

# A Song For The Night

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] If you know very much about David's life, and I think probably all of you do know very much about David's life, then you aren't surprised to find that his Psalms are really permeated with distressing circumstances, aren't they?

We are not very soon leaving off this really dramatic scene in Psalm 3 with his son Absalom that we immediately pick right back up with another scenario in which he is in distress, and he's crying out to the Lord once again.

Over and over, we see it. He cries out to God to intervene in troubling situations, and very often in these Psalms, he expresses to us that God did just that.

He answers the prayer, and he delivers him. Not always, but very often we see that, and it's quite helpful. We learn through David's example here, through the Psalms, that an exit from one trial is actually very often the entrance into another one.

And we are continually confronted by this truth in the book of Psalms. And in that way, the Psalms are like life, reminding us that deliverance from one distress doesn't result in freedom from all hardship.

[ 1 : 2 4 ] I think whoever it is that's responsible for curating these Psalms in the way that they did, and of course we believe that David did a huge amount of the foundational work for that as really the architect of Israel's corporate worship early on as a king.

We find evidence of that in the Old Testament, that David was probably responsible for a lot of that. And as he's curating these things, I think the Psalmist intends for us to see this, to see and be confronted constantly by the fact that we constantly are going to go through distresses, that there will be actually seasons in our life where we're moving really just from one season of distress to another.

You know what that's like. Many of you are living in that period of time right now in your life, where it seems like as soon as you come out of one kind of hardship, there's just another thing to deal with.

There's just another heartache to have to go through. There's another sin to repent of. There's another circumstance for which you must cry out to the Lord. I think that's the point that we are to see here, and even the way that the Psalms are put together.

Like David, we sometimes have very little opportunity to even catch a breath before moving on from one trying season to another.

[ 2 : 4 4 ] And that's precisely why the Psalms are so helpful to us, aren't they? They will not let us deny the reality of suffering. As many tend to do, we go through these periods of denial where we just kind of want to ignore the hardships of life.

We just kind of want to put them behind us and just focus on other things, maybe psychologically trying to ignore everything that's wrong and only focus on what is good and really to our detriment. The Psalms don't let us do that.

They don't let us ignore suffering, but neither will they allow us to wallow in self-pity. The Psalms teach us how to process, how to respond to all sorts of trying circumstances.

They teach us where God is at in our suffering. And in the process of doing that, they offer us hope every step of the way as we march through them.

And Psalm 4 is no exception to that. But really what Psalm 4 does is it gives us a song in the night, a prayer that brings peace in the midst of our chaos.

[ 3 : 58 ] Just a couple of notes about the structure of the Psalm in case you're wondering how we're piecing it together. Maybe the better way to say that is how we are taking it apart here to see the various portions.

Remember, this is poetry. This is song. It's written in stanza. In fact, if you're studying through the Psalms yourself, really probably the most fruitful way to try to get the idea that is presented in each one is to break apart the stanzas themselves.

Think about a song that you would sing in church, a congregational hymn perhaps. Each stanza is really kind of giving us a different idea. There's one big theme to it, but each stanza is supporting that theme in a different way.

And if you will look closely at the way even the Bible publishers have kind of broken the verses apart, they help us to see the way that the psalmist intended for it to be.

You'll notice that verse 1 and verse 8 are alone. There's gaps between those and the others. Verse 1 really is kind of an introduction to the song, where verse 8 is kind of a conclusion to the song, right?

[ 5 : 04 ] They really stand on their own. And then in between these two, we see three stanzas. Each stanza contains two verses in our numbering system, but each verse has two lines.

Those are poetic arrangements, okay? So think that we're seeing this as a poem laid out on a page. And there's three main stanzas to the body, and each one is making a statement, and then it's responding to the statement.

That's why the selahs are placed in such a weird spot in this psalm. Did you notice that? The selahs, different than Psalm 3, they're not positioned at the end of a stanza, they're positioned in the middle of a stanza.

Do you see it? There's a selah in between verses 2 and 3 that's right in the middle of a verse, or of a stanza. There's another selah in between verse 4 and verse 5, right in the middle of another stanza.

Now, you don't have to know all of that, except that's how we're going to break it apart. We're going to break it apart as the text leads us to break it apart this morning. So I want you to turn your eye back to verse 1.

