

Small groups – Week beginning Monday 20th July 2020

Introduction/icebreaker

- How was your week?
- Would you rather sing in front of an audience or deliver a speech?
- What's one way you've changed for the better in the past year?

Recap from Sunday's teaching [Despair – Psalm 13]

- We all face times when we wonder how much more we can take
- David's despair was deep (4x "How long"), and his first assumption was that God was responsible for his troubles.
- Three parts to Psalm 13: Despair (v1-2), Prayer (v3-4), Rejoicing (v5-6). Within 6 short verses, David shifts from turmoil to tranquillity, from hurt to hope.
- David's prayer (v3-4) wasn't deeply spiritual or even theologically accurate. It was short, heartfelt, desperate, and shows that David turned to God in his moment of need. He didn't pray for God to change/remove his situation, but for God to change him.
- David in later life wrote Psalm 37:25...
- David held onto God's promises. Chose to trust regardless of circumstances. Decided to sing God's praises while he waited to witness God's power. Worship isn't something we do when we feel like it but a choice to declare God's sovereignty and focus on him.
- By the end of the Psalm there was no mention of any change in David's situation but there was certainly a change in him! While you wait for your situation to change, allow God to change you.

Discussion questions

1. Did anything stick out or resonate with you from Sunday's teaching?
2. Four times in 2 verses, David asks God "How long...?" – Have you been in a situation where you can't see a way out and you're not sure how much more you can take? What was that time like? Where did God feature in it?
3. What is your prayer life like in tough times? What do you notice about David's cry to God?
4. What do you make of David singing while he waits? He's facing a grim reality but is shouting and singing about how good God is...

Digging deeper

Some observations:

- Psalms as poetry – worth a look at the literary techniques. On Sunday we looked at the 3 distinct stanzas – David's pain, prayer & praise. But notice another threefold division of this Psalm – in each stanza, David is concerned with God, with himself, and with his circumstances, in that order:
 - Complains to God (stanza 1), seeks an answer from God (stanza 2), regains his trust in God (stanza 3)
 - Feeling wretched (1), asks for renewal (2), finds joy (3)
 - Bowing under pressure (1), defying pressure (2), rising above it (3)
- Don't know when this was written (or why) – from what we know about David, either he would soon become king, or he had already become a great and successful king – but that didn't make him immune to suffering. See also Psalm 22:1 – quoted by Jesus (a descendent of David) – he may well have called to mind other scriptures and used them in prayer during that time – read this Psalm again with that in mind! Even Jesus not immune. See also Revelation 6:9-11 – the same pain-filled cry found in John's vision of the suffering church in the last days. This side of heaven, nobody is immune. There is no time that will be free from evil.
- How therefore can David declare "I will sing to the Lord because **He is good to me**"?
 - God's goodness is dependant on His character/nature, not our circumstances
 - Prophetic – behind David's real anguish is an equally real certainty that he will be rescued from it so will then be able to make that statement.
 - Also a recognition that God has been good to him in the past → Philippians 1:6.
 - Regardless of circumstance, rejoicing in great truth of Romans 8:28.

Discuss – thoughts, takeaways...

Prayer

Take time to share prayer requests and pray for each other.