it. It's a subtle change, but perhaps a meaningful one. It's similar, not the same, but we see a similar shift in Psalm 23.

Psalm 23, David talks about God in the third person. And then we come to verse four and he says, you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

So he goes from talking about God to speaking to God. And I believe there's a great lesson in there, but I'll leave you to think about that. Here in Psalm 13, David's faith is growing as he prays.

He's becoming stronger. He's drawing closer to God as he prays. Until finally, he seems to reverse course altogether and says, but I have trusted in your steadfast love.

My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. Have you ever noticed the importance of these but statements in scripture? B-U-T. We see them in the New Testament and Ephesians chapter two has one of them.

[38 : 55] You were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked. And he goes on and on about how we're following the prince of the power of the air, skipping ahead. And we're by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God. Being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses has made us alive together with Christ.

But God. That's the gospel in only three letters. But. B-U-T. Bad news. Bad news. Bad news. But. Same is true in our despair.

In our despair. As one author has said of this psalm, no circumstance has changed. No prayer has been answered. No deliverance has arrived.

Yet in a moment, enemies grow small. Sorrow and care loosen their grip. And lament gives way to praise. Why? Because David's prayerful meditation on God's promises has reminded him of something more powerful than his enemies.

[40 : 02] More certain than his sorrows. What is that? Your steadfast love. I remind you that Psalm 13 is the lament of a believer.

David went into this prayer knowing the promises of God. But as Spurgeon said, he was distracted by his circumstances. He was distracted by his feelings.

Even then, Spurgeon says, God is not far from the voice of our roaring, for he does not regard the music of our prayers, but his own spirit's work in them in exciting desire and inflaming the affections. I told you we'd come back to that. We shouldn't get the idea that if we learn to pray a certain way, it will serve as a magic formula that will just make all things right in the world.

It's not about the prayer. It's about the God who hears those prayers. It's not about the lamenter's, you know, confident faith in God and his promises or the lack thereof.

[41 : 15] It's about God's faithfulness to his people. It's not about the exact words that are spoken in these prayers. It's about the Christ who intercedes for God's people.

Travis Cottrell has a version of the hymn, Just As I Am, where he adds the lines, I come broken to be healed, I come broken to be mended, I come wounded to be healed, I come desperate to be rescued, I come empty to be filled, I come guilty to be pardoned, and I'm welcomed with open arms, praise God, just as I am.

What happened to David? Well, like all of the lamenters in the Bible, he fell before the throne of grace recognizing his utter dependence upon the sovereign God of heaven.

He came to God with nothing but his pain, his agony. And as it happens, that's precisely where he needed to be.

He came broken, he came wounded, he came desperate and empty and guilty, but God. But God. There was no magic formula.

[42 : 30] David did all he could do, which was, in so many words, confess his helplessness before God. Cry out for help. And that's all God needed to hear.

It's similar to the tax collector, who you remember, beat his breast, crying out, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And what did Jesus say about that man?

Truly, I tell you, this man went down to his house justified. Everyone who humbles himself will be exalted. In response to David's cry of humility, the Lord lifts his spirits and strengthens him.

And at last, just like that, David can shout, I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me. We'll put all of this together next week, but for now, we're out of time, so we're dismissed.

Thank you. Thank you. Father, thank you, thank you.

[43 : 43] Thank you.■■inter