Psalm 77 A psalm of Asaph

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[0:00] I decided not to sing that hymn of Thomas Oliver's, but it's the guide me out of our great! Redeemer, of course, is where that quotation comes from, but I thought those two lines are particularly! appropriate. It says, the watery deep I pass with Jesus in my view, and through the howling wilderness my path pursue. I hope you don't think that all the Psalms, I'm conscious we've done two Psalms in quite a dark mood. Psalm 44 we looked at, and Psalm 77, again in a different sense, is a Psalm in a somewhat dark mood. You may be relieved to know that we're going on from the last two sermons to some of the brighter ones. First of all, we're going to look at the Psalm of the prayer of Moses, kind of follows on from this because it's about crossing the Red Sea and so on, but and then we're going to finish this series by looking at two of the Hallels, and they're called Hallels because they start with Hallelujah, Hallelujah, praise the Lord. But there are different moods of different Psalms, and this again is one of the darker ones in a darker mood, although I don't think it really is a dark Psalm actually, but it starts that way. As I said, it's a Psalm of Asaph, which is presumably, means it belongs to one of the two Temple music schools. It's marked, first of all, for the choir master or the musical director or the worship leader, whatever you want to call him.

It's also marked for Jeduthun. Jeduthun was one of the early musicians, a contemporary of David and Asaph himself, the founder of the Asaph school. There are several references to him in the historical books and in the Psalms. Interestingly, in 2 Chronicles 35 verse 15, he's described as the king's seal, the king's prophet, reminding us, as we saw before, that these Psalms are prophecies set to music.

But interestingly, the last reference to Jeduthun comes after the Jewish exile and hundreds of years later, in fact, in Nehemiah 11 verse 17, Nehemiah mentions, as the Temple worship and the worship is being re-established, a descendant of Asaph, a son of Asaph, but obviously not a direct son because this was a grandson, this was hundreds of years later. He mentions a son of Asaph and a son of Jeduthun.

So it is possible that Jeduthun was like Asaph, a kind of generic title describing perhaps the choir master or even perhaps the chief soloist or something like that. We're not exactly sure.

So it may not date actually back to the time of David, although Asaph and Jeduthun themselves were of course around in the Psalm of David, the time of David. But it may be just some formal dedication or something like that. We can't be sure.

[3:15] And this makes the psalm difficult to date, but actually it hardly matters because the theme of this psalm is universal.

It's as relevant today as it was when it was written. It's as relevant today as it was at the crossing of the Red Sea. And what it's about is doubt. It's an anatomy of doubt, one might describe it as.

And that is a timeless theme. Another thing that's clear, even from the title, but also from the way it's structured, is that this is what we might call an art song.

It's a song intended for professional musicians and choir. And it's the work, I think, of a master dramatist. One imagines perhaps some great operatic soprano or tenor being wheeled out to bring out the passion in this psalm.

As I said, not all the psalms of Asaph are as dark as this one. And in fact, the two previous ones, if you read them, Psalm 75, which I read in the prayer meeting, and 76, were actually quite upbeat in

tone.
[4:25] But sometimes, well, think of Shakespeare. Perhaps he achieved his greatest heights, didn't he, in his tragedies perhaps. When he wrote Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet and Macbeth and King Lear, they're perhaps the greatest of Shakespeare's plays.

He wrote a lot of good comedies as well, of course. But sometimes the artist is at his best when he's at his apparently most bleak.
And I say, I think this bleak psalm is a masterpiece. And like Romeo and Juliet, it maps the depths of despair. But like that play, unlike perhaps some of Shakespeare's other tragedies, but Romeo and Juliet does end, doesn't it, on a note of hope, that perhaps these two warring families will be reconciled.
And this psalm also ends on a note of hope. The suffering of Romeo and Juliet was not in vain, although they died, of course. Though it is a tragedy.
And yet, something good would come out of that suffering. And it's the same in this psalm. Something good will come out of this map, suffering. So I think it is worth spending a few minutes looking at the structure of this psalm.
[5:48] Of course, it's designed to be sung, but if one was the choir master or the director of music in the time when somebody comes up and says, here, I've written this new psalm, can you look through it?

