

Endure With Joy

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Preacher: Treg Hallman

- [0 : 00] Amen. Well, if you will open with me to the book of Psalms. We're continuing our series in the book of Psalms. This morning we find ourselves at Psalm 13.
- And I get a total of six verses this morning. But they're full of truth. And I think very much relate to us and very much point to Jesus.
- And that's what we want to see this morning. And so I ask if you will, in honor of God's word, if you're able, if you will stand this morning. As we read these six verses out of the book of Psalms.
- To the choir master, a psalm of David. How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever?
- How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul? And have sorrow in my heart all the day?
- [1 : 07] How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God. Light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.
- Lest my enemies say, I have prevailed over him. Lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
- But I have trusted in your steadfast love. My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me.
- Let's pray one more time. God, I pray this morning as we look into your word here at this psalm. That Father, you would put your words in my mouth. And if there's anything from me, that Father, you'd cause it to fly away.
- But if there's anything from you, I pray that it would touch our hearts this morning. And I pray in your name. Amen. And you can have a seat. Does this psalm strike you like it struck me when I first read it?
- [2 : 18] Do you see the four questions in the first couple of verses that David asked? Do you feel his despair?
- Do you feel the emotion that he's sharing in this psalm? It seems as we read it these first couple of verses that there's a distance between him and God.
- That there's a separation between him and God. It's as if he's on his own. And he's crying out to God.
- Just look at the first verses. Will you forget me forever? Where are you, God? Will you hide your face from me?
- Do you hear the anguish in David's heart? You know, I don't know what moment this was in his life. The psalm doesn't tell us.
- [3 : 33] We don't know what was going on for him. But we listen to his heart here in this very personal prayer. This pouring out to God.
- And you see, Oh Lord, my God. You see it in verse 3. Oh Lord, my God. I know you. Where are you?

Why are you absent? Why are you far away? Do you not hear me? God, why is your face not towards me? Will you not help me, God?

Do you not remember who I am? Do you not know that I'm your child? Lord, I desire to hear your counsel. And yet I hear nothing. My soul is in anguish.

Because I miss the fellowship that I've known with you. How long, oh Lord, my God.

[4 : 33] You know, as you consider that question, How long, oh Lord? Do you see that he knew a time that was different?

He knew a time when there was intimacy. He knew a time when there was closeness. He's been in a deep, intimate relationship with the Lord before.

He's sharing this contrast. Lord, where are you? For so many years, I've relied on you. For so many years, you've shown yourself strong on my behalf.

For so many years, you've directed me. You've led me. You've protected me. You've empowered me. Where are you, Lord? You see, in verse 2, he talks about this sorrow.

How long, oh Lord, my God, will I have sorrow in my heart all the day? Have you ever been there? Have you ever had this gnawing sorrow that won't leave?

[5 : 43] This sense of loneliness that is hard to bear? A sense of separation.

As if we would say, God, where are you? Where did you go? Do you not know? Do you not love me? Do you not care? Do you not see what's happening right now? Have you forgotten?

God, do you... Have you all been there? Is that something that's real for y'all? Can you remember a time? Maybe it's now. Maybe it's a time when there was great hardship in your life.

Maybe there was the death of someone you were very close to. Maybe you lost a job. Maybe it was just an ordinary time of life that wasn't super tragic.

But it's as if God is way away. As if your prayers were going up to the ceiling and bouncing right back down. As if he wasn't hearing you.

[6 : 42] Have you ever been there? I would share for me... Personally... It would date back quite a number of years ago.

This time that I will share with you. And it would be the most dramatic time in my life that would be true in this arena. This sense of God being far, far away. And me being lonely.

And crying out to God. Or at least trying to. Just a heaviness. So when my kids were very young. I was a youth pastor at a church in Atlanta. I ended up doing that for four years.

And in a component or in a time frame. An eight month time frame during those four years. I was at a place where I would articulate it this way. That I could not pray.

I would desire to pray. And it was such a heaviness on my heart. That I would try to open my mouth. And I would try to pray. And there was nothing. Not a word would come out.

