

Summer in the Psalms - Psalm 5

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[0:00] I mean, let's pray together. Father, I thank you that because you are a God of wow, so many things that you have done that we just could stand back and say, Lord, you are worthy.

None compare to you. Wow. So, Lord, as we have this opportunity to look at your word this morning, I pray that these timeless truths that you have declared in your living word would take root in our hearts.

And we would seek to know you more. And may we leave this place after we have heard from you. More like you. Thank you so much for the opportunity to receive from you this morning. Amen.

In June of 2002, there was a 67-year-old woman whose name was Vernita Vincent. She lived in Silverdale, Washington, in Kitsap County.

She went for a walk and somehow got lost and she found herself in a wooded area that was very thick with brush to the point where she did not know how she got there and she did not know how to get out.

[1:27] And so she began to exclaim, help! Help! Can anybody hear me? Help! For two days, a search party went out looking and on the third day, the search party was called off.

Day four, help! Can anybody hear me? Help! Day five, six, seven, ten days passed. Eleven days passed.

She had no food. She had no water. She became very weak. She medically became in a very precarious place.

And on day 12, she thought one last time, I'm going to scream for all I'm worth, help! Can anybody hear me? And there was a woman sitting on her back porch in the morning drinking her coffee and she said, I think I hear someone.

She asked her husband to come and they indeed called back. We can hear you. Where are you? And through the course of communication, they called the police.

[2:41] Another search party went out and they found her. And Vincent, Vernita Vincent was saved that day. And I think sometimes if we're not careful, we can think that that's what I feel like.

I cry out to God and he does not hear me. But that is not the record of scripture that we have of who God is like and what how he relates to humanity.

And so today we're going to if you're new at this, we're walking through the book of Psalms. We find ourselves today in Psalm chapter 5. And if you will, David is there and he is exclaiming to the Lord, help me, O Lord.

And the Lord responds to him. So the overarching truth I want us to have today is that when you cry for the help, the Lord hears you. And so let's walk through this psalm together and journey with David as he cries for help and he puts his trust in the Lord.

And there's a progression in this psalm. In this psalm, there is no context that is given. We're not given a circumstance by which David writes this psalm.

[3:52] And so as long as we share something of this experience, we can take what God has taught David and we can apply it in our own lives and say, Lord, help me have this heart of David and apply it to my circumstance.

But there is a particular need that David is crying help for. He has some enemies. That is his circumstance that he writes this in.

He is in a time of trouble. Also, I want to note before we get into the psalm that the heading to the psalm says to the choir master for the flutes, a psalm of David.

So we know David is the author of this psalm. And this is the only psalm that is given to the flutes. And so we have lost in history the musical arrangement. We have the words of the song, but we've lost the musical arrangement.

And David had particularly in mind this song I've written for flutes. And so if you're a flautist today, this psalm is especially for you. So this is actually the only psalm that is written for wind instruments for the flute.

[5:03] So that's just anecdotal. But let's look now as David makes this progression.

He expresses his, he goes through three phases. The first phase is this. He expresses his trouble. So notice in verse 1 and 2, he expresses his trouble.

So give ear to my words, O Lord. Consider my groanings. Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God. For to you do I pray. Notice this sense of trouble that David is articulating here. He says it in three different ways in two verses. Give ear to my words. Consider my groanings. Give attention to the sound of my cry. David is in need of help.

And he is crying out to the Lord for help. But notice the direction of his cry. It is important to note that he is not so concerned about the nature of his trouble or the nature of his distress.

[6:16] But the direction in which he looks. This is significant. And it is one of the greatest temptations we face in trials. And when we are in a season of distress and a season of adversity.

Is that we look too often our own distress and anguish and ache and affliction. And it's a strange thing that we do this. You would think it would be more common sense not to look into our own distress when we're in distress.

But that's hard not to do. It is like there is this magnetic pull that we all feel when we're in a time of trouble.

