

I Ponder the Wonders of Old

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[0 : 00] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! My soul refuses to be comforted, and when I remember God, I moan.

When I meditate, my spirit faints. You hold my eyelids open. I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I consider the days of old and the years of long ago.

I said, let me remember the song in the night. Let me meditate in my heart. Then my spirit made a diligent search. Will the Lord spurn forever and never again be favorable?

Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in his anger shut up his compassion?

[1 : 17] Then I said, I will appeal to this, to the years of the Most High. The years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the deeds of the Lord. Yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

I will ponder all your work and meditate on your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. What God is great like our God? You are the God who works wonders.

You have made known your might among the people. You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. When the water saw you, O God, when the water saw you, they were afraid.

Indeed, the deep trembled. The clouds poured out water. The skies gave forth thunder. Your arrows flashed on every side. The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind.

Your lightning lit up the world. The earth trembled and shook. Your way was through the sea. Your path through the great waters. Yet your footprints were unseen.

[2 : 18] You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. You may be seated. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. All right. Let's go before the Lord and pray. Lord, I just pray that utterance would be given to me in the opening of my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador, that in proclaiming it, I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.

Amen. All right. Well, true confessions. Something I have learned over the years through speaking and teaching at various churches and ministries and schools is I have something in common with Pastor Walt.

And I can get emotional while speaking. During the week when I was preparing, my wife walked in on me and she's like, your eyes are bloodshot.

Are you okay? And I was like, are you sick? And I was like, no, I'm fine. I'm fine. She's like, did you not sleep well? Like, what's going on? I was like, no, I'm fine. I'm fine. She's like, are you crying? I was like, yeah. It's just so beautiful, you know.

[3 : 34] And she's like, but yeah, so the series we're in is this is, these are a few of my favorite Psalms. Psalm 77, it's not necessarily my favorite in the way that it's just like, it's a fun read.

I just like enjoy reading it. But it has been one of the most impactful Psalms in my life. And the reason is just sooner or later, you are just going to be hit in the face with the problem of evil.

You're going to get knocked down. Life is going to go sideways. And it's just going to be hard. And over the last few years, one of the favorite books I've read, one of the best ones I've read is The Yearling by Marjorie Rawlings.

A gorgeous, beautiful book. And she really does just a masterful job of showing the world in all its glory, in all its wonder, just the beauty and the awe-inspiring nature of God's creation, how it just brings glory to him.

But there's a paradox there because the world is all that, but it's also dark. It's full of sin.

[4 : 53] It's full of pain. It's full of malice and suffering. And it's just a beautiful book. And it's this coming-of-age story of this boy who, it's kind of his last summer of boyhood.

He still kind of has that awe-inspiring just, you know, wonder of the world. And through the course of the book, he comes in contact with the darkness.

He sees pain. He sees suffering. And at the end of the book, he just can't take it anymore, and he just runs away. And it's set in, like, the late 1800s in the middle of nowhere, Florida.

And so as he just runs, it just deepens his suffering even more. He nearly starves to death as he's just lost. He barely makes it back home.

Barely survives. And so his father meets him. He's been a boy through this whole thing. It's almost like this first conversation where his dad talks to him like a man.

[5 : 55] And he says to his son, he goes, life goes back on you. You've seen how things go in the world of men. You've known men to be low down and mean.

You've seen old death at its tricks. You've messed around with old starvation. Every man wants life to be a fine thing and easy. It is fine, boy.

Powerful fine. But life ain't easy. Life knocks him down, and he gets up, and it knocks him down again. That I wanted life to be easy for you.

Easier than it was for me. A man's heart aches seeing his youngins face the world, knowing that they got to get their guts tore out the way his was tore out. I wanted to spare you as long as I could. I wanted you to frolic with your yearling. I know the lonesomeness he eased for you. But every man is lonesome. What's he to do then?

[6 : 54] What's he to do when he gets knocked down? So that's what this psalm answers the question to. What do we do when we get knocked down? What do you do when you've got to go home and tell your wife that they don't have a job anymore?

What do you do when you find out your husband's been cheating on you? What do you do when you have to watch your son or your daughter play the prodigal son and just throw away their life and sin and debauchery?

What do you do when your body is just wracked with physical pain as a cancer just eats away at you from the inside? What do you do when you love the one? You lose the one you love the most. And we don't know what to do a lot of times. And part of that is just we're not familiar with the psalms. We don't know how to verbalize that.