Can you perform it for me? Well, he wouldn't have dived straight in, would he? He would have looked at it. A professional musician, a professional conductor, will look at a piece of music, will see how it works, how the logic of it fits together, how the song uses emotion and language.
And I think it's worth doing that just briefly, because that helps us to come to grips with the drama of it. Particularly, it's worth looking at the use of parallelism and also contrast.
There's a lot of contrast in this psalm as well. At its simplest, as you're probably aware, Hebrew parallelism in poems, in psalms and other songs, just amounts to saying the same thing twice in the same verse.
And we do get that in this psalm, quite starkly in verse 1, where we get almost exactly that. It just says the same thing twice. But as the psalm moves on, the repetition becomes more subtle.
[7:10] And so if you look at verse 8, instead of just saying the same thing twice, we see there's a slight change. that, first of all, the psalmist refers to God's love, and then in the repetition to God's promise.

And so there is development in the parallels versus in the later psalm. And we also find there are parallels in the larger structure as well.
The psalm is divided into four sections, and I didn't have to do that because it's done for us by the psalmist, separated by that slightly mysterious word, which we assume means a dramatic pause or dramatic break.
And it's the four sections I've shown you there, verse 1 to 3, verse 4 to 9, verse 10 to 15, and verses 16 to 20.
And those sections don't come with titles, but I've tried to give them some titles there. The first one, I think, describes the dark night of the soul. It's a cry of despair. But then in the second section, we find that there's an analysis of this despair.
[8:24] It's still there, but the psalmist begins to understand it and to think about it and think his way through it. And then in 10 to 15, we get an appeal to history.

The years are the most high, as it's described. And in verses 16 to 20, we meet the God of the storm. And we find there that history is used as a metaphor for faith.
And we'll look at that again when we come to it. And it's where it looks, interestingly, at the parallels, for instance, between verses 1 to 3 and in verses 4 to 6. Because actually, it's not repetition in that case.
The same ideas are being developed, but there's actually contrast. So in verse 1, there's a loud cry. But in verse 4, the psalmist is too troubled to speak.
In verse 3, there are groans of distress. But in verse 6, there's a memory of happier songs that have been sung in the past, perhaps happier psalms sung in the night.

[9:30] And in verse 3, we read that the psalmist's spirit grew faint. But in verse 6, crucially, we read that the psalmist's spirit inquired.

And there is a development there, and there is also parallelism. So it's a carefully constructed psalm. There's similar parallels, as we'll see as we get into it, in the last two sections.
Most obviously, I suppose, verse 15 and verse 30. The redemption, the line of redemption there. It's carefully constructed, dramatically constructed.
But just because there is art here, just because there's artifice here, that doesn't mean the experience described is artificial. I mean, just think of the whole book of Job.
That's very carefully constructed. But it describes a real experience, a real feeling. In fact, exactly, I think the reverse is the case. The psalmist is using the medium of song and music to convey the depths of his searching, to help us to come to grips with the pain that he was dealing with.
[10:44] And so he uses his ability as an artist to help us to come to grips with that. I mean, to take perhaps slightly an odd example, but what's Tracy Emmett's most famous work?

Well, it's an unmade bed, isn't it? Emmett? Is Tracy Emmett? Emmett. Emmett, not Emmett. That's right. Tracy Emmett. Is that art? Well, yeah, it is art, actually, isn't it?
It's a pity that the best thing she's got to say is something of grubbiness and chaos, but it is art. It does express what she feels.
And this art here expresses what the psalmist feels. Is the cry of verse 1 answered? Well, yes, it is answered, but the psalm itself, it really is the answer.
So let's look through these sections in a bit more detail. So first of all, we have this dramatic start. I've called it the dark night of the soul.
[11:50] This phrase is actually more often found in Roman Catholic literature. It's the title given to a poem by the 16th century mystic John of the Cross. But for that, it's a good description, nonetheless.

It's a good description of the struggle that the believer sometimes has with doubt, with confusion. The dark night of the soul. It describes the crisis of doubt that may affect the believer at times.
And it's a good description of the experience of these first verses. What we have here is a dramatic picture of a soul in despair. A soul troubled in body, mind and spirit.
And it is dramatic. Just imagine the scene for a minute. It's dark. It's the middle of the night. It's quiet. Perhaps there's just a glimmer of moonlight and we can see a person lying on a bed.
The person is clearly not asleep. They are wriggling and writhing. And suddenly there's a shout. That is what the Hebrew says here.
[12:59] The trouble with the NIV is it doesn't entirely bring it out. But it's a shout out loud. It's a cry. There's a cry in the night. My God, are you there?