In a time of adversity. Where our focus of our attention is incredibly focused on the nature of that circumstance. Whether it be a financial difficulty.

A relational fallout. A marital or family strife. The employment trial. Workplace circumstance. A health reversal. Travel woes. And sadly. We become so focused on our circumstance.

[7:27] We can hardly hear from someone else who says anything different. I have come to the conclusion sometimes that I think we really don't want help. We just want to be further absorbed in ourselves.

And how do we observe this? We just like to talk about our troubles. We can become absorbed by our circumstance. You will not find.

And this is weird. Because you will not find a solution to your troubling circumstance by gazing at your troubling circumstance. The adversity and the trials and difficulties.

They're like this strong magnet that bait us. To remain focused on them. They become like a drug. We become addicted to talking about them.

We become addicted to thinking about them. It becomes the preoccupation of our minds. But David doesn't direct his cries to his own circumstance.

[8:31] He directs his cry for help to the Lord. He directs his attention. He directs his attention not to his circumstances. But to the one who can bring resolution to the trouble that he finds himself in.

Give ear to my words, O Lord. Consider my groanings. Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God. He directs his attention in his cry for help to his King and his God.

And this phrase, my King and my God, comes up to us in a surprising amount of Christian hymns today. We sing the phrase often and it's found first in this song.

It is a recognition that God is King. And what are we communicating when we say God is King? We are communicating that God reigns. It is the first step that the psalmist has a sense of well-being and peace.

There is someone who reigns superior over my troubling circumstance. He is my God and King. While everything is seemingly out of the psalmist's control, he cannot change his circumstance.

[9:47] He cannot change his trouble. But he is crying out to the one who has control over those circumstances, over that trouble. He reigns. He rules. Nothing is outside of his control.

Oftentimes, we memorize Romans 8, 28. And it's the psalmist here, David, is communicating in an autobiographical sense what Paul writes in Romans 8, 28.

We read it this way. This is how it reads. This is how it reads. This is how it reads. This is how it reads. This is how it reads. I'm sorry.

And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purposes. This is not some, the power of positive thinking type of a verse that Paul is advocating for.

It's important for us to know what are all things that work together for good. What is the good that is in mind? Because if we're not careful, we can think, Scott, how is this family strife?

[10 : 49] How is this financial reversal? How is this health concern? How is this prognosis any good? That circumstance is not good. This is why verse 29 is so important.

The good of 28 is defined for us. All things work out together for the good. What is the good, verse 29, is super helpful. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

The good, found in verse 28, that God is purposing to work through adverse circumstances is not for your comfort. It is not for your success, but it is that you may be transformed by everything we go through to be more and more like Jesus.

In the verse, it's said this way, to be conformed to the image of his son. That is Christ's greatest passion in your life. Christ is using these circumstances to transform you into the image of Christ to become less selfless, to become less fearful, to become more courageous in your faith despite the opposition.

Becoming less controlling, less insecure, less focused on yourself, more joyful, more spirit-filled, more spirit-led. Becoming more burdened by the things that burdens the Lord's heart, like the nations who do not know him.

[12 : 18] This is Christ's greatest passion in your life. And so he orchestrates circumstances in your life that you may be more and more conformed to the image and the likeness of his son.

I'll be a bit transparent with you and share something in my own life that I think the Lord has divinely orchestrated often for my good that I might be conformed to the image of his son.

For decades now, there is a circumstance that I have an extreme displeasure for. And that is to be misunderstood.

I know I have a responsibility to not be misunderstood. Communicating well, communicating clearly, leading well, making wise choices. There's a plethora of things that I have responsibility to do to not be misunderstood.

I know that. But when I think I do those things well and still am misunderstood, oh, there is not joy found in my heart.

[13 : 18] And it has been for decades a circumstance that occurs in my life that I think the Lord has used divinely because there is something about that that strikes at my flesh.

And I wanted to share with you some of those things. But think about this. Here's how I receive being misunderstood. It's a circumstance that God has permitted in my life to make me more like his son, to conform me into the image of his son.

