

Summer in the Psalms - Psalm 4

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[0:00] Good morning. How are you? You're awake? All right. Low-hanging fruit today, I guess. You're awake. Amen.

I just want to clarify really quick, I'm not the PE teacher of Central Valley School District. I just, just one, just one school, River Bend Elementary. I just wanted to clarify that before we get started, in case you came to me with all your health concerns. That's not, that's not my role.

That's not my role. Also, really quickly, I just, shout out to our children's ministry. As parents, you want to know that you're doing right by the Lord, and that you're raising your kids in the way of the Lord. And so, earlier this week, when I put this shirt on, my daughter, my 10-year-old daughter, started singing, nothing but the blood of Jesus. And so, it's encouraging to me to know that the gospel is even in my apparel, apparently.

So, I just thought that I'd make that shout out. If you're new with us today, we've spent the last couple of weeks going through the Psalms.

We've gone through Psalm 1, Psalm 2, Psalm 3, and then here today we find ourselves in Psalm 4. So, before we jump into the text, what I'm going to do is, I'm just going to copy and paste what Jay has said from the last couple of weeks with regard to the Psalms, just some fun facts for you.

[1:25] First is, the Psalms are like songs. They have been designed to show us how to worship, how to grieve, how to lament, how to trust in the Lord.

Fifty-five of the Psalms, including today's, are addressed to the choir master, meaning that these were meant to be sung in a corporate setting.

And like Jay said last week, or a couple weeks ago, and I will say today, I'm not going to sing for you this morning, P.E. teacher. You're welcome. Seventy-three of these have David ascribed as the author.

One last thing, specifically with regard to today's Psalm and Psalm 4. Many historians and commentators, people much smarter than me, have tried to make a connection between this Psalm, Psalm 4, the previous Psalm of Psalm 3, and then the events that took place in 2 Samuel 15.

When I look at the beginning of this Psalm, at the beginning, it says, To the choir master with stringed instruments, a Psalm of David. If you look back to the previous Psalm, in Psalm 3, it says, A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom, his son.

[2:37] Now, with all due respect to historians and commentators, again, people that have more degrees than a thermostat, I just don't see, I don't see it specifically in the text.

Which I think for today, I think it allows for a broader application, but with all due respect to those people that have come before me, I will, when appropriate, make connections to 2 Samuel 15.

Let me pray. Let me get myself out of the way. Father, as I preach your word, I pray that you would empower me by your spirit, so that the people of God might hear your will, thus being encouraged and convicted to walk closer with you.

It's in Jesus' name, amen. When you think about social media, sometimes what comes to mind is that family photo that's been perfectly curated.

However many kids, all smiling beautifully, could probably go in a picture frame at Hobby Lobby. But what you don't see is, you don't see the three photos before that, where everybody was crying, there was threats being made, and there was no smiles on anybody's face.

[3:46] Or you think about the kitchen that just looks beautiful. There's no crumbs, there's no peels, there's no garbage, it is just something out of a William & Sonoma catalog. But then what you don't see is the deep clean that took place beforehand to make sure that the photo was taken correctly and the mess that's going to take place once the family comes through the kitchen

afterwards looking for a snack.

Those photos, social media, that's not real life. That's a curated thing. The Psalms are not that. The Psalms are for real life, real struggle, for real people, going through real things in everyday life. And the blessing that we have this morning is, it's almost as if somebody took, or David took, a page out of his prayer journal, handed it to the choir master, and said this should be sung for the congregation.

And so today what we get to do is, we get to look at real life. Because if we're honest, once we leave here after the final amen, you have to go back to real life.

You have to go back to whatever it is that you're pressing pause on briefly while you sit here among the people of God. And so prayerfully today, we'll receive some encouragement.

[5:10] Today's sermon is titled, Real Struggle, Real Life. The main point of today is this.

When life is beyond our control, we can have peace. Not because our circumstances will change, but because we know the God who holds us. And as a result, it should have an effect on us.

And that's what we're going to see today in this Psalm. David is dealing with opposition, uncertainty, and circumstances that he can't control. Yet by the end of today's Psalm, David will be able to say, Yet in peace, I will both lie down and sleep.

For those of you that are note takers, I have three points for you. The cry of faith, the call to faith, and the confidence of faith.