Is anyone there? So we see a body, sleepless and restless, turning on a bed. And a hand is stretched out, imploring help.
For some bizarre reason, I don't know why, the NIV has taken to, translated as hands in the plural. That is not what the Hebrew says.
It's hand. Stretching out one hand is a very different thing from stretching out two hands, isn't it? If you stretch out two hands in prayer, whether you do it the way they would have done in the ancient world, like something like this, or whether you put your hands together, that's a ritual gesture.
It conveys calm, peace, submission, maybe even joy. Almost in the act of doing it is an act of conveying that calm and peace.
[14:09] If you stretch out one hand, that's a very different thing. There's two reasons you might stretch out one hand. There's somebody outside. Could you just take a look?

There are two reasons you might stretch out one hand. One is that you might be angry with somebody, and you're threatening them, you're looking for a weapon to hit them with.
But that doesn't seem to be the case here. The implication here is one of somebody stretching out in desperation. You reach out with one hand because you can reach further.
Do take a seat. Just stop for a minute. Sorry. Do come in, yes.
We're looking at Psalm 77. And we're just looking at the first few verses. So, as I say, if you stretch out one hand, well, you've seen it if you watch cricket, the best catches are taken with one hand,

aren't they?
[15:20] Because you can reach further. One hand stretched out is reaching for help. One hand is what you do when you're drowning in the river and you stretch out a hand to try and grab a branch or hopefully somebody will take it.

I don't know why the NIV is translated as hands. Perhaps they were thinking, which was true, of course, that they used two hands to pray, which they did. But this is one hand.
The Hebrew is singular here, as if you've got the English Standard Version or the Authorized Version. It makes quite clear. There is one hand stretched out. Surely somebody will come.
There's a cry. You're stretching out, reaching. Surely somebody will come. Perhaps a husband or wife. Perhaps a parent or a child will come and bring comfort. Surely there was a servant or attendant who might come.
But no, they're all asleep. None of them has woken up. No one comes. Is there anybody there? Is God there?
[16:31] There's no clear answer. And the psalm builds the pathos, doesn't it? As the cries subside into groans. And instead of writhing and crying out, faintness takes over, verse 3.

Bone weariness. Tiredness, but no sleep. No comforter comes.
Neither human nor divine. And then we briefly pause. We fade to black, as it were. While you think on that.
This is a soul in torment. This isn't the result of some national defeat, as we read in Psalm 44, when we looked at that. This is a very personal crisis of the spirit.
Doubt grips the mind and heart of this soul alone. And the cry, even the cry in verse 1 says, I cry out to God that he will hear me.
[17:39] But that seems like a hollow claim. It seems that there is no answer. It seems that the cry just disappears, as we say, into the void, into the blackness.

As if there's no one to hear at all. And so we move on to scene 2. This is 4 to 9.
And at first it seems as though nothing much has changed, except that even though cry of despair, that groaning is silenced. Now the psalmist is too troubled to say anything.
He's gone quiet, but not the quiet of peace. But the beginning of the answer comes. In fact, the psalmist tells us that it's actually God who is at work here.
He tells us it is God who has denied the right of sleep. Why has he done that? Well, it's so that perhaps that the psalmist will direct the soul to think about its troubles.
[18:48] And as we move through these verses 4 to 9, the mere despair, the crying out, turns to introspection, to looking inwards, to memory, to meditation.

And the troubled saint remembers it hasn't always been like this. Verse 5 and 6, he remembers that there was a time when there were more joyful songs, when he had a better song to sing, but he remembered that there was a time when he sang songs of joy.
But that was then, this is now. What's changed? And that meditational musing that starts in verse 3 now becomes more directed in verse 6.
So instead of just focusing on his or her own misery, the believer starts to question, starts to inquire. What is the root of this terrible state of mind?
What's going on here? Why am I in this state? Why am I in this state? And so in verse 7 to 9, we get these rhetorical questions which pinpoint the key issue.
[20:11] What is my problem here? Well, it's doubt, isn't it? Specifically, it's a doubt about the Lord's favour and compassion. What exactly is the problem?

