Psalm 13 - How Long Oh Lord

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[0:00] I have sorrow in my heart. How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes or I will sleep in death.

My enemy will say, I have overcome him, and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love. My heart rejoices in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me. Amen. Thanks, Chris. Well, let's pray and ask for God's help as we look at his words together.
We come as a people before a great and mighty God. A God who cares. A God who loves.
A God who understands exactly how we feel. A God who understands us better than we understand our own emotions and thoughts.
[1:18] And so, Father, we ask that you would speak into our lives today. Would you please enable us and cause us, in the midst of our life, to trust in you alone.

And that you would teach us what all that brings to us. We ask for your help as we look at your word together.
In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. How long.
How long must I put up with this constant, unrelenting pain? How long must I face false accusations and lies?
How long, O Lord, do I have to go through bitter disappointment? How long, O Lord, will it be until this darkness that consumes me passes?
[2:35] Our journey through life is marked with all kinds of struggles. And that's the experience of David in Psalm 13. Let's read the beginning of Psalm 13.

Don't forget the little note, the beginning, for the director of music. So, this is something that should be sung and proclaimed and announced. It's a psalm of David.
How long, O Lord? David was, of course, God's chosen king. And he has experienced something that is causing him great difficulty.
It could be that he is facing opposition. If you look at the end of verse 2, he cries out, How long will my enemy triumph over me? It could be that he's experienced some kind of ill health.
So, look at the end of verse 3. Give light to my eyes or I will sleep in death. Whatever the reason of his pain, it is a very real experience.
[3:46] How long, O Lord? You see, we all live in a broken world where suffering is the normal experience of life.

Apartment towers burn down. Terror attacks happen. Loved ones are taken from us. Cancer strikes.
Injustice goes unchecked. If we live long enough in this world, we will suffer in some way. And if God's king, King David, was not immune from suffering, then neither are we.
So, what do we learn from this personal experience of suffering? Well, first, a cry of despair.
Look at verse 1 again. How long, O Lord? This is a cry deep from the heart. Life has become unbearable. There's no hope.
[4:48] No escape. And that's how we can feel when we struggle. There's an isolation, a rejection. And what's worse, the God that we thought we could trust, the one who is supposed to be all-powerful and all-loving, seems to be completely absent.

Like David, we feel God has forgotten me. Verse 1, How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? It's the cry like that of a child whose father has walked out on him, left to fend for himself without support.
The father who is supposed to be there in times of trouble has just gone. And that's sometimes how we can feel God is treating us. Did I do something wrong?

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Is God punishing me? Does he not love me? How long will you hide your face from me? Rejected, abandoned, forgotten by the God who is supposed to care.
[6:01] Do you ever feel like that? And in these times of despair, we think, not only has he forgotten me, but God will not answer me.

Look at verse 2. How long must I wrestle with my thoughts, and every day have sorrow in my heart. We call out to our Father God, but it's like he just doesn't want to listen. God's not interested. He's too busy. It seems God is unconcerned.
My suffering is not bad enough to get God's attention. And what's worse, we know God is there, we know he's in, but he refuses to answer the door.
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts? We're left in the darkness to carry our own problems.
[7:05] And as verse 2 tells us, it is unending sorrow. Every day we cry out, but the response is just the same.

Earth-shattering silence. And our only conclusion is that God can't help me.
Look at the end of verse 2. How long will my enemy triumph over me? It's as if suffering is the strong arm and it has the upper hand.
Everything is piling and pushing up against us. Have you ever thought, why is it that when we most need our health, that's when we get sick?
Or why is it that when we're going through a difficult time, something worse happens? Or we're financially under pressure and then we lose our job?
[8:10] Does God not see what is going on in my life? Either God can't help or he won't help. We come to the conclusion that God has forgotten me.