So let me share with you some of those things. Being misunderstood has taught me to entrust myself to the Lord rather than striving for man's approval. Instead of being misunderstood, I want to be known by the Lord.

Being misunderstood has taught me humility. I cannot control what other people think of me. I cannot explain myself perfectly every time. And so being misunderstood has taught me humility because I can't find myself trying.

I cannot spend my energy necessarily managing my reputation. Why is my reputation so important to me? I want to be faithful to the Lord rather than being perceived correctly.

[14 : 33] Being misunderstood teaches me patience. The Lord was oppressed. He was afflicted. And yet he did not open his mouth, we're told in Peter. And so sometimes I just want to allow myself to be misunderstood and say nothing.

This has taught me patience. Being misunderstood has proved, provided me an opportunity to love people that don't understand me or the decision. It's easy for someone to love someone who appreciates you, who understands your motives, who trusts you, speaks well of you.

It's much harder to love someone who has misread you or your decisions. Yet Jesus has loved people who rejected him. He loved people who even crucified him. And so too can I.

Being misunderstood has taught me to leave the ultimate vindication to the Lord. God knows my motives. God knows the truth of the thing. I don't have to win every case.

I don't have to correct every false impression. I don't have to make everyone see what I see. For I know someday I'm going to stand before the Lord and give an account of my life. And he will be the judge of the matter.

[15:37] For me, being misunderstood reveals to me who I am to be living for. Because sometimes underneath the discomfort of being misunderstood, there is something deeper.

That I want people to think well of me. Or I desire people to affirm me. Or I want to control my reputation. I desire for people to recognize my good intentions. Or worse yet, I just want to be right. And I know what you're thinking right now. You're saying, Scott, you're a piece of work. Aren't we all? But God in his kindness, listen.

God in his kindness allows circumstances in my life. One of which is to be misunderstood. And he orchestrates that for my good that I might be conformed into the image of his son.

And if not careful, we can all be looking at the circumstances that are not pleasurable for us. And we think, help us, Lord. And we forget, don't take your eyes off of the circumstance.

[16:47] Direct them to the Lord and say, Lord, you're doing something here. Help me not to miss it in my life. And may I be more and more like you.

That would be a good way to appropriate your circumstances. And that is one of the things that Paul, or Paul, David in this psalm is doing. Is he's saying, you are the king and my God.

And I can trust you in this. The first phase is he expresses his trouble. The second phase, he expresses his confidence. Confidence. Now, before we get into this expression of his confidence in the Lord, David's going to do this in a few ways.

There is something in Hebrew poetry that's called a chiasm. You can think of it as a sandwich. You have a piece of bread on the top, and you have a piece of bread on the bottom, and the good stuff is in the middle. Well, Hebrew poetry is written that way, where there's a prelude to something that is a way of emphasizing something.

There's a postlude of way of emphasizing something, but the stuff that's in the middle is what he wants to focus on. Verse 7 is the thing that he wants you to focus on.

[17:57] But he's going to get there by expressing his confidence negatively. Verse 7 is the positive, and then he's going to conclude with another negative way of expressing his confidence.

Let's look at the prelude to expressing his confidence in the Lord, verses 3 through 6. Oh, Lord, in the morning you hear my voice.

In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you, and watch. In the morning, notice what David is doing. In the morning I prepare my sacrifice for you. And then notice what he does.

So he seeks to the Lord. He seeks to be pleasing to him. He offers a sacrifice to him, if he will. He communes with the Lord in some way. He offers a sacrifice, and then what does he do?

He watches. There's this anticipation that he knows. The Lord heard me when I said, help! Does anyone hear me?

[18:52] Lord, do you hear me? David is confident that because he watches. He anticipates. Now I'm just going to wait to see what the Lord does. Verses 3, or 4 through 6, is now how he voices further this confidence in the Lord, but he states it negatively.