Is it rejection? Is it a failure of covenant mercy? Are the promises ineffective? Is it a lack of grace? Certainly feels that way, doesn't it?
The questions pour out, don't they? Let me just read them to you again. Will the Lord reject forever? Will he show his favour? Will he never show his favour again? Has his unfailing love vanished forever?

Has his promise failed for all time? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion? And then there's another pause for thought as the psalmist tries to sort out his confusion.
And he realises that the questions seem at the same time all too real and yet absurd. It feels as though God will never show his favour again.
[21:24] But he knows that isn't true. He's conflicted. But is it true? The psalmist may still be saying perhaps reality is absurd.

This is absurd. But that's perhaps, of course, all there is. Perhaps there is no sensible answer. Or is it all meaningless? And is it all pointless? But as those fears are brought into the light, as the light is shone on them, as it were, the absurdity starts to become clear.
The psalmist knows that that is not who God is. The questions, when you ask them, you realise they don't make sense. Of course the answer is no.
But am I really sure of that? Is that true in my experience? And so there's another pause. But then the psalmist begins to answer his own questions.
Again, verse 10 loses a little in the bland NIV translation. The appeal here is not so much the reasoned argument of a lawyer as the cry of desperation.
[22:51] It refers back again to the cry of verse 1. It's the cry of the drowning sailor. For God's sake, pull me out. It's that sort of appeal.

It's the plea of the starving refugee who turns up at your border and says, you claim to stand for peace and justice. You claim to welcome strangers. Well, put your money where your mouth is. Put up or shut up and let me in. But even in the English translation, the rhythm gives it tremendous force, doesn't it? What's the nature of this prayer?
We have the whole theology packed into one sentence. The appeal is to the years of the right hand of the Most High. The years point us to God's faithfulness shown in history, don't they?
It says we're not starting from a blank slate here. We've got history that tells us that God is faithful, that God does lead his people.
[23:59] And it tells us that it's his own right hand that does these things. In other words, it's saying God is strong enough to do it. It's not that he, you know, he'd like to help, but sorry, there's nothing I can do.

And he reminds us that it is the right hand of the Most High. God is not some capricious demon who will help you if he feels like it, but another day will not just as well drown you.
He's the Holy One. The one whose very character is superior to all others. The appeal is to the highest authority, to the Supreme Court, to the very origin of all power and authority and justice.
And if it's impassioned, it is also reasoned. It leaves no loophole, does it? Why might God not help me? Well, let's think it through.
Did God make promises? Yes, he did. We see them in history. Has God the power to carry them out?
[25:12] Somebody else outside. Has God the power to carry out his promises? I mean, you know, I could make all sorts of promises. I could promise you a million quid, but it's not going to do any good, because I haven't got it to give you.

But does God have the ability to carry out his promises? Well, yes, he does. But perhaps God's going to pass the buck onto somebody else.
Well, never mind. Somebody will help you. It's not my job. But no. He is the most high. The place where the buck stops, as it were.
God is not going to pass this job onto somebody else. He is the most high. And how can the appeal be denied? And then the psalmist goes on to expand these three ideas in the next three verses.
So he recalls, doesn't he, the miracles of long ago in verse 11. And he recalls their power. The right hand, in verse 12.
[26:17] And he reminds us in verse 13 that God's ways are holy and displays his greatness. And he reminds us in verse 14 that God's power changes lives and situations, as it's seen among the nations.

And he works up to the greatest miracle of all. Verses 13 and 14. The miracle of redemption. Derek Kidner, in his commentary, points out that the implication here, when it says the redeemer, is the

kinsman redeemer.
The relative whose job it is to find some nephew or cousin or something, has been sold into slavery. And as a kinsman redeemer, has the duty to go and buy them out of slavery. Set them free again.
And that is what God has done.
He didn't leave his people in slavery in Egypt. And so the psalmist reminds us of Jacob and Joseph. Why does he remind us of those two particularly?
[27:30] Well, you may remember that both of them gave instructions concerning their burial. Both of them said that, no, I don't want to be buried in Egypt.