God won't answer me. And God can't help me. Is that your cry of despair? Have you ever cried out like that to him?
You see, look where this cry is directed. How long, O Lord? This isn't a cry into the abyss, into the emptiness.
This is directed to the Lord. You see, who do we go to when God is not doing his job? Who are we going to shout and give off to when everything collapses around us?
At the very least, this psalm is telling us that we have a God who is big enough to handle all our cries. He is not going to be put off by our shouts at him.
[9:20] We can get angry with him. We can voice our complaint to him. We can cry out, how long must I put up with this? Sometimes we just need to be real with God and tell him exactly how we feel.

Because in our cry of despair comes a cry of hope. You see, in the midst of our pain, as we wrestle with God, as we do battle with God, we do have hope.
God is personal. Look at verse 3. Look on me and answer, O Lord my God.
Even though this prayer begins with despair and disappointment and doubt, how long, O Lord? There is in the midst of it a sure and certain hope that God is not distant.
He is not removed from us. God is personally involved in our lives. Look how he cries out, verse 3. O Lord my God.
[10:42] This is personal and relational. And we have the assurance of God's personal commitment to us. Again, look at the beginning of verse 3.

He says, Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Have you ever wondered and noticed why Lord is in capitals?
It's not that when they were typing they forgot to turn off caps lock. Lord is the personal name that God gave to his people.
By giving of his name to his people, God is committing himself to them. He is binding himself to them. It's his covenant name.
I am yours and you are mine. I belong to you and you belong to me. I am the promise maker and the promise keeper.
[11:42] So as we cry out to God, we are calling upon one who will never abandon his people. He is faithful and loyal and committed.

God has not forgotten you. God will answer you. God will help you. God will help you.
God will help you. So why is it, if that is true, why is it that God seems so silent at times? Why is it that God just seems distant and uninvolved?

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God will help you. God will help you. Well, as he cries out to this personal God, look how he prays. Look at verse 3.
Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes or I will sleep in death. You see, the request is not what we would expect.
[12:44] It's not like how we pray. He doesn't pray, Lord, change my situation. He doesn't pray, Lord, put an end to all of my suffering.

He doesn't ask, make my life easier. No. Do you see what he prays? Give light to my eyes.
It's a prayer to see life from God's perspective. Just have a quick look at Psalm 19, just a couple of pages on.
Psalm 19 and verse 8. We get the same phrase in this Psalm. Verse 8. It says, The precepts, talking about the word of God, the precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. You see, as we meditate, as we think upon God's word, his commands, his precepts, we begin to view and see life from God's perspective.
[14:05] So when we are asking, as this Psalm does in Psalm 13, verse 3, give light to my eyes, we are asking, Lord, change not my circumstances, but change me.

We're asking, Lord, it's not I want this thing or this person in my life, but I want you in my life.
So often as we come, we're wanting God to change our situations, to end our struggles. We ask for more time, more money, better health, better success.
But do we ever stop and ask, Lord, I want more of you in my life. Prayer is not asking God to fit into my plans, but prayer is essentially asking God to shape me so that I fit in with his plans.
It's not my will, but your will. You see, if we don't have this perspective of life, if we constantly look at life through our eyes, we will become disappointed and disillusioned with God.
[15:24] We will be overcome by our circumstances. It will be like a living death. Look how the rest of verse 3 goes. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death.

My enemy will say, I have overcome him, and my foes will rejoice when I fall. So in your despair, in your wrestle with God, cry out to him, and ask, Give light to my eyes.
Change me. I want to know you. Through this experience, I want to know you more. Help me see life from your perspective.
Enable me to walk life as you have willed. And from this cry of despair comes a cry of hope, and ultimately, a cry of joy.
Now let's be clear about this as we come to the end of the psalm. The struggle is not yet resolved. The suffering has not been taken away.
[16:45] There is still this wrestling going on. However, despair gives way to joy. There's two kinds of joy we see.

