

Answer Me!

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[0 : 00] Well, this seems really out of place. I feel trapped up here behind this podium. I'm so used to being there, but the communion has got my normal spot.

So I'm going to preach up here and I'm going to wander around every now and then. So y'all bear with me if you will. This morning we look at Psalm 4.

We have begun a series through the summer in the book of Psalms and we're just going one psalm at a time. And this morning we've reached Psalm 4. And before I read this psalm together with you, I want to ask two questions.

And these questions come directly out of this psalm. But I want to focus your mind on these two questions before we read, before we consider the text. And here's the two questions.

The first question is this. And this is a very personal question. And I wonder if we think much about it. Let me ask this question. When do you call out to God?

[1 : 06] When do you, in your life, call out to God? Is it based on hard circumstances?

Is times of a trauma? When is it that you actually call to Him? And the second question is similar. Why?

So I ask these two questions. When do you call out to God? And then why do you do that? Why do you choose to call out to God? Or in some cases, why not?

Why are you not calling out to God? The psalm we read this morning is a psalm written by David.

And we'll see very early in this psalm that David cries out to God or calls out to God.

He's in conversation with God. And we'll read about the scenario and we'll talk about that a little more. But the question is for us to consider, how about us?

[2 : 10] David will see there's a situation in his life that is the reason he's calling out to God. We'll consider that situation. But you know, our lives are full of situations.

And how frequently do we find ourselves calling out to God? How often are we in conversation with Him? What does prayer look like for us?

Is prayer an event for you? Or is prayer a conversation for you? Why in the world would you spend time in conversation with God?

We'll look at that as we look at this passage this morning. Read with me, if you will, Psalm 4.

Written by David. Verse 1.

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.

[3 : 18] 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 beds and be silent.

Offer right sacrifices. And put your trust in the Lord. 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. In peace, I will both lie down and sleep.

For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. Let's pray. Father, this morning, as we look at Your Word, I pray that You would open, spiritually speaking, open our eyes and open our ears, that we might hear and see Your truth this morning.

[4 : 27] And I pray that You would move our heart to desire You all the more. God, I pray that You would lead our time this morning. And I pray in Your name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. So again, these two questions. We see here David calling out to God. And then it begs the question, David, why do you do this?

Why is this a practice in your life? Why do you choose to call out to God? What is it that you know or what is it that you've experienced that has led you to this pattern in your life?

Now, we would... Let me say it this way. It would be important for us to understand who David is and what situation he's in and what has transpired in his life leading up to this time.

So it's important for us to understand the history of the nation. And I don't have time to recite all of that, but we would know the highlights of it, that David is the son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[5 : 31] And we would know some things about Abraham's life, that Abraham was a pagan in a foreign land, and God called to him and he responded. And God promised Abraham many things.

And he promised through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then certainly as we walk forward in the lineage of Abraham, we find David, his son, the son of Abraham.

Abraham's a man of faith. He believed God. He trusted God. He experienced God. God made promises to Abraham and to the nation. God, you remember through Samuel, went to anoint a son of Jesse.

You remember God said, go to the house of Jesse and anoint the next king. You remember that he went to the house of Jesse and all the sons of Jesse lined up except one. All the warring sons, all the sons that the father was impressed with lined up, but David was in the field.

The one who, in a sense, his father didn't even acknowledge was in the field. And Samuel got there and said, where's your other son? He's like, these are my sons.

[6 : 41] No, God has not chosen these. You must have another son. And they sent to call David. And David came. And Samuel anointed him as king over Israel.

He did not immediately step into the kingship. Actually, the king Saul chased after him, threw spears at him, sought him to kill him and destroy him so there wouldn't be competition for the throne.

Saul chased after his own ways, but David was a man after God's own heart. The same David that wrote this psalm, you would remember when he was a shepherd in the fields by himself, watching the flocks, caring for the flocks, that as we read, we learn that he saw the powerful hand of God at work as he protected the flock.

You remember the bear. You remember the lion who attacked. And by the great power of God, David defeated both. He had seen the mighty hand of God.