I'll say that again. The cry of faith, the call to faith, and the confidence of faith. Let's start with the cry of faith, starting in verse one.

[6:22] Where the Lord says this. Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness. You have given me relief when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. First question, when was the last time you cried out to God because of stressful, hard, sudden, weighty, uncontrollable circumstances.

The thing that I love about this is there's no pretense. David just gets right to it. Answer me, O God of my righteousness. This is a call for action.

He's not just asking for the Lord to listen to him. Lord, if you have time, can you lend me your ear? David expects intervention. See, if I were to text you, if my wife were to text me urgently, wondering where I am, it'd probably be in all caps.

Or if you have an iPhone, you can actually make it bold now. Or italicize it, let it lean to the right a little bit. Or underline it. Where are you? That doesn't exist here in the psalm.

[7:33] The Hebrew doesn't allow for that. But what it does is there are certain stylistic points that allow you to know what the emotion is. If you look here in verse one, you'll see how the imperatives are stacked.

Answer me, be gracious to me, hear my prayer. Whether or not this is a reference to 2 Samuel 15 or a different set of circumstances, one thing is true.

David is calling out to and needs God to act on his behalf. Bless you. No, no apologies.

Look who he's calling to. He says, God of my righteousness. Really quick, let's pause and think about who it is that we're talking about here. We're talking about David. This is David, the king of Israel.

Right? This is David. This is the one who was anointed by Samuel. This is David. This is the one who killed the giant. This is David, who in the last administration would play music in order to soothe Saul.

[8:43] This is David, the man whose military achievements were celebrated in song. And yet, when David comes to God, he does not rattle off his resume. It's not, you who, God, this is me, the giant killer.

That's not what David does. What does he do? He says, oh God of my righteousness. Meaning this, the only basis for which David can start by saying, oh God of my righteousness and answer me is God himself.

Which actually is a good reminder for us. Your membership status here at 4th, the amount you've ever given or tithed to the church, the mission trip count that you may have, whether or not you've ever been up here on stage, your net worth, your degrees, whatever else that you would use to elevate and have as a reason for why you should be able to come to God doesn't matter.

None of those things qualified you for salvation. So none of those things qualify the Lord to answer you. The Lord's not just answering prayers of PhDs and people in the Fortune 500.

David's appeal to God who is righteous because God knows what's right. David isn't asking God to join Team David. His appeal to God is because God knows what's going on and will act justly. [10:22] Think about how David addresses God. He says, God of my righteousness. And let's think about how he's also addressed God in the Psalms. He says, the Lord is my shepherd.

The Lord is my light. The Lord is my salvation. See, God isn't distant from David. David has a relationship with God.

David doesn't know God based on rumors. And here's what's encouraging to me going back to David as a king. Remember, this was written so that the choir master would take it and play it before the congregation.

Everybody knows who David is. David's the king. And the king is having a bad day. How encouraging, then, for the rest of us who are not kings or queens to know that we, too, can have bad days and it's okay.

You're allowed to have a bad day. That's called life. And yet, if David can call out to the Lord, so can we.

[11:40] And here's what he says, right in the middle of verse one. You have given me relief when I was in distress. Specifically, the Hebrew says that when I was in a tight spot, you gave me relief.

I love how David has a little testimony in the middle of his cry out to God. God, you've acted on my behalf before and that's why I'm calling again.

David is looking back while he asks God to act again. And that's what faith does. Faith remembers. God's past faithfulness allows us to have confidence to come to God again.

So my next question for us is, what's the situation that you can point to in your life specifically and say, had God not shown up, fill in the blank.

I prayed for this and God showed up in my life or in my circumstances. And does that allow you the confidence to come to God again?

[12:50] Now let me speak to a group of new believers. Let's say that you're a new believer. You just recently came to faith in the catalog of your prayer journal is not that long. And so you look back over your shoulder and you go, I don't really know if I have much to base my confidence in.

Let me give you one. And it's all you need. You cried out to God for your salvation.

And God answered you. God took you from the tight spot that you were in with your sin and he gave you relief.

That alone should give you confidence to be able to cry, oh God of my righteousness, answer me. That is your testimony. That is your testimony.