There is a present joy. Look at verse 5. But I trust in your unfailing love.
love. My heart rejoices in your salvation. In our struggles, and that's going to be different for each and every person here this morning, in your suffering, you can experience joy.
Here's how. Do you see what it says, the beginning of verse 5? I trust in your unfailing love. The unfailing love of God is that steadfast, loyal, and committed love of God.
It's that love of God that we read about when God proclaims or tells people what he is like. Faithful, loyal, steadfast.
[18:02] the love that endures when we fail and fall. It's a love that persists when we doubt and despair. It's a love that pursues us and chases after us when we walk away.

It's a love that will hold us and keep us. It's the kind of love we encounter in Romans 8, verse 38. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present or the future or any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything in all creation, nothing, no matter what you experience in your life, no matter what you may be going through now, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
You see, to trust in the unfailing love of God is not trusting in our ability to understand or comprehend or to battle through or get through.
Our trust is in God's ability to hold us in the suffering. God's love is unfailing.
[19:31] He does not give up or let go. It is an everlasting grip upon us. Therefore, my heart rejoices in your salvation.

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Here is a God who has you in the palm of his hand and has a grip upon you that will not let you go, even though we despair and doubt.
In this we can rejoice. But not only do we have a present joy, we have a future joy.
Look at verse 6. He cries out, I will sing to the Lord. Here is a confidence that looks forward in time and says, I despair right now, I struggle right now, but I will sing to the Lord.
You see, a heart that cries out in pain can also at the same time cry out in joy. How is that possible? Well, look at verse 6. I will sing to the Lord because he has been good to me.
[20:57] Well, where is God's goodness? How has God been good to me? When we're in the thick of it, it's hard to see God's goodness. But that's why we are directed here not only to think forward and say, I will sing to the Lord.

We will sing to the Lord because he has been past tense being good to me. So here he is saying, look back over the course of your life and do not stop looking until you come to the cross because there you will see the goodness of God for you and for me.
You see, the words of Psalm 13 are not just the experience of King David. It is the experience of our true and ultimate King, the Lord Jesus Christ.
As we read Psalm 13, it echoes what Jesus cried out on the cross as he hung there for you and for me. He cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
In the depths of his agony he is crying out, how long oh Lord will you hide your face from me? Will you forget me forever? You see, Jesus knows what it is to be in despair, to go through that struggle, to go through that suffering.
[22:33] But it's so much more than just an example. Because as Jesus dies on the cross for you and for me, he is taking my place and your place.

for as Jesus dies, he is taking upon us the greatest despair, sin and death. He takes it on himself and he suffers instead of you.
And as Jesus cries out to the Father in the darkness, there is no answer, there is no help. It is earth-shattering silence.
Jesus dies alone, rejected and abandoned. He dies our death so we don't have to. Jesus was shut out from the presence of God so that we would never ever be removed from his presence.
So look back and keep looking back till you come to the cross and you will see the goodness of God on display. here we see a God who loves you so much that he suffered for you.
[23:46] A God who cares for you so much that he would die for you. Here we have a God who will never reject you, never abandon you, never forget you.

He has promised that he will walk with you in your pain and he understands your pain. And he hears your every cry. before we can even voice it to him.
His unfailing love will not let you go. So look to our true king, the Lord Jesus Christ.
Look to him on the cross and in the midst of our despair and wrestle and struggle, trust his unfailing love.
Experience a joy today and experience a joy to come where we will say I will sing to the Lord for he has been good to me.
[24:54] to love. Let's just take a moment right now to bring our cries and our prayers to him.

Let's do that now. in this moment cry out to the Lord whatever it is that is upon our hearts maybe something we go through or somebody else how long oh Lord Father give light to our eyes help us to see life to see things through your perspective change me give us more of yourself
Father we trust in your unfailing steadfast loyal love thank you that we can say that I will sing to the Lord for he has been good to me Father help us to be real where we need to be and give us that confidence that we might trust in you and you alone Amen we're going to sing together which helps us to reflect a little bit of what this psalm is calling us to do when you

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