You know, David became proficient at playing the harp. Can you imagine being out in the grasslands all day, every day by yourself with the flocks?

[7 : 55] I've had the privilege to travel to Mongolia and see what it's like to be in a nomadic land. A land that has very few buildings that men travel with their flocks with tents and they'll erect a tent for a period of time while they feed their animals.

And then when the grass is eaten, they'll move to another spot by putting their tent into, collecting their tent, putting it on a trailer and going to another place and erecting their tent and staying there for a while.

It's a nomadic lifestyle. David knew what it was like to be in the wilderness by himself. He knew what it was like to see the hand of God protect the flock.

He knew what it was like to worship. So much so that we know the story of David when his father called him and he wanted David to deliver food and gifts to his brothers who were on the front line. The nation of Israel was in a battle with the Philistines and they had put forth their champion, this guy named Goliath. And Goliath was taunting the children of Israel.

[9 : 05] And David went out there and was like, why are you not fighting them? What is up? Why are y'all standing here? Why have you stood here for 40 days afraid to fight this uncircumcised Philistine?

And then when this Philistine, Goliath, began to ridicule God, something went off in the heart of David. How dare you ridicule my God?

How dare you do that to the God of all creation? To the God that's worthy of worship? We see David, a man after God's own heart.

David who's quick to worship. David who has come to know the powerful person of God in his life, to see his hand at work. And David is used by God, this boy, to destroy this giant.

That's the David that writes this psalm. We don't know exactly where it is in the life of David. Some believe that it's after Absalom has usurped the throne and he's fled from Absalom.

[10:17] He's with a band of men and they are fleeing. He doesn't want to confront his son in battle and kill his son. So he's fleeing.

That's what many believe here. And then we see this psalm and the truths that are woven in this psalm. And what I want us to see is that David has this habit of calling out on God. And we can't divorce this from the life of David. We can't divorce this from the time he's a shepherd. We can't divorce this from all that's happened in his life to this point. And I pause just for a second to make this pertinent to you and I. And again, I ask this question, how often do you call on God? What is it like, your relationship with the Lord? Do you find yourself genuinely depending on God? Or do you find yourself more likely to depend on your own ability? Do you find yourself full of peace and full of quietness when circumstances rage? [11:31] Or do you find yourself disquieted? Do you find turmoil stewing inside of you? Churning inside of you?

And you wonder, how am I going to handle this? What am I going to do? What do I need to fix? How can I control this? Is that common for you? Or do you find yourself calling on God? Calling out on God. I want us to notice something that we saw last week where David laid down and slept. You know, sometimes when we have turmoil in our life, it's hard to sleep, isn't it? We can't turn the switch off. We lay down and we can't find sleep. Or if we do, it's just spotty and we wake back up and it's still on our mind, the forefront of our mind and we can't get away from it. But you know that's not true here for David. Look at verse 9. In peace, I will both lie down and sleep. How is it possible that when circumstances are out of control, whatever those circumstances might be, that we actually can rest and sleep? [12:46] It's only through trust, isn't it? I want to share this, that the psalm reveals to us something about David's relationship to God.

I see three things and I want to look at all three of these things. First is this, that David knows the character of God. David knows the character of God. Where do I see that? I want us to look here. I see 11 statements by David that reveal that he knows the character of God. I want you to look with me here. Notice in verse 1, he says, when I call to you, O God, my righteousness. You know what he's saying here? He recognizes that his righteousness, that is the righteousness that David would say is true for him, is sourced in God. O God, you who've given me righteousness, you who've granted righteousness, you who've clothed me in righteousness. The source of David's righteousness is God. [13:51] God is the giver of righteousness. We also see that he gives relief in distress in that same verse. David says, you've given me relief when I was in distress.

You know, he has that in a past tense. I have lived it, God. I know by experience that you've given me relief. You've done it in the past in my life. I know you're the one who's able to give relief. And Lord, I call out to you. In the same verse, he says, be gracious to me. What is he saying here? God, you are the gracious God. You are the one full of grace. And I'm asking that you would give me your grace. Pour your grace upon me, God. You are the gracious one. He goes on to say in verse 3, I know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself. God is the one that sets apart those for himself. [14:53] God is the one that chooses men for his purposes. And then in that verse, it says, the Lord hears when I call to him.