[ 6 : 09 ] We'll use this as our introduction then, right? Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness. You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me.

Hear my prayer. Sometimes the context of David's circumstances are made clear. As in Psalm 3, it was made very clear to us.

But we don't usually know the precise situation that gives rise to his songs. There is good reason to believe that Psalm 4 should be understood in relation to the aftermath of what has unfolded in Psalm 3 with David's son Absalom, with this whole conspiracy.

There's good reason. A lot of people make that argument, and it's probably a pretty healthy argument to consider. I want to avoid the kind of dogma today that imposes a context on this psalm that the text itself doesn't impose.

I want to be careful about that. I'm not going to deal with it from that perspective. We're not really going to think about Absalom so much in that scenario. The psalm really stands on its own, and we need to interpret it that way.

[ 7 : 21 ] That being said, what has led to David's distress in this psalm is actually quite clear in the text. James Montgomery Boyce says it this way, in this psalm, the problem is one of malicious slander and lies.

It is the psalmist's reputation rather than his person that is being attacked, and what he needs is a sense of the presence and approval of God rather than physical deliverance.

So Psalm 4, the context here, the circumstance, is very different from Psalm 3. It's very different from the previous psalm. Here, David isn't running for his life.

He's fighting for his reputation. That's what's happening. Now, that doesn't mean that he isn't still under extreme distress. Clearly, he is. Listen to the call in verse 1.

Oh, Lord, hear my cry. Answer me, Lord, please, answer me. That's anguish. It's distress.

[ 8 : 30 ] But it's not the same as Psalm 3. At least the circumstances is. The point is that while suffering comes in all shapes and sizes, the one to which we make our appeals and the trust with which we cry out to him is unchanging.

You say you've got the David of Psalm 3 who's literally running for his life. Then you've got the David of Psalm 4 who is in distress because his reputation is being torn apart completely different circumstances and yet his cry is the same.

He makes his appeal to the same God. He makes his appeal in the same way. He executes such similar trust in both situations. You see, some of you are here and you're facing very serious circumstances that relate to your very physical life.

Maybe it's in relation to your health or maybe there is some sort of danger that's around the way. Others of you are here and your circumstances of suffering are quite different from that. But our response to God in that is unchanging.

It's the same. We cry to the same God. We cry often with the same intensity. It demands the same trust. David cries to God alone for help in each circumstance knowing that only the Lord can cause him to, quote, dwell in safety as we see in verse 8.

[ 10 : 00 ] Now, there's a shift in the song that we have to acknowledge here that's going to help us to understand the whole song. It begins with feelings of distress in verse 1.

It ends with feelings of safety. Do you see that? Verse 1, answer me when I call. You've given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me because I'm in distress again.

Please hear my prayer. That's how he starts. Notice how he concludes in verse 8. In peace, I will lie down and sleep. For you alone make me dwell in safety.

That's quite the shift, isn't it? Distress to safety. It moves from anxiety in its opening plea to peace in its closing praise.

Thus is the hope that God intends for us to discover as we enjoy and study the Psalms. Isn't that the point?

[ 11 : 04 ] Isn't that what God wants us to see here? In many of the Psalms that there is hope. But what is it that makes the difference for David? What is it that makes the difference that moves him from this anxiety at the beginning to the safety at the end?

It's not a change in his circumstance for no change is ever actually mentioned in the text. Do you see that? When we read through it, did you realize David never said, oh Lord, thank you for hearing my prayer.

That's not what he did. There's no change in his situation here. Yet, there is change in his disposition toward the circumstance.

I want to suggest that it is the act of prayer or song itself that moves David from one end of the emotional spectrum to the other.

And in this way, Psalm 4 teaches us the significant role of prayer and of hymnody, song, in the life of a believer.

[ 12 : 11 ] Not as a coping mechanism, but as an instrument of divine intervention through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Are you with me on that? I just want to make clear the trajectory here. David's got a very real situation and there's a very significant way that he's going to approach it as we work through the text.

I want to suggest that what moves him from one thing in verse 1 to another thing in verse 8 is the prayer itself, is the song itself, that God uses prayer, God uses hymnody as divine instruments to lift the heads of his people, to lift the hearts of his people, even when he does not change their circumstances, even when he does not resolve their conflict.