We don't know how to approach that. And we often fall into a couple of ditches and try to walk through this. The first one might be a little mean. I'm going to call it the Uncle Leonard ditch.

[8 : 01] I had a, I don't know how many greats he was. He was probably a great, great uncle. I met at a family reunion when I was like nine or ten years old. He was in his 90s. But he was just a bitter, angry old man.

Didn't want help from anybody. Just, I mean, permanent scowl on his face. But, I mean, he lived a tough life. He was like born in the Wild West, like in the Montanas and Dakota, like at the tail end of just like only the toughest people went up there.

Like you have to scratch out a living. And he came from a family that was godless, tough, mean, showed favoritism to kids, alcoholics, just rough life.

Growing up in the Depression and World War I and World War II, just lived through all of that. And just, you get life, you kind of have that mentality. Life is tough. So you got to be tougher.

You just got to cram those emotions in. Like you can't show weakness. You just got to be mean. It's the only way to survive. And we kind of have our Christianese version of that.

[9 : 11] And instead of just being tough, we approach it as like, oh, I got to have faith. I have these big feelings coming out. I have these doubts towards God.

But like I'm a good Christian. Those are bad feelings. I'm going to stuff them down and just have faith or joy. You know, I just, I've got to be joyful. I got to be joyful. Like God, you know, God has saved me. This is so good.

I got to, I got to stuff it down, my true feelings down and just be joyful. And it's not healthy. It just breeds bitterness. It just, it festers in there.

It's like a pressure cooker that's going to blow. But the other ditch is kind of what Indy Wilson calls like picking the scab. We're kind of open with the emotions.

We go back to them continually. That trauma that happened in your past, you're going to like keep going to it five years later, 10 years later, 20 years later. We're just going to keep pulling that out

and just, just, man, this, this is so hard, you know.

[10:10] And there's never healing that comes. There's never, never any moving on. There's no, you know, like it's almost like this thing that has wounded you and there's no getting past it.

It's just a part of you now. And that again, just, it leads to a deep depression. It leads to growing more and more bitter. It just causes those doubts in God to just take a deeper root.

And so the, I love Psalm 77 because it kind of cuts through both of those. And gives you a path through where you can actually deal honestly with your emotions.

Which is point number one, be brutally, crying out to God in a brutally honest way. And so verse two, second half of that verse, it says, In the night, my hand is stretched out without wearying.

My soul refuses to be comforted. When I remember God, I moan. When I meditate, my spirit faints. You hold my eyelids open.

[11:29] I am so troubled I cannot speak. I don't know about you, but I'm almost uncomfortable with that, aren't you? That moan there in, it's used elsewhere in Psalm 46.

It's actually used to describe the constant roaring of the sea in a storm. It's kind of a broad word. It can be like a moan, but it could also be like a rage almost.

And so when I remember God, it causes me pain. When I meditate, meditating is not like emptying your mind and meditate.

It's literally like a muttering word where you're reading over God's word. You're thinking through God's word. You're working out what it means. And when you do that, it causes your soul to faint.

And I've been there. When I was in college, I called my dad one morning. And as soon as he picked up the phone, like I knew something was horribly wrong.

[12:35] And it's like somebody's dead. And I'm like, dad, what's going on? And he's just so emotional, he can't tell me what's going on for a little bit. But after a while, he's able to tell me that my 15-year-old sister just got raped last night.

And I was like, oh, okay. And so I was like, all right, I'll be home. And so it takes about an hour to get home. I'm driving home. And like I had just got done memorizing Psalm 91.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I'll say to the Lord, my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust. For it is he who rescues you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his pinions. And under his wings, you will find refuge. And that's mulling through my mind as I'm driving home. And I'm going like, okay, my sister was dwelling in the shelter of the Most High.

She trusted God and loves God like nobody else I know. And so where was God's wings over her last night? Where was his shield?

[13:46] It brought me no comfort at all. Like that verse said, it made me moan. I felt angry. My spirit fainted when I meditated on God's word.

And I felt guilty about that for a long time. I'm not supposed to feel that. It's much later. Just, you know, I wasn't immersed in the Psalms the way I should have been.

That's actually the first step of recovering from something like that. Is being honest with God. Going to him and just crying out how you actually feel.

Because we have a big God. He has strong shoulders. He can take that on. He can take your raw feelings. He can, even the way you feel about him.

And as you work through that process, it often leads to big questions for God. Which is exactly where Asaph goes.