The end of verse 3. You know that when we call on God truly out of the heart that he hears, you know God is a God who hears the cries of his children. Have y'all come to know that by experience or you just know it by thought? David knew it by experience. How many times has David called out on God for help? How many times has he lived it? We don't know. But we do see many situations as we read the scriptures about David. He knew him to be a gracious God. A God that hears prayers. And then also in verse 5 we see this, is that he's a God worthy to be worshipped. He's a God of holiness. holiness. It's right that we would offer proper sacrifices to God. And what is a proper sacrifice?

[16:02] Psalm 51 reveals, it says, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. That is a right sacrifice.

That is genuine worship. When we see ourselves how we really are, that apart from him we're nothing. And he is a holy God deserving praise and worship and honor and glory.

David knows that. And I want you to see in that same verse it says, put your trust in him. God is a trustworthy God. We can absolutely take it to the bank.

We can entrust ourselves into the hands of the God who is good. The God who is able. Amen. In verse 6 we see this question that he poses, this question that he keeps hearing for others, who will show us some good and what is the response of David?

I'll tell you who will show us some good. It's God and God alone that shows us good. So he prays, God shine your face upon us. What is it for God to shine his face on us but the goodness of God to be focused our way for God who is the good one, the one and only one who is good to shine forth his face on us.

[17:24] He knows God is one who is good. Do we know God in that way? Do we understand it deep in our spirit or do we just understand it as a concept?

Have we come to know that everything he does in our life is good? You know sometimes from the human perspective we look at events in our life and say God why are you letting this happen?

If you're sovereign and you're in control and you love me why are you letting this happen? And we see it from the human perspective but God sees it from a divine perspective in the events that he's allowing in our life have an ultimate end for our good.

We see it in Romans. He causes all things to work together for the good of those he calls his own. even things that from an earthly perspective we view as not good as painful as traumatic God turns them all for the good of his children.

Mystery a huge mystery hard for us to understand it but everything that God does is good he is the good one and we look at verse 7 you have put more joy in my heart than the nation when they celebrate the harvest there's more joy that is in my heart because you've placed it there you are the giver of joy and we look in verse 9 in peace I will lie down and sleep do you know where peace comes from you know where true genuine peace comes from only from him only from him if we were to read Ephesians we would see the message of where peace comes from it says be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and fasting with thanksgiving make your requests known to [19:29] God and the peace of God which passes understanding shall guard your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus the peace of God that passes all understanding is a gift to his children it's related to prayer did you hear it be anxious for nothing but by prayer with prayer fasting and thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God why because the trustworthy God loves you the God who is sovereign and able loves you the God who works all things for our good provides for you and he gives you peace the source of peace the true source is God himself David knows this he's sharing this and at the end of it the end of verse 8 it says for you alone oh Lord make me to dwell in safety you alone make me to dwell in safety put it in context in David's life if truly he's fleeing from Absalom and truly he has a whole army that's chasing after him how can he make this statement that you alone make me dwell in safety that if

I'm going to be safe this day it's because you put your hand around me and you protect me do we know God in this way have you come to know him as a source of peace and the source of joy and the source of your protection and the source of all goodness have you come to know him as worthy of trust as worthy of worship have you come to see God as the gracious one have you known him in a way that when you pray he hears do we find ourselves trying to manipulate God God I'm praying you better answer me because you're the one who answers are we manipulating him I want you to do this I want you to do it this way I want you to do it in this timing I want you to fill in the blank what is our relationship to God do we know him like David knew him and so I ask the question again that we started with the question is this when do you call to him and now we've answered the question why why is it that we would call to him because look who he is when we come to know him more deeply you know what begins to be more frequent in our life we begin to talk to him more have y'all noticed that in your own life the longer you walk in the faith the longer you pursue him the more you chase to know him the more you talk to him do you find yourself in prayer sometimes laughing with him do you find yourself enjoying him the relationship do you find yourself entrusting more and more and more into his hands have you gotten to the place in your