Maybe you were worried that you were going to run out of money before you ran out of month. Maybe you had a disease or addiction that God healed you of.

[13:55] Maybe it was marital or relational stress. Maybe job problems. We just recently had a regional fire. I know there was a lot of cries out to the Lord.

Whatever it is, the faithfulness of God should give you confidence to be able to come to him again in your time of need. David doesn't stop there.

Look at the end of verse 1. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer. This shows David's posture. David is bold enough to ask God for help but is humble enough to know that God doesn't owe him anything.

The word gracious here means that you are asking for favor from someone who is greater than you that doesn't owe you anything. And that's what David is doing here.

In Exodus 33, Moses says to the Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me your ways. He was asking for God's favor. It's the same posture here that we see with David.

[15:01] David's point here in verse 1 is this. God, I know you're righteous. I don't come to you because you owe me something or because I'm king or because I've earned the right to be heard.

I come to you because of who you are, because of what you've done on my behalf in the past and I'm asking you to turn toward me again. Again, that's the cry of faith.

A look to God. A remembrance of what he's done. Trusting in his righteousness and a request for grace. And here's where we turn.

Normally in a lament, the author would continue in the lament. But David does something different here. Having gained confidence in his prayer to the Lord, he now turns his attention to what could be the source of or at least a contributing factor of his strife.

He turns to the opposition. Read with me here. In chapter 2, as we start point 2, which is a call to faith. Verse 2.

[16:07] O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself.

The Lord hears when I call to him. Be angry and do not sin. Ponder in your own hearts, on your own beds, and be silent.

Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord. If Psalm 3 were to provide a backdrop at also 2 Samuel 15, if it were to provide a backdrop for what it is that we're looking at today, we could say and make the connection that there were people that conspired with his son Absalom to run David out of Jerusalem.

But again, the text doesn't make that clear. But what is clear is that there is actual opposition and it has been going on for a while. You'll notice two times in verse 2, he asks the question, how long? Some commentators will say that David is referring to the honor that God gave David when he called him and anointed him by the prophet Samuel, establishing him as king and preserving him.

[17:27] So here, David isn't defending his ego. Is that my heart? Okay, sorry. Sorry. Lord, I'm ready.

David isn't defending his ego. So he's pointing to God's work in his life. In other words, what David is saying here in verse 2 is, you're seeking to ruin what God has established in order to pursue emptiness and lies.

Stop. Think about what you're doing. How long are you going to keep this up? Selah. Right on the side of this section, you'll see the word Selah.

This is the first pause. The reason why this was put in is it's a pause to allow you to meditate on what has just been said.

To allow it to marinate within you. At Pastor Chuck Swindoll's church, Stonebriar Community Church in Texas, they actually put this within their worship service.

[18:38] Right before the preaching of the word, what will happen is someone will come up to the podium and they'll read whatever the passage of the day is. And then there will be a pause where there actually is stringed instruments playing in the background for X amount of time and then the preaching of the word comes.

It's a pause. Remember, this is being sung in the tabernacle. David's opposition might be present. So what is it then? What is it that David is asking for a pause for? What does he want them to consider?

What does he want to marinate? In the previous verse, in verse 2, he just said, how long will my honor be turned to shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? I don't know. Maybe David wants them to check the motives of their heart. It's possible that his opposition is either ignorant or intentional in what it is that they're pursuing and doing. You ever been caught up in something and you look around and you don't know how you got there?

[19:51] Stop. How long is this going to go on? Maybe today you're in David's position. Maybe you're not the instigator. Maybe you're the victim.

What does God want you to pause on? How are you responding? Maybe you are the instigator. Maybe you are the instigator. How long will you let this pursuit of foolishness continue?

How long will you choose falsehood? I don't know what your marriage is like, but maybe you're choosing to believe the worst about your spouse right now and you're pursuing that.

Maybe a friendship has been poisoned by assumptions or by a mistake. Maybe someone lovingly confronted you about your sin and rather than listen, you've put your energy into proving them wrong.

Pause. Think honestly. How long will this continue? Please notice that David doesn't defend himself or present evidence or even build a case against himself.

[20:59] He just asks questions, pauses, and then says this in verse 3, but know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself. The Lord hears when I call to him.