And I want you to see that clearly here in the psalm. Now let's work through the stanzas themselves. Here's how I might label the first stanza. We see a warning to sinners. A warning to sinners.

Verse 2. O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

[ 13 : 24 ] Selah, think about that. Who is it that's supposed to pause in this moment and think? The sinners are. The slanderers are. How long will you continue in this?

And then he provides further explanation. But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself. the Lord hears when I call to him.

This is a warning. A very clear warning. And it is directed to sinners. To the slanderers who have come against David in this moment. So after asking for God to hear him, David addresses his enemies directly.

And what is the warning in relation to? It's in relation to the perils of slandering those whom God has set apart for himself.

Men here, it translates a word that connotes men of significance. Exalted ones as it reads in the CSB. These leaders in David's life, they are attempting to ruin David's good reputation and they are doing that by telling lies about him.

[ 14 : 33 ] They're tearing him down in order that they might build themselves up. They are actively seeking to turn David's honor into shame which the New Testament routinely calls slander.

Okay, that's the word we're working with here. This is slander coming against David. How is he going to deal with it? The chances are that you know what it's like to be slandered against.

you know what it's like to have someone malign your character through deception. You know how distressing it can be for people to tear you down especially when it's untrue.

Especially as it affects your sphere of influence on others. Perhaps you're a wife whose husband has misrepresented you to your children in order that he might win the loyalty of the children to himself and away from you.

Perhaps in your place of work you have been the one that has been passed over for that promotion because the co-workers out of their envy have misled the people that are in charge of the promotion and has held you back.

[ 15 : 54 ] Perhaps it's happened in the context of the local church to you that people have turned their backs on you because someone else in the church that had a vendetta is coming against you they're spreading lies or at least they are misrepresenting who you are or what you've done or what you believe.

Don't you know what that's like? Of course you do. it's one thing for your sins to be exposed so that people know who you truly are.

That's one thing to deal with. It's quite another thing for someone to use deceptive means to cause others to think less of you. Like everyone else David had his failures that's for sure but in this instance he was misrepresented and lied about by those who were envious of his position seeking to advance their own cause instead and that of course is something that we all can relate to.

Well David confronts them but how is it that he confronts them? He confronts them by drawing attention not to the truth of who he is. He doesn't defend his character.

What does he do? He draws their attention to his relationship with God. It's actually interesting honor here is the same word that's used as glory in Psalm 3 and verse 3 look back at that verse in Psalm 3 and verse 3 David says but you O Lord are a shield about me you O Lord are my glory he says God is his glory David means that anything good of his reputation anything that he wants to be known about him is directly linked to his relationship to God anything good about who he is is a result of God's work of grace in his life David recognizes that but even more than that David warns the enemies in verse 3 this is back to Psalm 4 in verse 3 again bringing in the unique relationship between

[18:18] God and his people look at the verse but know oh men that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself the Lord hears when I call I belong to him don't you realize what you're doing David's honor is directly tied to his relationship with God and to shame that honor in the way that it has been shamed by these men is to be viewed as a reproach against God himself that's the point here just as a mother takes offense at an injustice against her child so does God take offense to injustices against his people hence the inerrant danger in carelessly slandering those whom God has set apart for himself that's the warning don't you realize old men that the Lord has chosen me the

Lord has set me apart I belong to him he has set me apart for himself and by the way because I belong to him he listens to me he hears my prayer he answers my cries this is a warning flashing lights to the slanderers bad things are ahead for you if you continue to tear down those who belong to God the heart of the warning is a reminder that he belongs to the Lord that God hears his prayer and that should be a truth that strikes fear into the hearts of his enemies it should strike fear now surely this was a means of easing David's distress about the whole ordeal right can you see how that would happen as he reminds his enemies that the

Lord hears and protects his people David surely must have realized afresh in that moment that what he said to them applies directly to him he belonged to God and what was a warning to his enemies must have undoubtedly been an encouraging promise for him right as he tells his enemies I belong to God he's going to hear my prayer that's a warning for you surely in the midst of that moment he even turns back to himself and says I belong to him he hears my prayer he will come to my aid what an encouragement as he prays against these other people to have the Lord lift him up in such a helpful way what is our hope in distress as we sing all the time what is our hope in life and death the he he says that we are not our own but we belong body and soul to our

Lord Jesus Christ what is David's hope here his hope is that he belongs to God what is our hope we belong to him he hears us and he will vindicate his people in one way or another he will vindicate his people he will save us from all of our distresses!

in one way or another What an encouragement! But of course this is a warning first we take great encouragement from it I hope you do but let's listen to it as a warning first though we know what it's like to be slandered against it's actually not very uncommon for us to feel the role of slanderer!