Christian walk where you could say God I sense this anxiety this rising in me but I don't want to own it I don't want to handle it I want to give it to you and I entrust it in your hands I choose to tell you what's going on in my heart and God I lay it before you and I say God you take this burden as the one who's able I'm not going to worry about it I'm going to watch and see what you do and I'm going to worship and praise you through the midst of it all have we grown in our walk to the place where we trust him in that way you know that's what he's offering to all of us Hebrews says come boldly to the throne of grace that you may find help in time of need how often do we have need how often do you need him you know this is a very revealing question how often do you need him you know we need him a whole lot more than we think and Linda

I know you shared in Sunday school that just because of health and breathing and getting up and mobility that you would quickly say I need him all the time and you probably have grown in your walk through the midst of this tough journey you're on you know when life is going good you know what the children of Israel did they forgot about him I would venture to say they really didn't know him when we know him as the one who's good the lover of our soul you know what we want to do we want to be in conversation with him why would we want to because who he is the more we come to know him the more we entrust ourselves to him the more we come to know him the more we pray to him the more we talk to him the deeper the relationship becomes and so let's look real quick at the scenario here

I want you to see that there's some men in verse two I really believe that the setting here is David is fleeing from an army or those who would seek to destroy him and we see in verse 9 that he's laying down and sleeping so in my mind what I see this psalm saying is David is calling out to God God you are my righteousness you're the one who's given me relief I have a history here this has happened before I've seen your hand operate my life and God again I call out to you David who knows the character of God who's experienced the power of God calls out on God you know that's a true pattern for us too the more we know him the more experienced and the more we call out to him and he's calling out in this situation he's saying God hear my prayer and then I can picture him on his bed he's just thinking about all that's going on and he's thinking about these men and what men is he talking about he's talking about the leaders of the nation he's talking about the men that are wealthy the men that are influential the men that would be considered leaders in the nation why do I say it's those men well look at verse six he says lift up the light of your face upon us oh lord who is the us it's me and these men so he's in his in my mind he's he's laying on his bed and he's thinking about what's going on and he's in conversation with God and he's saying to

[26 : 59] God God please hear my prayer I'm calling out to you because of all that's going on and these men he's just in a sense he's picturing these men and it's as if right in on his bed he's saying to these men let me just get you to hear these things men will you just listen how long will my honor be turned into shame and it begs the question David what are you talking about your honor being turned into shame are they treating him as the king that he truly is are they treating him as God's anointed we have to know that David was anointed by God through Samuel David said to Samuel go and you take the oil and when you get there you anoint David as the next king he is the one I choose to be king and what are the men of the nation doing they're running him out of town they're not treating him as king they're not honoring him as king and listen they're dishonoring

God because they're turning their back on the leader that God has placed at the head of the nation his honor as king as leader as the called one the anointed one by God they are turning into shame not only are they hurling accusations at him not only that but they're chasing him to kill him they don't trust the plan of God and he reveals about these men that what they really love is vain words and they seek after lies they're not listening to the Lord they're not trusting in the Lord they're trusting after their own ways and their own ways lead to destruction they're not honoring David as a king the anointed of God and he reminds them this is again he's thinking about what he would say to these men but know this that the

Lord has set apart the godly for himself it's the Lord that anointed me as king and so when you chase me to kill me you know what you're doing you're looking at the face of God and say I will not accept what you've done I want to accept your plan I will not accept your way we're going to do our own thing and as David's thinking through this he says this be angry and do not sin it's six excuse me seven things he says to these men I don't think he's in their company when he says it but he's rehearsing this in his mind as he's on his bed and he's in prayer he's singing be angry and sin not I think a better English translation would be this tremble with fear and stop sinning tremble with fear