David says, you love lies and emptiness, but before you continue, understand this reality. The Lord knows who belongs to him. I know that because when I call, he answers.

This just goes to show you the spirituality of David because had it been me, it's not that he was essentially saying, it's not that he was saying, Yahweh loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

You're not in, so don't be mad. I'm his son and he's my dad. That's something childish that I would do. Be honest, you would do it too.

That's not, that's not what David is saying here. Is my thing doing? It's Britney Spears, Mike, it's killing me. All right. Again, this is in the tabernacle where his opponents are possibly a part of covenant community.

[22 : 13] So here's possibly what David is saying. While he's not saying you're definitely outside of the family of God, what he is saying is don't confuse covenant membership with covenant faithfulness.

The Lord knows who truly belongs to him. just because you're in the tabernacle and just because you're singing these psalms, just because you might happen to be making sacrifices, that doesn't necessarily mean that you're in right standing with God.

This is why David immediately afterward urges them in the next verse to stop, not to just stop bothering him, but to offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord. See, their greatest problem isn't that they're opposing David, their problem is that they're not in right relationship with God.

And the same warning applies today. Just because you're sitting in the pews today, just because you might happen to be a greeter, just because you might happen to be an elder, a position of leadership, just because you happen to be on a mission trip or have led a mission trip or have donated to the facility and the projects that are going on, that doesn't mean that you're in right standing with God.

covenant membership does not equate to covenant faithfulness. Remember earlier, none of those guaranteed your salvation.

[23 : 38] So at the same point, none of those guarantee that you're in right standing. And, matter of fact, scripture would go so far as to remind us and warn us about external religion without a transformed heart.

Samuel says it's better to obey than sacrifice. sacrifice. The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah says, this people honors me with their lips while their hearts are what?

Far from me. Everything external look good. This is why the Selah between verses two and three, should I just move to that one?

No. It's fine. Now I can't talk with my hands. This is why the Selah between verses two and three is so significant because David says, pause and consider this.

Your pedigree doesn't determine your standing before God. And for David, verse three is a reminder of verse one. Remember in the middle of verse one, he says, you have given me relief when I was in distress.

[24 : 48] God has heard him before. And for us as believers, this should be an encouragement. Again, I don't know where you are today, but hear me when I say this.

God hears you. God hears you. And for those of us, or for those of you, that might not be walking with the Lord, or you're not in right standing with God, unconfessed, unrepented sin in your life, this should serve as a warning or an invitation.

Rather than the pursuit of lies, seek truth. If you've settled once for religion, seek repentance. David is lovingly warning you to stop, pause, and examine your heart.

In your heart. Our confidence rests entirely in what God has done, never in what we've accomplished. Which begs the question then, what should the opposition do?

And I love that because David doesn't leave him hanging. You don't have to wait long. Verse four. Be angry and do not sin. Ponder in your own hearts, on your beds, and be silent.

[26 : 13] Selah. The second one. Another selah, another pause. The word angry here means to be agitated, to be disturbed, to be bothered, to be shaken.

And that's what David wants this truth to do. He wants it to unsettle them. He wants this truth to bother them and to agitate something in here, which is why he's asking them to be quiet. Just chill. Just pause. Angry, being angry, is not, it's not the sin. It's what we do with it. So what is your first response when confronted with truth?

I work around 600 little kids. 600 of them. Pray for me. And I can tell you this, it is a rare day out of 600 kids that I've ever confronted a kid, and I've ever said, hey, you can't do that.

And their first response is never, oh, wise and knowing P.E. teacher, I am so sorry. You are right.

[27 : 35] let me repent of the error of my ways. 18 years, it's never happened. I'm waiting. It's never happened. Doesn't even happen in my own house. What I always get is some sort of like, but

he did it, but she did it.

Just, just, just chill. Just chill. Just chill. is your response defense or contemplation, retaliation or reflection? And this is what I love.

David isn't simply rebuking them. He who used to be a shepherd of sheep is now a shepherd of men. And his desire right now is for them to allow the truth to marinate.

His invitation is for them to go someplace quiet, to remove all distractions, turn your phone off, to stop talking even to yourself, to sit with the truth and allow it to expose what's really going on in your heart.

You can't do that with a lot of noise and distractions. You can't. He's not asking them to go get two or three witnesses and come up with a reason why he's wrong.