[7 : 42] I wanted to pray. I even retreated and got alone in a place. I had a key to a door that very few people had. I had asked the facility staff if I could use that room.

And they were fine with me doing that. And I would retreat to that place. To try to hear from God. To try to get relief from the sense of heaviness. And for eight months I felt as if I was in some great spiritual battle.

The enemy seemed to be having a great victory in my life. And I felt like I was under a huge weight. A heaviness. It's hard to describe.

And that heaviness comes with emotion. And the emotion is just this sense of anxiety. And helplessness. And separation.

And you get the picture. I would retreat to that room. Hoping. Hoping.

[8 : 45] That the Lord would bring an end to this season. In my life. And you can imagine trying to lead a youth ministry. And being in this place spiritually.

It's hard to preach. It's hard to teach. It's hard to care. It's hard to give my life away. When everything seems so weighty for me. It was a very difficult season for me.

But I remember. When I got along that room. I got to the place where nothing would come out. I wouldn't hear God saying anything. I began to take a cassette player in there.

But that was old days. Y'all remember cassettes? That's how many years ago. I would take my cassette player in there. I would take a worship CD. And I would put it in there. I would mash play. And after about.

I don't know. 15, 20 minutes. There was a freedom to begin to worship. But I had to listen to it first.

[9 : 46] In order for it to wash over me. To get to the place where I was able to personally worship. That was the only relief. For eight months.

And then. For whatever reason. I don't have any event that changed. I don't have any remembrance. Of any kind of moment. That sparked. That sparked. That sparked.

A change. It's as if. All that weight. All that heaviness. That I carried for eight months. It just went. It just disappeared. It wasn't because of some great prayer.

It wasn't because of. Some great event. In ministry. It was just. The season was over. And God. carried me through a time. That was very painful.

And I can look back now. And I can see that there's a gain. In my life. Because of the season. I see that God showed me.

[10 : 43] What spiritual warfare looks like. He showed me what the fight looks like. And he helped me to experience. How do you walk faithfully. Through seasons like that.

How do you still keep others. Keep the focus on caring for others. During that season. Very difficult. But I think that now. I rely on him more.

In those type moments. And in normal moments. I desire to rely on him. And not to rely on me. There's something that he taught me. Through that season. And we see here.

In the life of David. As we look back at the psalm. That David in a sense. Is walking through. One of these times in his life. And I would just say this. That I fully believe.

That God has a purpose. In each of these times in our life. I believe that for David. God had a purpose. To allow this time.

[11 : 40] In David's life. And I believe. That when those times come. For you and me. I fully believe. That God has a purpose in it. He's growing us.

Through seasons. Of difficulty. Ultimately. That he would teach us. To rely on him. At all times. And we look again. At this psalm.

And I want you to see. The greatest cry. Of David's heart. Is not that his enemies. Would be subdued. Do you see it? Do you see the greatest cry.

Of David's heart? I want you. I long for you. I long for intimacy.

I long for your voice. I long for your fellowship. I long to hear from you. I long to be in your presence. Yes there's enemies.

[12 : 36] But it's as if the enemies. Are on a side. In this psalm. The greatest thing. That he's hurting for. Is him. You know.

I'll look at a couple of verses. That talk about David. And give us insight. Into David's relationship. With the Lord. So you would remember.

That David was a shepherd. When he was young. He was in the fields. Keeping the sheep. And we would remember. Probably in 1st Samuel. There's a verse. That reveals.

A couple of times. That David encountered. Difficulty. And God showed his hand. Strong in the life of David. It says this. In verse 37.

Chapter 17. 1st Samuel. And David said. The Lord who delivered me. From the paw of the lion. And from the paw of the bear. Will deliver me. From the hand of this Philistine. So he walks into the battlefield.

[13 : 38] He sees Goliath standing there. Throwing curses at God. He says. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine? He delivered me then. He'll deliver me now. Do you see the boldness of David?

Do you see the confidence of David? Do you see that David knows God in a powerful way? He has experienced the hand of God in his life.