at what God has done don't turn away from what

God has put in place and stop sinning by trying to overthrow the king you are sinning against God because God has put this in place ponder in your own hearts and be silent in other words get in front of God and listen to him and recognize how little you are and how great he is you think about these truths and you be silent because what can you say to a holy sovereign righteous God and then he goes in verse five and he says offer right sacrifices the right sacrifice is a contrite heart these men were full of pride full of the flesh full of their own ways doing whatever they wanted to do whatever they wanted to make happen in a sense this might be true as well you know God had promised that through David there would always be a king on the throne he had also promised earlier that there would be this time when there would be a kingdom of peace we see Isaiah talking about it years later he said there's a time coming when they will take their swords and they will beat them into plowshares there will be a time of peace that will last forever you know that that was talking about eternity that was talking about after the second coming of Christ he's pointing forward yes there's a kingdom of peace coming but these men wanted it to be an earthly kingdom of peace they wanted to conquer everybody so they could rest and do what they wanted to do I think that is a part of this equation that David is not the king they'd hoped he would be David has not given them peace from all their enemies David has not lived up to the building what we thought he should have lived up to but look what David does let me ask this question if you ever had an enemy if you ever had people that seek to do you harm emotionally physically situationally how do you respond what do you do look what

[32 : 36] David did in verse 6 in the midst of this situation he says lift up the light of your face upon us God he even identified with them and he blessed them he prayed for them these men that are chasing him these men that are dishonoring God these men that are trying to kill him what does he do he prays for them let me just share with us the importance of this and I would encourage you if there's anyone in your life and I've said it before that you would say I hate them I hope evil I wish evil upon them I resent them if there's any level of animosity you have toward any person I would encourage you to do what David did and pray for them I realize there's some situations that are beyond what we could possibly do if you've been hurt deeply wounded deeply there's no way in the flesh you're going to be able to forgive but listen the power of God is great and God could give you a love for people that have tried to hurt you and maybe have hurt you

God is calling us to entrust even that to him and God will put a strength and a power in our lives to be able to pray for our enemies when we entrust these things to him guess what the result is incredible joy so the question for us how well do you sleep I know that's not a fair question I don't sleep all night every night but is it because that there's bitterness and anger and resentment in our heart for others and God would call us to lay that at the foot of his cross and with the power of God to love others to lift all these things up to him in prayer when do we pray to him it's my hope that we all begin to be in constant conversation with God it was said of A.W.

Tozer a guy who's written some pretty powerful books who had a deep relationship with God it was said about him not him saying it about himself it was said about him there was never ten minutes a day when he wasn't in conversation with God if you've ever heard about a guy named Brother Lawrence there's a book and as a guy that just lived his life talking to God sometimes out loud and just in constantly listening to God constantly in communion and fellowship with God you know it's the privilege of all believers to enjoy fellowship now to entrust ourselves to him now to love others now to live this life of trusting God praying to him on a constant basis why because he's the God who's able he's the sovereign God can handle all situations it's my hope that we all grow in quietness in our heart is that true for us church right now when you when you get alone and you just sit do you find your heart full of turmoil or do you find it full of quietness my encouragement to all of us is that we would cast our burdens on him that we might experience the gift of quietness of peace of rest you know he offers it to all of us every one of us let's pray father i don't think you're asking us to accomplish this thing to accomplish prayer to make ourselves trust you god i think you're wanting to show us your glory and your greatness and your holiness and your love and your grace show us that you're able to do all things that you love us and you cause things to work together for good and you're growing us into the image of christ you're purging us of sin god help us to turn our eyes on jesus help us to look to you for all things help us to live a life of dependency that more and more we would trust you in every area of our life and father when the world throws things at us and it makes us uneasy god help us to quickly turn to you and talk to you and give those things to you that we

might experience the peace that passes all understanding father we long for a deeper walk with you we long for this fellowship that's uninterrupted we long for all these burdens to be yours that you would take them away from us they're heavy god god i pray that you would put a song in our spirit and we would worship you and sing to you and enjoy you father you give us the privilege to enjoy you and i just pray that you would do a work in each of our lives that would take us to this deeper place and i pray in your name amen