Doubtless Joseph could have had a very impressive tomb in Egypt as a high official. He says, no, don't bury me in Egypt. This is not my land. Take my bones back to Canaan.
They believed that God would indeed take his people back to the promised land. And so they gave instructions concerning their burial.
And that work of redemption is the greatest work of all. What business is God in is in the business of freeing slaves and making them into a nation.
And so with that thought, the psalmist pauses again. And indeed, perhaps, you thought the sign might have ended there.
[28:35] That would be a good positive note to finish on, wouldn't it? But actually, it doesn't. The psalmist is not done. He still has a question to consider, an issue to sort out.

And the question, I think, is why have I gone through this? Why have I had to go this way? And so, clearly still thinking about the Exodus.
In verses 16 to 20. But it's not so much the historical brute factor of the crossing that he wants to focus on. He wants to focus on what this tells us about that crossing.
The crossing here is a picture, a metaphor, an illustration of spiritual struggle. And in fact, it's the very struggle that he's already described in verses 1 to 9.
Where is God to be found? Look at verse 19. What does he tell us in verse 19?
[29:45] There are no footprints on the beach. When I was a scout, boy scout, which I was in my youth, one thing I struggled with was tracking.

But of course, on a beach, a smooth beach or a smooth snowfield, the most inept tracker can follow a trail, can't they? You can say, there are the footprints.
And you can say, if God had left his footprints on a beach, you could say, yeah, God went that way. That's clear enough. But no. There are no footprints that say, look, God went that way.
Instead, there is struggle. And we see that the writhings and convulsions of the waters, and these words do imply, it's not just waves, it implies trouble and even fear.
The writhings and convulsions of the waters in verse 16, and mirror the writhings and groanings of the psalmist's sleepless night, don't they? And the lightning flashes of the storm, what are they?
[30:56] They're arrows that pierce the soul, verse 17. You want to know which way God went? Well, I'll tell you which way he went.

Look to the sea and the storm. That's where God's pathway is, through the storm, through the sea. That's the way to go if you want to catch up with him.
And what's the point of this? Well, it's all very well to look back on the history and look back at, say, the history of the crossing of the Red Sea and think, well, that was, you know, that's clear.
God led his people across the sea. Isn't that great? But, of course, if you actually read the description of it, it wasn't like that at all, was it? This was a terrifying experience.
Here were the people of God. They fled from Egypt under Moses' leadership. And they were stuck against the water.
[31:59] There was the Red Sea in front of them. And there was the Egyptian cavalry behind them. What were they going to do? It was only in the possibility of destruction that they could exercise faith, wasn't it?

I mean, to take a silly example. I mean, it's only when you realize that enclosing yourself in a metal box at 30,000 feet is not a very natural thing to do, that you put your faith in the engineers who designed the plane, that you put your faith in the pilot who is flying it.
And, of course, most of the time, that faith is justified, but there are exceptions. But, in this case, there are no exceptions, because we put our faith in the most high.

But still, it was the possibility of a massacre. The choice they had was either to be drowned in the sea or to face the charging cavalry behind them.
And only in that situation did it make sense to step into the water. If that hadn't been the situation they were in, they wouldn't have needed faith, really, would they?
[33:20] It was when they were in that situation that they stepped into the water and found that the Lord did, indeed, deliver them. In fact, it's fair to say that faith is almost meaningless without doubt.

It's only the possibility of doubt that makes faith mean anything, really, isn't it? It's like the boy with the epileptic boy, or the boy whose son had a spirit that cast him into the fire.
What did he say to Jesus? I believe, help my unbelief. His belief there was not a state he was in, but an act of will.
And faith here, the psalmist reminds us, is an act of will. It is challenged by doubt, and in a sense it is right that it's challenged by doubt.
Because if it's not challenged by doubt, then ultimately it's not faith at all. It's just hoping for the best. As one of the Peanuts cartoons says, hoping for the best is not theologically sound.
[34:29] Hoping for the best is not what we're supposed to do. What we're supposed to do is step into the sea. You want to follow where God has gone, then walk into the teeth of the storm.

And there you will find his hand reaches out to you. That's what the psalmist wants to tell us. The world is not pointless and meaningless, as the atheists think.
But there is struggle. There are storms. But it's in the storm, in the struggle, that actually faith is made complete. That's where we meet, really meet with God.
That's where, as we might say, faith ceases to be mere words. Ceases to be mere hoping for the best. And actually gains substance, becomes something real.
That's the lesson, I think, that the psalmist has learnt from his sleepless night. And that's the lesson, I think, he wants us to learn also.
[35:38] It's why he bothered to write it down and put it to us in such a dramatic way. But even that's not the last thing to be said. Some people have said the last verse is an anti-climax.