[14:54] Point two is take your questions to God. In verse seven it says, Will the Lord spurn forever and never again be favorable? Has his steadfast love forever ceased?

Are his promises at an end for all time? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in his anger shut up his compassion? Guys, those are big concepts he's wrestling with there.

His steadfast love, has it forever ceased? My poor Hebrew professor teaching me. Hebrew just never stuck.

But one of the things that did actually stick was, one of the few words I know is hesed. And that's what this steadfast love is. It's hesed. And the reason why I remembered it is because we actually translated the book of Ruth in his class.

And the whole theme of the book of Ruth is hesed. This steadfast love. This love that will never let go. It just, it is faithful to the end. It will not die.

[16:01] And you just see that throughout the book. Naomi, because of a famine, moves to this strange land of Moab. And there just meets tragedy upon tragedy where her husband dies, her son, both of her sons die.

And at the end, she even changes her name to Mara, like bitterness. And she's standing before her daughter-in-law's and just says, go home. Go back to your family. I'm going back to Israel.

I'm going back to be a beggar, basically. I have nothing for you. Go home. Orpah does, but Ruth will not. She takes on the life of a beggar with her.

She takes on all the harshness and the challenges of life at that time. And says, I will not leave you. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God.

I'm staying faithful to you. And you just see that over and over again through the book. You see it with Boaz showing faithfulness to Ruth. And you see, in the end, God showing this faithful, chesed love because all this leads to this King David, who is a result of the marriage of Ruth and Boaz.

[17:14] And he's looking through this stuff. Each of these are huge concepts like that. And he is going, has God ceased this? Is God going to keep his promises?

Does God hate me now? And as Christians, we're all too quick to go, yeah, yeah, yeah. And like, the answer is obviously no. But when you're in that moment, you're not so sure.

It's rough. And once again, God invites us to ask those tough questions, to bring those tough questions to him. In the middle of the Psalms, Psalm 73 through 89 are just marked as psalms of lament.

And you just see that word. If you went through and highlighted the word why, why, you just see it over and over and over again. It kind of reminds me of my son Nathan had a rough stretch when he was about four years old.

One night, I was at home alone with the kids. And his sister, we were renovating the living room. So we were like sanding the ceiling. And so we had like a seven-foot pole.

[18:23] And his sister took that thing and swung it and just got Nathan right at the hairline on the forehead. And there's so many blood vessels up there. It wasn't a big cut, but it just, blood everywhere.

So I'm like, we're getting paper towels. We're trying to get blood stopped. My wife walks in like in the middle of this and just like bloody paper towels everywhere. She's like, what's going on? It's like, it's fine. It's fine. I got under control. Just a little cut.

It wasn't two weeks later. Nathan's swinging on the swing. We had one of those like, it's like a fort with a swing on it, slide going down. And he's over there swinging. He's the most creative person I've probably ever met.

So he's just thinking about, you know, these strange monsters or whatever. And his little brother is probably one years old at the time, you know, outside wearing a diaper and that's it kind of thing. Climbs up there with a rock and is like leaning over Nathan on the fort part while Nathan's swinging below him. And he's like, hey, Nathan, look at this rock. And Nathan's in his own little world.

[19:26] So he's just, you know, swinging away. He's like, Nathan, look at the rock. Just totally oblivious. And the rock slips out of his hand. And Nathan still has a chance. He's swinging.

So it could miss him if it comes down just right. But it comes down just right and nails him, I mean, just like an inch away from where he got hit before. And there's blood everywhere.

My wife and I are inside just enjoying one of the few moments of quiet you have with four children. And suddenly the door is bust open. There's kids crying and yelling.

There's blood everywhere. The dog comes running in. And we're like, what's going on? We don't know if he's okay. We're trying to figure it all out. And in the middle of the chaos, Elizabeth, my daughter, just loses it and starts crying.

And she just goes, why? Why? Like, why does this always happen to Nathan? And it's like, that's where we're at. I loved it.

[20:25] It was just this honest question, probably even to God. You know, it's just like, why is this happening to Nathan? Like, why is he getting singled out?

Like, the injustice of all of this. And that's where God calls us to be. Take your questions to God. There is a danger with all this, though.

Israel had a lot of hard problems. And in Exodus 17, they're wandering through the wilderness, going to the promised land, and they don't have water.

That's tough. When your daughter's coming to you, it's like, I'm thirsty. It's 100 degrees out here. And you have no way of giving her anything.

