

A Troubled Heart (Psalm 77)

Have you ever faced something so difficult, so heartbreaking it's caused you to question God's goodness, presence and love? We've all faced things that have kept us up at night, things that have sent us spiraling. Psalm 77 is a song written in response to intense heartache and loss. Just about every question you could throw at God is brought up. But the psalm doesn't stop there. The honesty is refreshing, and the conclusion life-giving.

1. His Experience (Psalm 77:1-9)

Lament = cry of desperation; passionate expression of grief and sorrow.

Big Q: *"If what I know about God is true then why on earth has / is THIS happening?!"*

VV5-6 *"I thought about the former days...I remembered my songs in the night."*

The "songs" became a reminder of what once was - it wasn't always this way! They remind him of God's character!

VV7-9 Bring God your questions

What's this really all about? How can a holy and loving God who has made promises to a particular people allow *this* to happen?

The concern from the start? *"God break into this crazy mess and intervene – say something / do something!"*

2. His Appeal (Psalm 77:10-20)

VV11-12 He's answering his questions about God's faithfulness by calling to mind God's victory over Egypt. He's remembering Israel's story – and he's appealing to THAT! A defining story.

God's story anchored the psalmist to something bigger than himself.

VV16-20 It starts to get loud! The unforgettable events at the Red Sea fire up the psalmist.

He remembers one of the most celebrated events of Israel's history.

It was a story that defined them as a people. *"THAT story is MY story!"*

"The God who has delivered us from death through Jesus lives and acts...the story hasn't stopped! I can never be separated from the love of God...not by trouble, hardship, persecution, death!" Romans 8:28-39
"Because you sent your son, I KNOW _____!"

When what we're experiencing in life and what we believe about God seem to be in conflict with each other, when we're tempted to believe God has changed - where will we go?

Mark 4:38

QUESTIONS

1. How does the psalmist feel about his present experience? Describe it.
2. According to verse 2 what does the psalmist do in his distress? The temptation is to retreat, keep it to ourselves, wallow in it, or try and escape it. What does he demonstrate in his "cry"?
3. We can all relate to the questions the psalmist asked. Describe a time when you asked these kinds of questions. Did you feel like you could bring him those questions?
4. How does a knowledge of the Bible help us to celebrate God's past faithfulness and how might that speak to our present situation?
5. Look at verse 10. To whom / what does the psalmist make his "appeal"?
6. It's not IF, but WHEN we find ourselves facing an experience that causes us to question God, so we need to have truth to run to/ stand on - an arsenal of biblical history that answers back. How can we become increasingly familiar with that history? How is Israel's history part of our story? How is the cross of Jesus part of our story?
7. "Remembering what God has done for us in Jesus is like medicine for a debilitating disease." How so?
8. Read Romans 8:28-39 and celebrate the ongoing story of God's sustaining love. Take some time and pray for one another.