[ 22:15 ] ourselves isn't that common? how often have we carelessly torn apart the reputation of another Christian carelessly diminished deceptively misrepresented another ministry out of envy or to advance our own cause we call it contending for the faith when in reality very often it's just pride it's jealousy dressed in the trappings of piety that if we say things in just the right way the people that we're talking to will get the idea that we are better than them that our church is more useful than that church church that we are more godly than that person we should tremble to treat those God has chosen and set apart with such contempt it should strike fear in us to see someone who belongs to

God and to misrepresent them tell half truths or diminish their character in order that we might try in some way to build ourselves up in the process as I studied this this week how many times have I done this to think that because of a disagreement that is inconsequential to the gospel that I would tear down another believer or another church or another ministry that belongs to the Lord and here David warns us the Lord hears their prayers the Lord answers their cries and if he answers their cries and we are the ones in the wrong and slandering against them we then will become the objects of God's judgment and that should strike fear in all of us what we enjoy as a promise in this text we must also take as a warning lest we also reproach the glory of God by slandering his people isn't this what Paul was getting at in Romans 14 we could go all the way through and and try to separate the distinctions of when is it right to speak negatively and when should we keep silent all those things

I think Paul says that for us in Romans 14 he actually makes it quite clear where he's dealing with really significant issues among the Christians and then finally gets to the middle of it and he says who are you to judge the servant of another master and the word of God becomes a mirror in that verse for us who are we to judge the servant of another master they belong to him and we need to be careful lest we become the enemy of God bringing a reproach to his glory rather than glorifying him in what we do well that's the warning to sinners in verse two and three let's look now at the way of repentance the way of repentance in verses four and five notice what David says a new thought now be angry and do not sin ponder in your own hearts on your beds and be silent rather than run your mouth out there think about it in your heart in private process this alone say like he says think about that all for right sacrifices put your trust in the

Lord now the opening statement here the command here at the very beginning is a little bit tricky I need to admit so let's work through this for just a second the word here in the ESV is given to us as angry that's not a bad translation it's correct but let's get what's behind this for just a second and if you've got a different translation some of you may have a CSB it will look a little bit different if you have a King James with you it will look even different from there all of them are correct translations but language is weird isn't it and we want to get the want to see conveyed the meaning of the author here behind this is a Hebrew word that really if it's translated literally it means to tremble if you have a new American standard with you that's what it says it says to tremble this is the meaning here but the reason for the trembling has two possibilities that's why it's difficult for us isn't it that's why some translations will say stand in awe as the King James says some translations like the ESV will say be angry what's behind that is tremble and we have to discern by the help of the Holy

Spirit what is this trembling in relation to now it could refer to the kind of physical agitation that comes with extreme anger have you ever been so angry that you shook it's kind of the idea that's what this that's a potential interpretation of the word here in this case David would be saying to his enemies almost you like you may have a reason to be upset with me but the way you're dealing with it is wrong be angry with something that is truly unjust about me or about my leadership but don't sin in the process of going through and dealing with that anger that could be a potential meaning here the second option is that it could refer to the realization trembling as a result of the realization that you have sinned against a holy God that's why those who translated the King

[ 28 : 45 ] James version use stand in awe it says stand in awe and cease from sinning stop sinning tremble before God now given the flow of the text here context is king isn't it given the flow of the text the second option is the preferred reading here the command is to fear God and in so doing cease from the sin that you are committing and by faith turn to him for atonement do you see that in the flow of the text in verses 2 and 3 David confronts the sin that it is not only a sin against him it is a sin against God and now in verses 4 and 5 he follows that up in its natural progression he says now that you have seen your sin tremble before a holy God turn from that sin offer right sacrifices to the

Lord trust in him do you see that's the flow of the text isn't it he confronts the sin of the enemies he reminds them that God will defend his glory by hearing the prayers of his people and in light of that pending!