In such a way. That when the bear tried to attack. Then he was able to overcome the bear. When the lion attacked. He was able to overcome the lion. Not by his own strength. But because he watched God do something.

In and through his life. He knew him in a very intimate way. We look at the book of Acts. Chapter 13. And I won't read the whole passage.

But I will just read this truth about David. I want you to hear the intimacy. That David had with the father. With God. It says. God raised up David to be their king.

[14 : 38] Of whom he. God testified and said. I have found David. The son of Jesse. A man after my own heart. A man after my own heart.

Let me just ask us this morning. Have you ever known God in this intimate way? Have you ever experienced God.

His power in and through your life. Have you ever seen his hand. Showing himself strong on your behalf. You know the word of God says. God seeks.

He looks to and fro across all the earth. Seeking to show himself strong. On behalf of those whose hearts are surrendered to him. God looks to and fro across all the earth.

Seeking to show himself strong. On behalf of those whose hearts are surrendered to him. Do you think God said that about David? A man after my own heart.

[15 : 44] A man that desires what I desire. A man that I've shown myself strong on his behalf. You know. When we look at this psalm.

And we see the anguish. In David's heart. He's saying. How long God. I've known intimacy with you. I've seen your power in my life. I've heard your prompting in my heart.

I desire to live for you. My heart beats for what you desire. Where are you? You recognize. It's not the circumstance that David is asking to change.

He wants that intimate. Close. Relationship with the Lord. And so brothers and sisters. I ask you. Have you ever known it? Have you ever known that level of intimacy?

Where with everything that's going on in your life. There's nothing that would be more treasured than that. That is intimacy with the Father.

[16 : 44] That's what David is revealing here. There's nothing greater for him. There's no greater loss than the intimacy with the Father. Father. And I'm hoping that's true for you and I this morning.

That we would echo the same thing. In times of trouble. In times when we're going through a season of heaviness. A season of difficulty. A season when we can't even pray.

Do we cry out to God. Say God I need you. Of all things I need. I need you. Please draw near to me. It's my hope.

That all of us. Will grow deeper. And deeper. And deeper. In our relationship. And our dependence upon God. You know God's not way out there somewhere.

You know we think about God. We think about heaven. And it's as if he's way away. But he knows everything. You know the word of God declares. That's not true. He's omniscient. He's omnipresent.

[17 : 44] And it says he dwells within. Amen. He's not very far from any one of us. He's closer than we can possibly imagine. That we've been made one with him.

We don't have to talk formally. We don't have to use these great phrases. That impress him. We just have to open our heart. And pour our heart out to him.

And that's what I hear David do. And he's opening his heart. And he's pouring it out before God. And then he talks about at the end of verse 2. The enemies. How long shall my enemies exalt over me?

What might he mean there? You know here's what I think. Is that when we declare. That God is our God. That we're Christians. And we serve him. And we love him.

And my God is great. You know what people. When they watch us go through these seasons. And they watch difficulties come in our life. You know there's a sense of saying. See he ain't that great.

[18 : 44] He ain't doing it for you. I mean good grief. You relying on him. And look at where. Your life's a wreck man. I don't want to go through what you're going through. It's as if the on looking world is trying to prove.

That God is not powerful. Not real. And it's like David saying. God. Don't. Don't. Let me say it this way.

Don't you want. To show yourself strong. It's as if he's saying. Show yourself strong on my behalf. So that the world will marvel at you.

Don't let the world dismiss you. Show yourself strong. Do something amazing. So that my enemies would see. Who you are. And they would glorify you. So you see four questions in the first two verses.

And in the next two verses you see three imperatives. When you spend time in prayer. And in conversation with God.

[19 : 49] Do you have a boldness? Look what David says here in verse three. Three imperatives.

Consider me. It's almost like he's telling. Giving God a command almost. Consider me. And he says answer me. God answer me.

Don't leave me alone God. He says give light to my eyes. Or light up my eyes. He's saying to God. He's got this boldness.

And this freedom. And conversation. And prayer with God. Do you all find that true? In your own life? Do you find that there's a closeness? Where you can tell God anything?