[28:57] He's not asking them to phone a friend and come up with a list of reasons why they're right. Go into your room, sit down, be quiet, and allow the truth to get deep into your soul.

Why? Because reflection can become repentance. For the believer, repentance restores fellowship. repentance not only with one another, but more importantly with the Lord.

For the non-believer, repentance begins reconciliation with God so you can be in new relationship. That's hard because you first have to acknowledge and admit that the truth that's hitting your soul is exposing you.

There's something wrong. Man, if that's not whoa, the first thing we had to do when the Lord called us was to get rid of our pride because the first thing that God told us was that we were sinners.

God to God to God offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord.

[30:11] Offer right sacrifices. That means that there's probably some sacrifices that were being offered that weren't right. note the balance.

One command is external right sacrifices. The other is internal trust in the Lord. See, David refuses to separate worship from faith. I'm going to step on some toes really quick.

I gave you warning. For us as believers, sometimes this time right here in the morning, this time can be the time where we struggle, the most.

We'll sing songs of I surrender all, and yet my fist is clenched with that one thing that I don't feel like falls under the category of all.

We just sang about how we trust in the Lord, and yet, I don't know, how many of you are trusting in your bank account? How many of you are trusting in your own skill and ability, your own wisdom?

[31:16] whatever the letters are that you have after your name, the time that you've spent in school, your net worth, your fill-in-the-blank, that can be difficult for us.

We sing about needing Christ while our heart posture in life is evidenced and full of evidence that we are trusting in ourselves with no fight at all. love. I recently listened to a snippet of a podcast by comedian Theo Vaughn, and one of the things that he shared within his podcast, he said that he was listening to a story, and this just shows you his heart, and I truly do think that the Lord is doing something in his heart.

He said, I was listening to this story called John 5. It was cute. And he said it was with regard to the healing that Jesus performed on this one man, and he said, if I'm honest, he said, if I'm honest, I do want to be healed, but I'm afraid of what a new story might mean.

And he goes, even in this, he goes, I am battling with saying that I want to be healed, but knowing, but knowing that I still do enjoy the things that I'm doing.

Gosh, what refreshing honesty. It's way more than coming on a Sunday, hey, how you doing?

Praise the Lord, everything's good, and your life is in shambles.

[32:50] That doesn't mean that you need to give everybody the headlines to your life, but is there somebody in your life, somebody that you can share, it's not all good, that you can be honest with.

that you can be honest with. See, because in Psalm 51, David says, you don't delight in sacrifice, and then later he says the sacrifices of God are what?

A broken and contrite, a broken heart and a contrite spirit. God never wants empty ritual, ever. He wants a heart that can trust him.

Sacrifices aren't magic for the Israelites. It wasn't some rabbit's foot that they could rub and everything would be fine. It was an acknowledgement that I've sinned.

I need atonement. I need reconciliation. And that sacrifice expressed a heart returning to God, which is why David put them together. Offer right sacrifices.

[33:54] Sacrifices and trust in the Lord. When was the last time, again, that you spent time in the word and allowed the word to spend time in you? To expose what it is that's going on.

Because David's final command is to trust, to lean on, to rest your total weight on. Okay, I'm a teacher, so I have a visual for you, and it involves your participation.

You're all sitting in the pews. Do me a favor really quick. Just take your feet off the ground. Just let them hang. Your total weight right now is on that pew.

And if that pew were to magically disappear, I thought it'd work. If it were to magically disappear, there would be a collective here in the auditorium.

Why? Because your total trust and weight is leaning on that pew. Okay, you can put your feet down. Hurt. Your total trust and weight was leaning on that pew.

[35:00] That's how the Lord wants you to lean on him. Right? Proverbs 3. Trust in the Lord with some of your heart. Nope. Trust in the Lord with like 95% of your heart.

You can keep five. No. Trust in the Lord with what? All your heart. I looked it up in Hebrew. All means all. Okay?

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. That's biblical trust. So now that David has confronted his opposition and their hearts, we can move to our final point regarding the confidence that faith plays when delineating between temporary happiness and the joy that God gives.

Let's move on to verse 6. Word says this. There are many who say, who will show us some good?

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord. You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. Verse 8. In peace, in peace, I will both lie down and sleep.