Like, you're going to have feelings towards God about that. And they do. And they become bitter about it. And they become enraged about it. And they're coming to Moses, going, why did you lead us out here?

[21 : 31] Lead us out of Egypt to die out here? And it's, they fall into a great sin doing that. And so that's something you've got to be careful with, is you can't fall into sin with this.

And so what's the difference between Asaph crying out to God, being brutally honest with his feelings, and what's the difference with Israel sinning in the wilderness, fighting against God? And I think it's what they, the way they handled those emotions is that Asaph is bringing those feelings, bringing those raw emotions straight to God in prayer.

Whereas the Israelites are grumbling with each other. They're grumbling against Moses. It's almost like they're gossiping about God. And so guard your hearts as you go through this.

But we do have to be honest with God. It is that first step. You can't hold it down and you can't be Uncle Leonard. How do we move on?

[22 : 36] You can't just be picking the scab forever as well. And point three, which is really the main point of this whole psalm, is remember the works of the Lord.

Remember the works of the Lord. In verse 10 it says, Then I said, I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the deeds of the Lord.

Yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work. I will meditate on your mighty deeds. It's a common pattern in the book of Psalms.

It's not like here in the West where a lot of times we make our main point at the very front of the talk or at the very end of the paper or something like that. In Hebrew, though, in the Psalms, they often did it at the center.

So it's a good habit. If you're reading a psalm, just circle those three or four verses right in the middle. There's a good chance that is the main theme. And that's what it is here. I will remember.

[23 : 41] And you see that word, remember, remember, remember, over and over through the rest of the psalm. And, you know, remembering is just something we're not very good at. This thing doesn't help.

I am way too dependent on everything with that. But what do we remember? Why is remembering so important? A psychologist named Viktor Frankl in World War II found himself in a German concentration camp.

It's kind of an interesting place for a psychologist to be. Everybody around you is experiencing extreme trauma. And so you could see all your theories play out in real time as you try to help person after person after person around you.

And in this horrific, ghastly situation he finds himself in, he decided, like, I'm going to try to figure out who survives this, who keeps the faith, who is able to work through these horrific circumstances there versus the people who lose hope.

And he found the source of hope is the key to surviving a tough situation like that.

[25 : 05] He found a lot of people would just have a false sense of hope of, like, September 7th, like, the war is almost over. September 7th, we are going to be free. The problem would be September would come and go.

Another month, three months, a year goes by, like, they would lose all hope then. They would literally, like, shrivel up and die. Other people had a false hope of just, like, when I get out of here, everything will be back to normal.

We will move back to our old house. We will, the family will be back together. They're like, that's my source of hope. And it helped them get through their time in concentration camp. But the tragedy is that most of them, when they went home, their home wasn't there anymore.

Many, many times, they were the lone survivor in their family. And then once again, the hopelessness set in. It's just, it's gone. But he found the people who had a simple hope.

Something simple like, I want to bake bread again. Something that nobody can take from you.

Another guy was a musician. He just wanted to play the violin.

[26 : 19] You can't steal that from somebody. And those are the things, those people are the ones who survived the hardships of a concentration camp.

And so that's what Asaph is doing. He's saying, remember. Put your hope in something that's really simpler and stronger than baking bread or playing the violin again.

He turns his hope to God. And he remembers the great deeds that God has done in the past. So that's point four. Ponder the power and the greatness of God.

I love passages like this. You see it frequently when someone like Ezekiel or Isaiah goes into the presence of God.

They see something like this. In verse 13, it says, Your way, O God, is holy. What God is great like our God? Skipping down to verse 16, it says, When the water saw you, O God.

[27 : 23] When the water saw you, they were afraid. Indeed, the deep trembled. The clouds poured out water. The skies gave forth thunder. Your arrows flashed on every side.

The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind. Your lightning lit up the world. And the earth trembled and shook. Your way was through the sea. Your path through the great waters.

Yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Asaph goes back to the most significant moment of salvation in Israel's history at that time.

The Exodus. They've been enslaved for 400 years. God delivers them through just the powerful acts of Moses. And as they're going away, the chariots of Pharaoh come after them.

And they're trapped against the Red Sea. And the sea is, it's something that us moderns don't really get. But they almost saw it as like a chaotic being.

[28 : 31] That was a goddess. Even the Babylonians had a goddess Tiamat. Which is this chaos monster of the sea. And that's just kind of the ancient Near Eastern view of the ocean.