But if it is, as Kidna says, it's a very deliberate one. Verse 20 says that, yes, but the believer is not expected to face this alone.
Not expected to step into the storm without a leader. Because, in fact, God does provide a shepherd who looks after, leads the flock.
There is a leader through the waters to the promised land. There is a priest, Aaron, who makes things, makes intercedes between us and God.
There is, in fact, there is one who stills the storm. There was one person who walked on the waters and left no footprints.
[36:52] One of whom this was written. Mark 14, 33 to 37. Jesus took Peter, James and John along with him.

And he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, he said to them.
Stay here and keep watch. These are the words of a warrior, aren't they? Not some callow recruit who, signing up for a battle like as if it's a trip to the seaside.
Who, sure, it will all be over by Christmas. This was the testimony of a hardened veteran. One who had fought fierce battles.
One who understood the hell of war, as it were, of spiritual war. And one who was well aware that the fiercest, most hellish battle of all was still ahead.
[37:54] It was about to happen. If Jesus himself hadn't gone through that Gethsemane experience, then his obedience would have had no substance, would it?

It would have been just hoping for the best. And so Jesus himself prayed a similar prayer to our psalmist, didn't he? Abba, Father, he said, everything is possible for you.
Take this cup from me. Get not what I will, but what you will. And then what happened? He returned to his disciples. And had they kept watch with him, as he'd asked, in his time of trouble?

No, they were asleep. He found them sleeping. Simon, he said to Peter, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Now, the disciples didn't come to Jesus' aid.
But we read that God did, that the angels came to his aid. The prayer, in fact, gives its own answer, doesn't it?
[39:03] Yet not what I will, but what you will. If you are leading me through this dark, through the storm, through this dark experience, I will do what you will.

If that's the way you're telling me to go. So Jesus fought that battle, and he won it. And so he's the one who guides the sheep.
He's the leader who takes them through the sea, because he's already been through. He's the priest who ensured God's favour, because the death that was demanded was paid for by his own suffering, by his own life.
And he's the one who knows that sometimes we'll be like this psalmist, won't we? Wrapped, perhaps, with fear and doubt.
But Jesus comes to us and points us to that great act of redemption. It reminds us, as the psalmist is reminded, that there is a redeemer. There is a leader.
[40:11] There is a shepherd. There is a priest. And this isn't some made-up fable, but it's a matter of history. And so a few days later, Jesus came to his disciples again.

This is Luke 24. It says, while they were still talking about this, well, this is the meeting with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. And what did Jesus say this time?
Jesus stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. And he said to them, Why are you troubled?
Why do doubts arise in your mind? And yet, he knew that they had, that they did, and that they were troubled. And he comes to them and says, Look.
Look. Not just look at the crossing of the Red Sea. Look at something far more graphic than that. Look at my hands and my feet. It's I, myself.
[41:16] Touch me and see. A ghost doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see I have. And he showed them his hands and feet. They still found it hard to believe.

But this time, they found it hard to believe because of joy and amazement. And he asked them, Do you have anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.
And he said to them, This is what I told you when I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me and the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms. Well, we've just read a psalm, haven't we?
He is the one who is the redeemer, the shepherd, the priest, the leader. And he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. And he told them, This is what is written.
The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. So yes, sometimes we are wracked with fear and doubt, as those disciples were, as that psalmist was.
[42:18] Sometimes we do have to look back and say, Well, up to now the Lord has helped me. But, the first thing to remind us, the most important thing to remind us, is that there is a redeemer.

There is a leader. There is a shepherd. There is a priest. And he takes our hand as we go through the storm, as Moses led the people through the waters.
So Jesus leads us through the waters, and that's why I quoted that verse of Thomas Oliver's at the beginning. The, I'll remind myself what it says.
The watery deep I pass with Jesus in my view, and through the howling wilderness my way pursue.
He may indeed lead us through the waters or the howling wilderness, but he is there in our view.
So we take comfort from that. So let's sing this psalm together. Psalm 77. Then I'll ask Chris to come out and perhaps close this time and organize us for prayer together.