[36:10] For you alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety. Okay, two different lenses. Let's say that this is connected to 2 Samuel 15.

There's a group of people. David has fled Jerusalem. There's a group of people that are with him. His son is trying to kill him. The Ark of the Covenant is back in Jerusalem. He's on the run. And he has a group of people with him that are like, who's going to turn this around?

Even if it's not 2 Samuel 15. There's a group of people with him that are like, who's going to turn this around? Their circumstances are not great. And it would be natural, it would be natural for anybody to ask, who's going to change our circumstances?

Who can do that? Matter of fact, if you look at the question, it doesn't even look like the expectation, like there's an expectation that David's going to answer this question. Who can show us some good?

It reminds me in Exodus 17, 7, when the Israelites were wandering around the desert and they said, is the Lord even for us? Right after saying, like, was there not enough graves in Egypt? Similar sentiment.

[37:23] Bleak situations can lead to desperate questions. And again, I don't know your circumstances, but it's possible that your heart posture is similar to those around David. And here's David's response.

He doesn't even answer them. His answer is another prayer to the Lord. Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord. And some say that David's desire was for God's approval and recognition and that true goodness and blessing come from his presence.

The favor of God. He's quoting Numbers 6, 26, in this priestly blessing, that the light of God's face would shine upon them. In other words, David's response is this.

If you want someone or something to change your circumstances and show you some good, God, show us yourself. Because you are the ultimate source of good.

The ultimate blessing is not in the gifts. It's in the giver. And in this particular context, it is God himself.

[38:29] Look at what he says next. What is it that the Lord gives? Verse 7, he says, you have put more joy into my heart than when they have their grain and wine abound.

This is an agrarian society. Is grain and wine bad? Is that a bad thing? No. But what is their happiness predicated on?

Whether or not there is grain and wine in abundance. Which means what? That means that they planted the crops at the right time. They harvested at the right time. There was the right amount of water. There was no famine, no locust.

All the conditions were good. And thus you have a crop. Which means what? When the grain and wine don't abound, what is their attitude like? Is it good? Are they happy?

Probably not. Probably not. What does David say? David says, you've given me more joy.

[39 : 29] More joy than on their best harvest. Hear what David's saying really quickly. He's not saying that grain and wine are cool, but here's a better alternative.

Right? It's not like you go to the grocery store and it's like, well, here's yogurt and here's organic yogurt. It's the same and yet better. That's not what David is saying. David is saying it's okay to have grain and wine.

You are an agrarian society. But your happiness is based on good crops. God has given me abundantly more joy that is not based on external circumstances.

See, happiness is based on external circumstances. You can have it today and not have it as soon as you leave church. You could be happy one minute and let the right person cut you off on the freeway and your happiness and the Holy Spirit just leaves as you start saying things as you roll down the road.

And yet, I'm not the only one. And yet, what David is saying is, he says, you have given me more joy. More joy.

[40 : 42] The blessing, the presence, and approval of God are so much better than when grain and wine are in abundance that it doesn't even compare. It doesn't even compare.

So a good heart check is, does your happiness ebb and flow based on your circumstances? Or do you have like a, do you just have a constant joy?

Not because, not because of your circumstances. Look, the last couple of weeks has proven that.

There was a video their friend sent me of, of a gal actually in Spokane and it was on Instagram.

And she's standing, she's standing right in front of where her house used to be. And on the fence, on the fence, right next to her, were these words.

God is good. And she took about three minutes to share her testimony about why her life that was behind her, although burned to the ground, was not dependent upon what just took place.

[42 : 03] I'm not saying that we shouldn't be upset. I don't want to sound insensitive. But life is life.

And if it's not a house that burns down, if it's not a job that's lost, if it's not a relationship that's broken, if it's not a family member that's sick, if it's not, we can make a laundry list of why things can and will go bad.

And that can tear us to where we're kind of like a feather in the barnyard. Our emotion is predicated on whether or not things are going well. And David says, you've given me a joy that is not based on what's going on around me.

So then the question becomes, what sort of expectations do we set when we present the gospel?

Do we tell people, well, your life is at a seven, but with Jesus, I can get you at a ten? And everything is going to be fine.