It's like a monster. It's unpredictable. It's dangerous. It's powerful. When you're caught in its grasp, there is nothing you can do to get out of it.

And that's why it's so amazing when God shows up, the powerful sea monster trembles before God. It is frightened of him. And by the way, it's this incredible foretaste of God's going to destroy chaos in the end.

And that's why in the book of Revelation, at the very end of the book, when God creates the new Jerusalem, and we're in heaven, it says a strange line that there will be no sea.

[29 : 32] The ocean will be gone. That's odd. Until you realize what the ocean represented. God is going to destroy chaos. There will be no chaos in the end.

And you just see this display of God's power. Lightning lighting up the world. The earth is trembling at the presence of God. And I don't know if you've ever been in a storm like that, but, like, you feel small.

This one time, I was in my grandparents' house up in Pine Top, Arizona. A 6,000-foot elevation, high pines. They live, like, 30 minutes away from a ski resort.

So don't think desert. Think, you know, high mountain pines. And they live right next to the Apache Reservation, right across the road.

So it was just wilderness out their front door. And there's a big mountain just right there that they lived at the foot of. So my cousins and I, I was probably 15, 16 years old. Our cousins went out there, climbed up that mountain one day.

[30 : 33] We had, like, some 11-year-old kid was with us. I don't even remember who he was. But he was like, all right, keep up, guy. You know, like, we're going up a mountain. And we go up there, and this storm just rolls in while we're, like, towards the top of the mountain.

And, you know, 6,000-foot elevation, we're on a mountain. So we're, like, in the cloud, and it just starts dumping snow. And they're like, yeah, we should probably head back when suddenly, like, that first thunderbolt hits.

Boom! Boom! And it's like you see the flash, and it's the earth shakes in that moment. And you're like, you know, lightning hits different when you're, like, in the cloud. It's different when you're, like, down on the ground, the clouds up there.

And it was a storm. It was boom! Boom! Like, lightning is hitting like crazy. This 11-year-old kid just starts crying. He's like, we're going to die! We're going to die! He's, like, on the ground.

It's like, we are going to die if we don't go. Like, you know, I'm like, what do you do? Like, he's

melting down, like, oh, you slap him? Like, what's the thing they do in the movies? I didn't slap him.

But it's like, we got to go now, buddy.

[31 : 39] So I think I was, like, behind him, pushing him down the mountains. Like, you can't stop. Just keep going, keep going. And we finally make it back to Grandma's house, and we're all just

sitting there, like, oh, my gosh.

Like, hearts pounding. And it was like, that was the craziest experience I've ever had in my life. And that's what the power of God is like. You're helpless before it.

You have zero control. It is shaking everything around you. It is scary. But what I love about this awesome display of God's power ends with him leading his people like a flock.

Like, he's a shepherd. And I love how Jesus says, you know, you're my sheep. My sheep hear my voice.

There's a comfort in hearing the voice of your shepherd. My dad's an author. He's written 16, 17 books. And he wrote with a great man named Dr. Neil T. Anderson.

[32 : 45] And Dr. Anderson was leading a tour in Israel one year. And they were out at the shepherd's fields, and there was, like, actual shepherd with sheep behind him. And he's explaining this concept of shepherds in Israel do things differently than we do in the West.

In the West, we herd sheep. In the Middle East, the shepherds lead their sheep. The shepherd will often just sing and walk away. And as he's singing, all the sheep hear his voice, and they follow after him.

And he's explaining this, and in the background, the shepherd's herding the sheep. And a guy raises his hand, like, the shepherd behind you is herding the sheep.

He's not leading them. And he's like, what? He's like, okay, everybody on the bus. Get on the bus. We're going to go over there and talk to them. And so everybody piles on the bus. They drive to the other side of the valley where the shepherd is.

And he gets out, and he's like, excuse me, sir. I'm sorry to interrupt. I know you're working. And he goes, I've always heard that the sheep follow the shepherd's voice. They don't hurt them.

[33 : 47] Like, he's like, yeah, yeah, that's true. That's true. All the shepherds sing. And he's like, okay, sorry for asking. You're hurting them. Like, why aren't you singing? He goes, oh, I'm not the shepherd.

I'm the butcher. And he's like, yes. See, yes. And so God, God is our good shepherd. He is strong. He is powerful. He is mighty. We have zero control of the situation. But that's actually a good thing. My kids like to come up to me on the couch sometimes, like, feel my arms.