And you can be bold to share where your heart is. Where your pains are. Where your hurts are. Do you find that true in your relationship with God? Do you find there's a realness? There's this sense of freedom.

[20 : 51] Freedom. Freedom. To express your heart and what's going on in your life. In a relationship with God. And then in verse 5 and 6.

It starts with this word but. You know but is this transition word. Even though this is true.

Even though but this. There is this statement that I see David make. And say God. I'm in this place where I can't hear you.

I don't feel you. I don't sense you. I don't see you. I feel separated. I feel lost. But even though that's true God. Even though it's true. I know for sure.

That you're a steadfast God. I will trust in you. No matter what. My circumstances will not change what I know to be true.

[21 : 55] And what I know to be true is your love for me is sure. And is steadfast. And it never changes. And though God I don't know you. I don't understand why you've done this.

Though I'm heavy and my world seems to be falling apart. I still know who you are. I still know you're the great and awesome God. I still know that you're steadfast.

And your love never fails. I know it. And because I know it. I'm going to cause my mind and my heart to reflect on that. And what is the result of reflecting on that truth.

That is the steadfast love of God. You know what it is? My heart shall rejoice. Brothers and sisters. In the worst and most difficult of circumstances.

Do you find that you can rejoice? It's not the circumstances that give you the reason to rejoice. You know what it is? It's the knowledge of who He is.

[22 : 53] It's the truths of Scripture that we know. It's the character of God that we've come to know. That God is the same today and yesterday and forever. God never changes.

The love of God does not ebb and flow based on our circumstances. When we're in times of greatness and we're in times of depth and despair, God's love doesn't change.

Do we understand that God sends us through trials for a purpose? Y'all heard it quoted probably every week for the last four weeks because we're in the Psalms.

We're in the same section of the Psalms. But James 1 is a verse that I would encourage us to cling to. And it says this, Count it all joy, brothers, when you encounter various trials.

Isn't that a paradox? I'm going through trials and difficulty, heaviness, and things I don't understand, circumstances that feel like they're going to overwhelm me, and God says, have joy.

[24 : 01] Wait a minute, God. You don't know what I'm going through. You know what he says? He says, I'm doing it. Not only do I know what you're going through, I put it there on purpose. I'm a sovereign God, but it has a purpose.

I'm trying to work something into your life. I sent this trial. And this trial is for your growth. This trial is so you'll know me more. This trial is so you'll depend on me.

Count it all joy knowing this, that the testing of your faith works character. The testing of your faith is producing in us a character.

It's producing in us the character of Christ. So he says, rejoice. Rejoice. Rejoice.

And David says, I know I'm supposed to rejoice, but when I look at my circumstances, I can't. So I don't look at my circumstances. I look at who you are. Though I don't feel you present, I know for sure you're a God of love.

[25 : 04] Your love is steadfast. You'll never leave me or forsake me. And when I think on these things, when I concentrate on the truths of your scripture, when I remember who you are, even in the midst of my circumstances, it causes me to rejoice.

Brothers and sisters, church, do you find that you can rejoice and sing praises to God in the midst of difficult times? You know that's what his power looks like?

His power in our life looks just like that. And though it took me 15 to 20 minutes before any words would come out of my mouth, finally they did come out of my mouth.

But I want you to know my heart was singing. And even though it was a heavy time for me, finally my words would come out and worship would come out.

And that was a time of great relief. It's as if the dark kingdom, whatever that was in the spiritual realm that I was under attack, I'm convinced of it.

[26 : 07] Whatever it was, whatever the intention was, it's as if the clouds parted for a little while. And while I was worshiping, I would stay in there for an hour. And I would sing, and I would sing, and I would sing.

And it was as if the clouds just pushed back. And I could feel the comfort and the presence of God. And you know, I think that that's what David is talking about here.

But I've trusted in your steadfast love. And my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. And I will sing. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Think about what he's done in your life. And I would say, in the greatest times of difficulty, think of what he's done in our life. You know, God doesn't call us to focus on the difficulties.