You know the one that we rarely share in gospel presentations? When Jesus says, I'm sending you out as lambs among wolves. I don't think I've ever used that. Your life is going to get rough.

Christ is life. And when circumstances change, the Lord is still good and joy is still possible.

Because your hope and joy weren't based on those circumstances. Psalm 1611. I know we're doing a psalm a week.

[43 : 26] We might get there in 2028. But in Psalm 1611, the psalmist says this, in your presence there is fullness of joy.

At your right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Piper said it this way, God is most delighted in us when we are most satisfied in him.

When I was a kid, when I was a kid, we used to take road trips. We used to drive around. And sometimes they would turn into scenic trips. You know what a scenic trip is?

It's when your parents don't know where they're going. And they say, this is a scenic trip. We're going to take the scenic route. But here's the thing. As a kid, I can say that both my parents are here today. I can say that.

I'd say it if they weren't here. But when I was a kid, what I would do is, my brother and I would just climb in the back of the car, get buckled in, and we would just enjoy the ride.

[44 : 28] I wasn't sitting in the back seat looking out the window with a map in my lap like, wait, you missed the turn? Wait, where are we going? What are we doing? Even when my mom would turn and look at my dad and be like, do you need help?

No, I got this. Why? Why? Because even though I didn't know where I was going, I trusted the one that was behind the wheel.

I trusted him so much that I'd fall asleep in the back seat. That's what I would do. I would fall asleep in the back seat. Why? Because I don't need to be in control. My dad's up front.

He knows where we're going. And we would get there. My faith was in his ability to know where we're going. And look at what David finishes with. David says in verse 8 this.

He says, in peace, in shalom, I will both lie down and sleep. I love that he pairs these two together.

[45 : 33] Because how many of you, if we're honest, how many of us, as soon as our head hits the pillow, our mind is running a million miles an hour. Not just wondering whether or not we left the lights on or the stove on or the TV on or something like that. But we're thinking about the things that we missed throughout the course of the day.

We're thinking about what we can't control. Well, I should have said this. Well, I need to do that. But what if this doesn't get turned in? But what if the insurance claim doesn't come through? What if the doctor can't figure out what's going on with me? What if my relationship doesn't get put back together?

What if? David says, I will both lie down, because to lie down is a choice, and sleep. It's almost as if David says, as soon as I finish writing this, when my head hits the pillow, I'm gone.

I will do that in peace. For you alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety. Here's what's interesting. David does not allude that there's going to be any change in his circumstances. Matter of fact, if we were to take it a step further, David's not even guaranteed to wake up when he puts his head down and go to sleep.

[46 : 43] And yet, David says, in peace, I will both lie down and sleep. Why? Let's take a look back through the psalm.

In verse one, God has intervened before. In verse three, God hears when David calls. Verses six through seven, God's favor is better than prosperity. And in verse eight, God alone is the source of David's security.

In other words, David, like me when I was a kid, God is sitting in the back seat. He's along for the ride because he knows and trusts in the one who is driving.

As I said earlier, I don't know where you are. I don't know what your life is like. I don't know what real life you're going to face when you leave. But my hope is that we can take comfort in the words of Jeremiah 29, 11, who although God was speaking to an exiled people, he reminds them that he, he knows the plans that he has for his people.

And maybe you don't need to know the plan. Maybe you don't. That's God's prerogative whether or not he wants to choose to share it with you. Maybe you just need to connect with the one who has the plan because in verse 13 of Jeremiah 29, he says, if you seek me, you will find me when you seek me with all your heart.

[48 : 10] And that's the source of our confidence. Not because we know what tomorrow holds, but because we know who holds tomorrow. Amen? May we leave today with the confidence that David had that in the presence of the Lord, we can have peace because of the one who our faith is placed in.

And maybe tonight when you lay down, put your head on the pillow and your mind starts running. You can think of Psalm 4, verse 8 that says, in peace, I will both lie down and sleep for you alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, you're good. You are good. You are better than life circumstances.

Lord, thank you that you don't change even though our circumstances do.

Thank you that we can have joy, not happiness. I pray, Lord, that the way that we live our lives, our real lives with real mess, would not only be a testimony to your faithfulness, but would also be a witness to the world around us that desperately is searching for peace.

We love you, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.