On one hand this part of the psalm is a gracious invitation to David's enemies David as king has the right to judge them for what they're doing this is treason he doesn't do that though what does he do he calls them to turn repent offer your sacrifices trust in the Lord cease from sinning is this not the call of salvation made clear throughout the scriptures is that not what's represented for us here I want you to hear me closely maybe kids and teenagers in particular right now some of you I know you are contemplating the things of the gospel you are considering conversion what that means what does it mean to be a

Christian what does it mean to be saved what must I do or not do and what does God do and all of these things and you're working through all of these things in your life and I want you to give me your eyes for just a! young people please give me your eyes David's correction here it corresponds to the call of repentance to follow Christ now there's two pieces of this and I know you know it there is the regenerating piece right that's the part of salvation that is totally a work of God's grace God does this amazing supernatural work Jesus called it being born again in which he comes in the Holy Spirit comes in like the wind in John 3 and he regenerates the heart he takes a dead person and he makes them living again and that's the gracious work of God now here's the thing I know!

everybody that's here I know you know that well I know you got that down I know that maybe you even get excited at the prospect of that it takes so much pressure off of us doesn't it to just think that salvation belongs to the Lord in that way and that's wonderful but it's not all there's another piece to this we call it conversion don't we if regeneration is the piece where God comes in supernaturally and he transforms the heart of a believer of someone who he intends to save the second part of this is what we call conversion which is an entirely human response it is an act of the will and what is this act of the will it turns from sin and it turns to Christ in faith now I know everybody in this room I know you've heard the gospel message a thousand times probably you could probably preach that message itself as well as I could you know it you know it well now

[ 33 : 25 ] I want you to look at these action verbs in this verse tremble cease from sin ponder in your own heart think about this offer put all things that David says the enemies must do in response to the word of God I know you've heard the gospel a million times before I don't want you to let the doctrine of divine grace lull you into a state of continued unbelief love you with me you listen young people in particular right now don't let the doctrine of grace lull you into this idea that really salvation has nothing to do with me that this work of grace just means I sit on the couch and at some point

I'm going to wake up and be a Christian that is not the presentation of the gospel that's given to us in this scripture you are responsible to turn from your sin you are responsible to turn in faith to Jesus Christ and in this moment God has issued his call to you he has extended his invitation I know he has because you've been in service after service after service Sunday after Sunday after Sunday at Lakeside Bible church where this invitation of the gospel has been extended to you you've sat in your homes with you have issued this call to respond to the gospel you have listened to it in your Bible studies you have heard it again and again and again and again God has issued his call he has said come he has said turn he has said believe the gracious work is being done if you remain unconverted that's on you the call is extended so believe turn from your sin turn to

Christ cry out to him for mercy offer your sacrifices which in our case has already been done for us Jesus is the sacrifice and God extends his grace it is by grace that you are here today that you hear this message again and God is saying come to me just believe just turn follow me and if you leave this place today and you remain steadfast in your sin it's because you have chosen in your will to do so but God calls you to him so come come to him nothing in your hand you bring simply to the cross you cling naked come to him for dress helpless look to him for grace is this not

David's presentation of the gospel turn from your sin and believe and with David can I just extend to you once again Paul says to the Corinthians Christ has given us this ministry of reconciliation and we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God here is the message here is what he has done now come to him come and believe don't wait any longer it's an urgent plea from God you may not have tomorrow you may not have tomorrow what a tragedy to stand before the Lord and say well Lord you just never did anything for me only for him to say all of those times you read your Bible all of those times you listen to Pastor Jared and the others in the church share the gospel with you all of those times that my spirit was freaking your heart to respond why didn't you come why didn't you believe don't let another day go by come to him respond in faith then and only then will you be able to move from the group that

David is confronting in verses 2 through 5 to the experience that David has in verses 6 and 7 notice with me in the final stanza the joy of knowing God the joy of knowing God verse 6 David says there's many who say his attention is back to God now there are many who say who will show us some good now he quotes from Aaron's blessing in Numbers lift up the light of your face upon us oh Lord this is an amazing statement in verse 7 you have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and their wine abound just let that settle in for just a second think about what David's going through here what's behind this song is distress and as he closes as he nears the end what is it that he says