For you are not a God who delights in wickedness. Evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes. You hate all evildoers.

You destroy those who speak lies. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and the deceitful man. What is David saying? I can have security.

Because God relentlessly opposes evil. Because God is relentlessly committed to righteousness and his goodness. David is saying, this harm, this trouble, this difficulty, this adversity that is currently afflicting me, I need help.

But I know this about my God and King. He hates evil. He hates evil. He does not delight in wickedness. Verse 4, he says that.

[20:06] There is no evil in the Lord. He does not delight in wickedness. He cannot stand those who commit evil. Because there is no deceit in him. And so he hates all those who are murderers and deceitful people.

Verse 6. So God sets himself against those who deal deceitfully. So David is surrounded by those who are deeply against God's purposes, principles, and ways.

And they are afflicting David at this time. And David's confidence is saying this. This harm, this trouble, this difficulty, this adversity that I am suffering. I know God does not mean to destroy me, but to grow me.

David is stating it positively now in verse 7. His confidence in the Lord. This is where the emphasis lies. This is the verse that's in the middle. This is the good stuff. Where the main emphasis is.

But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you. He's contrasting.

[21:08] Notice, but I. It's a strong contrast. This is what the enemies of God are like. But this is how I'm going to respond. Through the abundance of your steadfast love.

Through the abundance of your steadfast love. David is at home in God's house.

Notice in the verse. I will enter your house. He is at home in God's house. Not because David is morally superior or any of these reasons.

He is at home in God's house because of what God has done. Through the abundance of your steadfast love.

God's steadfast love. This is God's committed love. It is not just that God loves you, but that God committed himself to loving you. And David knows this.

[22:07] He's assured of this. God, I know that you are committed to loving me. And so I am at home in your house. The psalmist, in this case David, has experienced that abundance.

So when you have experienced God's love in abundance, you can withstand all kinds of hardships. All kinds of insults.

All kinds of hardships that this world may have. Why? You are assured of and committed because God has committed himself to loving you.

What can this world do? What can the circumstances be? Let's frame it in God's steadfast love. He is committed to loving you. What has he done for those of us in Christ?

I know God is my king. The maker of heaven and earth. And the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God who created all things in six days.

[23:08] The God who before time chose me before the foundation of the earth. The God who set his affection on me.

He departed heaven. He condescended to earth. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He died in my place to forgive sin. He rose victoriously over sin and death.

And today he lives to intercede for me. And now he's committed to loving me. He will never leave me.

He will never forsake me. So in light of God's steadfast love, what is the circumstance that troubles you? Turn your eyes to the Lord. And David does.

He says, I am at home in your house because of your steadfast love for me. That's the good stuff.

He then states his confidence in the Lord once again in a negative way to finish the structure.

[24:12] He says it this way in verse 8 through 10. Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness. Because of my enemies, make your way straight before me. For there is no truth in their mouth.

Their inmost self is destruction. Their throat is an open grave. They flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God.

Let them fall by their own counsels. Because of the abundance of their transgressions, cast them out. For they have rebelled against you. David is expressing his confidence in the Lord to deal justly with those who where he finds his trouble.

And so he expresses again his confidence in the Lord. He knows what the Lord is like. And so that's how he frames his confidence.

Let's review. The first phase of this psalm, David is expressing his trouble, his troubling circumstance. The second phase is he expresses his confidence in the Lord.

[25:22] And then lastly, the third phase is he, David, ends expressing his joy in the Lord. Look with me in Psalm chapter 5, verse 11 and 12.

But let all who take refuge in you, let them ever sing for joy and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exalt in you.

For you bless the righteous, O Lord. You cover him with favor as with a shield. In this passage, there is an unusual number of expressions of joy.

They are found all in verse 11. Let all who take refuge in you rejoice, a form of joy. Let them ever sing for joy.

And then also he says it this way, that those who love your name may exalt in you or feel joy in you. There's an unusual amount of joy in this passage.