He calls us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. He says, keep your eyes fixed on me. Recognize who I am. Don't turn to the left or to the right.

[27 : 13] And you'll experience joy and peace that passes all understanding, even in the deepest, darkest of times. You know, Paul and Silas experienced that, didn't they? Y'all know the story in the book of Acts when they go to Macedonia and they're called by God to go and preach the gospel.

They show up in the street and they begin to preach the gospel. And the enemy sends his servants to arrest them for preaching the gospel. And they're like, God, wait a minute, I'm doing exactly what you told me to do.

What do you mean? Why are they arresting me? And he takes them and they puts them in the deepest, darkest part of the jail. They fasten their hands and their feet in stocks. They tie them to the wall with no idea of where this is going and what the future looks like.

And what did Paul and Silas do? They praised God. They started singing in the jail cell. And you know what happened? The whole place shook. The miraculous, powerful hand of God placed them there so that they could proclaim the powerful name of God and worship God in the worst of times.

And the jailer and many, many others came into the kingdom because of it. You know that in the darkest of times, the light's brighter. In the heaviest of times, when we're praising God, when our life has fallen apart and we're praising God, that light is hard to miss.

[28 : 39] And God did it in the life of Paul and Silas and he does it for me. You know, I believe that all of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus.

I believe the New Testament points back to Jesus. It reveals the time when he walked on earth in the life of Christ. It revealed that he was God, Emmanuel, God with us.

But in the Old Testament, it's pointing forward at Jesus. All the text, I believe, would be pointing forward. So this week, as I'm looking at this psalm, I'm saying, God, show me Jesus here.

And I wonder if you see Jesus in this text. Prophetically, it's pointing to Christ. Specifically, it's pointing to a time when he would feel this very same separation.

Do you remember? As Christ is in the week of the passion, he knew that he would take on the sins of the world. You remember him in the garden? You remember him sweating drops of blood because he knew of the impending judgment that he was going to receive as he took on the sins of man?

[29 : 52] Listen with those ears as I read again real quickly this passage. And I want you to hear Christ here.

That this is talking about Jesus prophetically. How long? You can hear Jesus crying out, how long will you forget me forever? Jesus had never, ever known a time where he wasn't in perfect fellowship with the Father.

Never. There was nothing more precious to Jesus than the fellowship with the Father. The fellowship that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have known in all eternity past.

They always were united. They always knew something that's the most precious thing in all of life, that is fellowship with the Father. And he says, will you forget me forever? Jesus would say, will you hide your face?

God had never hidden his face from Jesus. Ever. And the Word of God says, remember what Christ said on the cross? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[30 : 59] It's as if God turned his face from Jesus. How long will I take counsel of my own soul? I need to hear from you. Father, I need communion from you. I have sorrow, this deep sorrow that Jesus took on because of separation with the Father, because of the weight of the sins of the world that he carried.

How long shall my enemies exalt over me? Can you remember the enemies of Jesus during that time? How they took a crown of thorns and stuffed it on his head, causing blood to drip all over him.

How they mocked him and spit on him. How they said, come on, king, right? You know, and they mocked him as a king with a purple robe on him. How they beat him to a pulp.

You couldn't even recognize that he was a man. And he, consider me, answer me, God. Light up my eyes.

Do you hear the groan? Do you hear the call of Jesus saying, not, I mean, it's like, please, God. It's almost like he's telling God, do this, do this, God.

[32 : 04] Lest my enemies say, I have prevailed over him. Remember what they said? He called himself the son of God. If he were the son of God, come down from the cross.

Show us that you're the son of God. But Jesus says, I've trusted in your steadfastness. I know of your love. I know of your promises.

I will rejoice. I willingly go to the cross. I willingly offer my life for the sake of my bride. I do it willingly.

I will sing your praise, God, for you're worthy. Your mercy is on full display. I praise you, God. Hear it in Psalm 22. This will be something you recognize.

You'll see the same pattern here in Psalm 22. But it becomes very crystal clear that it's Jesus. We call this a messianic psalm. I think both are messianic psalms.