[ 38 : 59 ] God you have put joy in my heart you have not only put joy in my heart you've put more joy in my heart than in all of their hearts when they get everything that they want out of this life he addresses the Lord his tone is entirely different than at the beginning though it's as if he has put away the distress now and is determined to offer praise in the place of his earlier pleas though others remain dissatisfied with what they lack David announces that in God he has found total satisfaction if the people around him reached the pinnacle of the prosperity that they desired he would still have more joy in his heart than them I want you to think about that you look around you we all fall into that pit from time to time of keeping up with the Joneses don't we we want to have what everyone else has we want to reach the pinnacle of our professions we want to have enough money that we can live in comfort all the time we want to have the stuff and the cars and the houses whatever it is we want to have this stuff most of us we feel that urge we feel that temptation and then we look around at the people around us who do not know the



Lord and we see that even once they get those things the pursuit doesn't end they get the stuff and then they just keep pressing forward there's always something else that they want there's always something else it's like they can't be satisfied and David here he says no there is a satisfaction that is final there is a type of satisfaction that is full and it's complete that God in himself he offers us something that this world it just cannot provide and I know that statement is cliché but it's true David's a testimony of it here how could someone facing such distress possess so much joy of heart how is that even possible he tells us in the verse you have put more joy in my heart how did David experience this how did he have this joy God put it there it's another work of grace isn't it there was a supernatural work of grace made evident in David's experience it was the existence of a joy that Peter wrote is quote inexpressible and full of glory

Peter wrote that in his first epistle to a group of people who were suffering tremendously and what did he remind them of that they possessed a joy that cannot even be described that is glorious full of glory how could they have so much joy how could David have so much joy God put it there how did he do it for the New Testament believers Christ put it there it's a work of grace joy isn't contingent on physical circumstances joy is contingent on knowing God not knowing about God but truly knowing him an intimate fellowship and communion and perhaps you're here and perhaps your view of God is as this kind of force that you have to discern this thing this object that you have to study and observe and analyze that is not what the scripture presents to us about who

God is the scriptures reveal a God who is a person a person that is knowable who can be known who desires to be known where does this joy come from for David it comes from knowing God that's why he can make such a bold statement in tremendous distress knowing God and his salvation was more valuable to David than all the honor and wealth that this world could possibly offer that's a pretty magnificent presentation of the gospel isn't it isn't that kind of what Jesus said quote the parable all the time because I love it so much there's the man he comes in the field and he's walking through and he trips over this little treasure box and he realizes oh I've never seen such treasure before surely there's nothing in this life that could compare to this treasure and he goes and he sells the land or he sells everything that he has he turns away from it all and he buys that one that one block of property in order that he could have this treasure and Jesus says I'm the treasure you're chasing all this stuff in your life you're looking for satisfaction it's just it's never going to be satisfying

I'm offering you something that is so much more Jesus says but that brings us to an important question if knowing God is what puts this joy in David's heart if knowing God is what is supernaturally done as a work of grace in these New Testament believers that Peter was writing to so that their joy was inexpressible if that's what's happening here how can we know God how we can look to David to know a lot about God but to truly know God we have to look beyond David we have to look to Jesus who the writer of Hebrews says is the radiance of the glory of God the exact imprint of God's nature the son through whom God has spoken to us in these last days if you want to know

[ 45 : 04 ] God come to Jesus if you want to see God look at Jesus if you want to hear God speak listen to Jesus that's how we know him because of our sin you know we have no fellowship with God we're condemned John 3 tells us we're condemned already it's not just that we await a condemnation ahead in our future no we stand condemned before God without Christ sin is the reason we need God's gracious intervention and he gives it he sent his son who on the cross suffered God's wrath in our place and then God raised him from the dead as you know God raised him from the dead to show that Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient it was a sufficient atonement when David tells his enemies offer right sacrifices we take that differently we look to Jesus and say no the right sacrifice has been offered it's already been offered there's nothing for us to do but turn and believe through

Christ God has made a way for us to know him again and he provides the abundant joy exemplified by David in Psalm 4 Christ brings that to us we know God through him it's so hard to grasp it I know I know it's supernatural it is a work of the spirit of God in our lives and he invites us to it you can't know God in a more complete way than even David but you have to come to him through Jesus Jesus said it plainly in John 14 Jesus said to him I'm the way I'm the truth I'm the life no one comes to the father no one can know the father except through me if you had known me he says you would have known my father also and from now on he speaks to his disciples as believers from now on you do know him and you have seen him how do they know him because they know