[26:31] And so he, David, is concluding this psalm expressing his joy in the Lord. This kind of joy that David is expressing isn't because of his favorable circumstances.

This is not in a circumstance where there's everything is rainbows and unicorns or whatever. I don't, fluffy things, unicorns, sheep or fluff, I don't know, whatever.

It's not that all circumstances are favorable. Remember, he's expressing joy knowing there's an enemy around him and he's crying for help.

Help! Lord, do you hear me? The answer is yes. And he's confident in that. And he is expressing his joy in the Lord despite his awful circumstance.

This kind of joy expresses a joy of refuge. Let all who take refuge in you rejoice. Do you take refuge in the Lord?

[27 : 43] Secondly, this kind of joy is expressing a continual confidence in the Lord. Let them ever sing for joy. May there never be an end of expressing joy in the Lord.

So there's a continual confidence in the Lord. And this joy also is a joy that delights in God himself. Let those who love your name exult in you.

That is, feel joy in you. Let those who love your name feel joy in you. God is not merely a giver of joy.

He is the object of joy. David is confident that he will not be overlooked. And he will have the Lord's protection because verse 12 concludes this way.

For you bless the righteous, O Lord. You cover him with favor as with a shield. So my question today is this for you.

[28 : 49] I think all of us in this room have some circumstance that is a source of trouble for us. It is a source of adversity.

It is a source of discouragement. Whatever that discouragement is, I'm asking you this question. What phase are you in?

Are you still in the phase where you just are expressing your trouble? That's the first phase. Where you just, you're crying for help, as David has done.

But the primary focus of your attention is on your trouble, not necessarily the Lord. Are you in the first phase? Second, have you graduated to expressing your confidence in the Lord?

That, Lord, no matter what these circumstances are, I know that you desire to be, that your image, you desire for me that I would be an image bearer of you and I'd be more and more conformed into the image of your son to be like him.

[29 : 48] Are you, have you graduated yet to phase two? Or also, are you in the phase where you are expressing that there is joy in the Lord?

That I take great delight in knowing the Lord and knowing what he has done and who he is. Are you, are you in that phase where you can also express joy in the Lord despite your circumstances?

Again, the context of this psalm is not necessarily joy-filled. There's an enemy that David has knocking at his door. He is feeling it. And yet he is also expressing a joy in the Lord.

I pray whenever we have a circumstance that is troubling, that we would walk through these phases. Read this psalm. Say, Lord, I want to be free to express my trouble.

I refuse to put my eyes on my circumstance, but onto you. Help my gaze be up to you. May my eyes be lifted up to you.

[30 : 51] And then may you go through the next phase of expressing your confidence in the Lord. Lord, I know this is what you are like. You, you hate evil. You hate evildoers. You hate deceit.

I know that to be true, but I am at home in your house, Lord. Because of your steadfast love for me. I'm confident of that. And then would we graduate and go to the next phase of just saying, Lord, I take great delight in you.

And may we accept our circumstances that the Lord has orchestrated in our lives and walk through these phases just as David has laid out for us.

And I think that's one of the beautiful things about this psalm is it's given us a pathway to process our adversity, our trouble, our circumstance that is not favorable. May we more and more be conformed to the image, the likeness of his son.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for the opportunity today to consider your word. To consider how David processed a circumstance.

[32 : 05] Lord, I pray that we would be a disciplined people. Yes, we can't help but note our circumstance that we find ourselves in. But Lord, I pray that we would turn our gaze to you for you are my king and my God.

I pray that we would also be a people who take who are at home in your presence, in your house. And we would be at home there assured of your abundance of your steadfast love. Thank you, Lord, for continually pursuing us with your love. And I pray that despite our circumstances, that we would take joy in you. Lord, thank you for what you are desiring to accomplish in each of our lives through adverse circumstances. We trust you, Lord. Thank you for a psalm such as this. We thank you for your word. You are good. Amen. Amen.