

Psalm 77
“God’s Providence and Human Emotions”
Cornerstone Church Of Poway
Pastor Jason Fizzard
March 10, 2024

Big Idea: When we surrender our plans to God’s good providence, we discover a new confidence to trust Him throughout our lives.

1st movement: Giving voice to your pain (77:1-6, HCSB)

For the choir director: according to Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm. ¹ I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and He will hear me. ² I sought the Lord in my day of trouble. My hands were continually lifted up all night long; I refused to be comforted. ³ I think of God; I groan; I meditate; my spirit becomes weak. *Selah* ⁴ You have kept me from closing my eyes; I am troubled and cannot speak. ⁵ I consider days of old, years long past. ⁶ At night I remember my music; I meditate in my heart, and my spirit ponders.

Notes:

2nd movement: Entering the space in between (77:7-9, HCSB)

⁷ “Will the Lord reject forever and never again show favor? ⁸ Has His faithful love ceased forever? Is His promise at an end for all generations? ⁹ Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger withheld His compassion?” *Selah*

Notes:

3rd movement: The upward journey to trust (77:10-20, HCSB)

¹⁰ So I say, "I am grieved that the right hand of the Most High has changed." ¹¹ I will remember the LORD's works; yes, I will remember Your ancient wonders. ¹² I will reflect on all You have done and meditate on Your actions. ¹³ God, Your way is holy. What god is great like God? ¹⁴ You are the God who works wonders; You revealed Your strength among the peoples. ¹⁵ With power You redeemed Your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah* ¹⁶ The waters saw You, God. The waters saw You; they trembled. Even the depths shook. ¹⁷ The clouds poured down water. The storm clouds thundered; Your arrows flashed back and forth. ¹⁸ The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; lightning lit up the world. The earth shook and quaked. ¹⁹ Your way went through the sea and Your path through the great waters, but Your footprints were unseen. ²⁰ You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Notes:

How can we embrace God's providence when it doesn't align with my feelings?

My Next Right Step, I Will:

- Accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior
- Follow Jesus in believer's baptism
- Find a Place To Serve First Impressions Media Children's Ministry

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Small Group Leader: Choose how many questions that will honor your time commitment. Encourage everyone to participate in either a question, reading or prayer. If using this as a family, use the icebreaker section to go deeper on Sunday's teaching.

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Open in Prayer.

Icebreaker: The Psalms have brought comfort to the people of God throughout the generations of church history. Do you have a favorite Psalm? If so, why?

Questions:

1. How would you define to what is a lament? In our society and culture, do you think we have lost the "language of lament?"
2. **Lament within the Psalms:** Lament psalms comprise approximately one-third of the book of Psalms. They are the most numerous category within the book. They are also called "complaints" by the psalmists themselves. These poems contain the poet's strategy for mastering a crisis. They can be either private (Ps 3, 4, 13, 22, 31, 39, 57, 69, 71, 77, 139) or communal in focus (Ps. 12, 44, 74, 79, 80, 94). When you reflect on why God would allow this genre and style of poetry within the Scriptures, what does this reveal about the character and nature of God? How does it encourage you?
3. **Lament within the Bible:** When we consider all of Scripture, honest lamenting is evident in so many books. Consider the book of Job. It portrays a righteous man experiencing immense suffering. How does Job's response to his circumstances compare to Asaph's lament in Psalm 77? What can we learn about God's character from both stories? (Job 1:1-22)
4. **Lament within the Bible:** Consider the book of Habakkuk. The prophet questions God's justice in the face of evil. How does Habakkuk's honest questioning compare to Asaph's doubts in Psalm 77? How does God respond to both men? (Habakkuk 1:1-13)
5. **Lament within the Bible:** As we move toward Good Friday, consider Jesus in Gethsemane. Jesus expresses his deep anguish before his crucifixion (Mark 14:32-36). How does Jesus' honest prayer wrestle with God's will, and what can we learn from his example?
6. Have you experience a time when you did the right spiritual disciplines and practices (prayer, Bible study, etc.), yet you still did not feel the comfort of God? Briefly explain.

7. The sermon talks about surrendering our plans to God's providence. Can you think of a time when you had to let go of your own plans and trust in God's will? What was that experience like? How would you describe your emotions along that journey?
8. **Surrender to God's Providence within the Bible:** Consider Abraham and Isaac. God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son, a seemingly impossible command (Genesis 22:1-2). How does Abraham's obedience demonstrate his trust in God's providence, even when he doesn't understand?
9. **Surrender to God's Providence within the Bible:** Consider Joseph. His life story in the book of Genesis is filled with betrayal and hardship, yet he ultimately acknowledges God's work in his circumstances (Genesis 50:19-20). How can Joseph's perspective inspire us to trust God's providence in our own lives?
10. How would you describe or summarize Asaph's struggle in Psalm 77 as he experienced God's providence and also encounter his own feelings?
11. **Emotions within the Bible:** Read **Psalm 34:18; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Philippians 4:6-7; Prov. 15:13;18; Eccl. 3:4; Rom. 12:15.** Consider how Scripture gives space for people to feel deeply. **How can you learn to grow in understanding your emotions? What is one area you desire to mature in this area?**
12. The message mentioned two general extremes. On one end, we tend to ignore emotions; thus, we can become emotionless. The other extreme is to think negative emotions are automatically a sign of spiritual weakness; thus, we never discuss them. How can we find a healthy balance in expressing our emotions to God? Why is it hard? What are the dangers of moving toward the extremes?
13. The message concluded with two calls to action. The first is to develop trusted and safe relationships within the church community. Do you have people in your life that you can be open and honest with about your struggles, pain, and hurt? What is one step you can take in the next month to foster this in a relationship?
14. The second call to action is to walk alongside others who are going through difficult times. As a disciple of Jesus, you are needed to be used in the life of another believer. How can you practically live this out in the next month? What posture or skills do you want to develop to more effectively come alongside a hurting person?