They're like, flex, Dad. Flex. And they just kind of giggle, like, I know I'm nothing like Brian Hurst. But they just take joy in the fact that their father is a lot stronger than them.

If a strained dog shows up in the neighborhood, they're going to come run to Dad. And that's the way we are with our father. Psalm 46, 1 says, God is our refuge and our strength.

[34 : 46] He's our strength. He is our very present help in time of trouble. And so I love some of the imagery in this psalm where in the beginning of the psalm, Asaph's hand is held out to God.

And he says it without wearying. The image of that is that his hand is going numb from holding it out so long. And it's just, God doesn't grab his hand.

It's just, he's holding it out and he's holding it out. But at the end, God does reach down. God is this powerful shepherd that reaches down and does guide his people.

That's what Asaph remembered. That's how he worked through whatever tragedy was going on in his life. And so we have the same question.

You know, the exodus was the greatest act of salvation that Asaph could think of. But we can do Asaph one better. And so point five, this I call to mind.

[35 : 46] What do we remember when life is at its hardest? What do you do with the problem of evil? Well, you know, one Christmas, I think it was my second year of teaching.

I'd never spoken in chapel before. And the head of school comes to me. He's like, hey, it was the night before chapel. And he goes, the Christmas thing we were going to do has fallen through. Can you preach a sermon tomorrow?

I was like, oh, okay. Yeah, 35 minutes. And so I did not sleep much that night. But it was an extremely impactful night for me because as I was contemplating God becoming man, as I thought about the glories of God, of him being the creator in heaven, doing what Philippians 2 says, where he, though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he made himself nothing.

Being born in the likeness of man and being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death. When you think about, like, the birthing process, what the creator God went through that night, it's astonishing, really.

Andrew Peterson wrote a song called Labor of Love. He said, It was not a silent night. There was blood on the ground. You could hear a woman cry in the alleyways that night on the streets of David's town.

[37 : 24] The stable was not clean. The cobblestones were cold. Little Mary, full of grace, with tears upon her face, had no mother's hand to hold. The king of the universe became man, and he was born into a dirty stall.

There was blood. Instead of a great palace, he's in a barn. Instead of being wrapped in sheets of purple and silk and linen, all they had was an old burial cloth to wrap their baby in. They didn't place him in a golden crib with, like, a feather comforter. They put him in a feeding trough. There were cows there.

There were sheep there. Doing what cows and sheep do. That's what our creator stepped into. We made a mess of this beautiful world that he created, and he stepped into it with us.

And I was just like, that's the answer to the problem of evil. I've heard all the arguments. I've read all the books. It just never settled right. I don't know the answer to the problem of evil, but I do know that Jesus stepped into it with us.

[38 : 43] Indy Wilson even pointed out, you know, that if any human being made up this story about God, it would just be deeply sacrilegious. Deeply sacrilegious.

You don't talk about that that way. God dirtying himself that way. And yet Jesus did that willingly. And it didn't get any better for him through life.

Isaiah 53 prophesied about Jesus that he will be despised and rejected by men. He's a man of sorrows. He's acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised. And we esteemed him not. Yet surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

That's what we remember. That's what we remember. When life kicks us down, and we get up and it just kicks you down again.

[39 : 50] When old death is playing at its tricks, when we get our guts tore out, that's what we remember. I love the song that we sing so often.

He who is mighty has done a great thing. He's taken on flesh. He's conquered death's sting. He has shattered the darkness and lifted our shame. Holy is his name. And so because of that, we can join with Jeremiah, the weeping prophet.

We can join with Habakkuk, a prophet whose book mirrors Psalm 77. If you want to read a good commentary in Psalm 77, go read Habakkuk. Listen to their words.

He says, But this I call to mind, therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. Hey, there's hesed again. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness.

Habakkuk says, There's that theme again.

[41 : 20] He makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me tread on high places. So guys, cry out to God in just brutal honesty and remember what he has done for you.

Let's pray. Dear Holy Father, we are just so grateful, God, that the word of God does not come back void.

We need your mercy. We are in such need of your grace. Lord, I just know a handful of stories in this room of people suffering, of people going through incredible hardships.

Lord, we just lay all this at your feet. We ask for your comfort. We ask for your healing. We're so grateful for your strength. We know that you are making all things new and working all things together for your good.

And so God, I just pray that you would work on our hearts, most especially when we are suffering. Just pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.

[42 : 30] For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.