Jesus how have they seen him because they've seen Jesus don't you see come to Jesus and you'll know the joy now we have to conclude don't we David concludes for us in verse 8 look at it with me in peace I will both lie down and sleep for you alone oh Lord make me dwell in safety you know it's interesting there's no resolution to David's problem at the end of the psalm that's what we come to psalms like this for don't we we come for resolution we think yeah I know exactly what David's up against I got this one this this one co-worker is just an absolute pain in the neck and they're always telling lies about when we think okay let's see what David did and then maybe I can take his thing and I can apply it to my situation and we'll all be good a lot of us we approach the Bible that way don't we we come and we find all other things that I can relate to and then I'm just going to try to match it up and it'll be like a formula that's not what this song's about there's no resolution for David yet somehow his distress turns to security his anxiety turns to peace could it be that the prayer itself is the thing that

God uses to settle the hearts of his people that gives them peaceful joyful rest could it be that just coming to him in prayer is really all that we need that we don't always need resolution we just need him George MacDonald said it this way what if God knows prayer to be the thing we need first and most what if the main object in God's idea of prayer be the supplying of our great and endless need the need of himself what if the good of all our smaller and lower needs lies in this that they help drive us to God communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other needs and prayer is the beginning of that communion that is a wonderful paragraph isn't that what's happening with David here he starts to pray to the

Lord and he thinks oh yeah I do belong to God he will hear my prayer oh yeah he is a saving God oh he's put so much joy in my heart and by the time he gets to the end of his prayer he's just been thinking about God he's just thinking about who God is and how God works and what does it do it he says I'm gonna lay down now I'm gonna sleep well not because they're not running their mouths anymore but because I'm just committing this to the Lord he's good whatever happens with this it is what it is I have him what more do I need oh Christian how many times have you cried before the Lord and got up from your place of prayer still anxious maybe about a circumstance!

[ 50 : 49 ] but filled with peace about where you're at in your standing with God oh you know what it's like so in the next distress why wouldn't you just go back to the prayer closet again I think this is a supernatural work of God it's an instrument of grace prayer is why because God is not just a force to be discerned he is a person to be known and if we can know him that means he knows us and that in prayer there is sweet communion it's not only that we're speaking to him he is working in us oh Christian go to the Lord in prayer and you will have peace because God will put it there but we shouldn't forget that this psalm really fundamentally is a song isn't it it's composed for the purpose not of our private prayer closet but of our corporate worship service that's its initial intention so that along with prayer songs have this unique significance in the life of

God's people so long as they're filled with God's truth God uses them to lift the hearts of his people I know you know what this is like too I remember a particularly dark season in our lives which would really pale in comparison to what many of you have experienced but a dark season for Julie and I several years ago coming across some songs by Andrew Peterson who doesn't write hymns he's just a Christian who writes songs about life and through the lens of the gospel and through who God is and I remember listening to on a drive from Laurel to Gastonia where we were living at the time we had like an hour and a half some afternoons and just listening to some of these songs time I get back home in Gastonia my soul is refreshed I heard Alistair Begg say many times that on his darkest days he gets in his car and he grabs a hymn book and he goes and he finds a private place to park somewhere and he just begins to read through the hymns that are there

God uses song to lift us in unique ways and so long as they are filled with the truth of God they are instruments of grace in our lives so that rather than immediately deliver us from our distresses God will often use instruments of prayer and song to carry us through those distresses only then can we really begin to know the depths of communion with God as David so intimately knew it here this is the nature of fellowship and relationship this is what God calls us to and it's what he makes available through Jesus are you enduring a season of distress here's what to do multiply your communion with God pray more sing more don't turn on

K-love buy an old hymn book from somebody Mark's got a good win grab an old hymn book sit in your house and sing oh for a thousand tongues to sing my great redeemer praise the glory of my God and king the triumphs of his grace perhaps one like this one a hymn from Newton would go a long way for you how sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear it soothes our sorrows heals our wounds and drives away our fear it makes the wounded spirit whole and calms the troubled breast tis manna to the hungry soul and to the weary rest oh Jesus shepherd guardian friend my prophet priest and king my lord my life my way my end accept the praise

I bring