[33 : 01] But it's sure clear in Psalm 22. Why? Because it's quoted over and over and over and over in the New Testament unequivocally about Jesus.

And look at verse 1. Just follow with me as we read Psalm 22 in closing this morning. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Have you ever heard that before?

That's the words of Jesus on the cross quoting Psalm 22, verse 1. Psalm 22 is pointing ahead to this very time in his life.

Why are you so far from saving me from the words of my groaning? You see the questions? Where are you, God? Why have you forsaken me? Oh, my God, verse 2.

I cry by day, but you do not answer. And by night, but I find no rest. Do you hear the groaning of Christ? The suffering he's going through?

[34 : 00] Yet. In Psalm 13, it was the word but. In this psalm, it's the word yet. Yet you are holy. You are enthroned on the praises of Israel.

He's not focusing on the circumstances. He's focused on the holiness of God. He declares it. In you, our fathers trusted. They trusted. And you delivered them. To you, they cried.

And were rescued. In you, they trusted. And were not put to shame. I am a worm and not a man. I'm scorned by men. I'm despised by people. All who see me mock me.

Have you heard that in your testament? All who see me mock me. And they make mouths at me. They wag their heads. He trusted in the Lord. Let him deliver him.

Let him rescue him. For he delights in him. Do you hear Christ? Yet you are he who took me from the womb. You made me trust at my mother's breast.

[34 : 54] On you was I cast for my birth. And for my mother's womb. You have been my God. Be not far from me. For trouble is near. And there is none to help. Many bulls encompass me.

Can you picture it? You know it's as if when we look with spiritual eyes in the garden of Gethsemane right before he goes into Jerusalem. Do you see it's almost like the whole dark kingdom is surrounding him.

We got these soldiers coming up to arrest him. We've got his servants. His 12 are sleeping. He's like by himself. He's sweating drops of blood. He knows it's imminent.

It's right around the corner. It's as if Satan and all the demonic kingdom is up there just laughing. They're just going crazy. They're going berserk. Because they're getting ready to take this guy down.

To take Jesus down. These bulls have compassed me around. Strong bulls of passion surround me. They open wide their mouths at me. Like a ravening and roaring lion.

[35 : 54] That reminds us of 1 Peter doesn't it? Like a roaring lion he seeks to devour. I am poured out like water. All my bones are out of joint.

That was quoted in the New Testament as well. My heart is like wax. It's melted within my breast. 16. For dogs compassed me. A company of evildoers encircled me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

I count all my bones. They stare. I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them. And for my clothing they cast lots. And then he says, But God do not be far from me.

Come quickly. Deliver my soul. Save me. Brothers and sisters. I encouraged us in these seasons to support one another.

To come alongside. How much of a blessing is it when we're in these heavy seasons of life? For somebody just to come sit with us. Just to put an arm around us. Just to say, I'm here.

[37 : 00] I'll do whatever I can to help. That type of love in the body of Christ is powerful. You know, how blessed it is to be out of those seasons. They're very difficult.

How blessed it is to have seasons where we just hear the voice of God clearly. We sense the presence of God often. And we're warmed inside by God's great love.

And worship comes freely and easily. That's what I long for us as a body. That we would support one another and help each other during those seasons. And that more than that, we would worship and grow spiritual.

Let's pray this morning. Father, I do ask that in these difficult times of life, in these heavy times of life, that Father, you would remind us to focus on your truth.

That your truth never fails. Your truth never changes. Your truth is always there. God, your love is beyond our understanding. It'll never leave. There's nothing that can separate us from your love.

[37 : 58] Nothing. Angels or principalities, powers, nothing can separate us from your love. Father, you love us as children, and yet you're doing a work in our life that requires trials.

God, in the midst of the trials, help our eyes to stay fixed on you. God, I pray that you give us strength to be faithful to you, to believe that you're trustworthy and steadfast.

God, I pray that that in itself, just this confidence in you, this commitment to you, especially in those seasons, would scream to the world that our lives have been changed by a holy, mighty God.

Thank you for this morning. I praise you in Christ's name. Amen.