

# Summer in the Psalms: Psalm 13

## **The Realities of Life**

It is here! School is back in session and many aspects of our life will fall back into a “normal rhythm.” For some of us that means stability and for others it means the onslaught of chaotic schedules to manage. Either way, the reality of life’s craziness seems to be palpable. Are you feeling the overwhelming pressure of your circumstances? Or sideswiped by chaos and conflict?

As the summer has closed and our *Summer in the Psalms* series winds down, there is hope that we are resting in our identity as children of God. Maybe this sermon series and this tool has helped you strengthen your relationship with Jesus. Or maybe you are feeling just as disconnected from God as you did when we started. God has shown His unfailing love to us through sending His son Jesus to live the life we could not, die the death we should have, and pay the debt we would never be able to pay. He is inviting us to experience that truth through His word.

The distance from the head to the heart is less than a foot, but it often times feels miles away. We know so many things about God, but we haven’t experienced Him in our lives for some time. Knowledge without experience leads to a life of dread, doubt, and loneliness. But the Gospel tells us that God has not given up on us just because we are not feeling like He is with us in the moment, no matter what lie the evil one would have us to believe.

## **You Are Created to Know and Experience God**

From work projects to kids’ activity schedules to personal commitments, the demands of our life lead us to believe that following Jesus is too hard of a task. But He has called us out of a battle that He has already won! He defeated sin and death, He defeated the grave to give us life, He restored us to right relationship with the Father, and He has invited us to live life with him. Every time we walk with Him in obedience, step out in faith, and trust Him to be all that we need, we experience Him more fully.

We are quick to struggle to believe that God, sitting on His throne, would pursue us. We cannot reconcile that He wants to show His character and love to us in a way that we can experience His goodness even when we do sense Him with us in a moment of pain, loss, temptation, or chaos. He has proven Himself time and time again, so we can always know that He loves us fully, even in our worst moments.

***What reality is pressing down on you? Honestly describe how are you experiencing your relationship with God.***

### **Experiencing God through His Word**

God's time-tested way of deepening your relational experience with Him is through receiving, praying and living out His word by the power of His Spirit. God's word gives us new life and is implanted in our hearts (James 1:18, 21). God invites you to hunger and thirst for His righteousness (Jesus Christ) AND promises to satisfy you (Matthew 5:6). Only God's Spirit can calm our heart, lift our eyes to Christ and restore our soul.

Every Christian needs to learn how to draw near to God and experience His love through His living word (Hebrews 4:12). You will have an opportunity to experience God as you walk through Psalm 13 in various ways.

### **Receiving God's Word—Psalm 13 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

<sup>2</sup>How long must I take counsel in my soul

and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

<sup>3</sup>Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;

light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

<sup>4</sup>lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"

lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

<sup>5</sup>But I have trusted in your steadfast love;

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

<sup>6</sup> I will sing to the LORD,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

***What did you experience in your heart and mind as you received God's word?***

### **Praying God's Word—Psalm 13**

Our prayers are often labored. Primarily because we feel like it is another item in a list of things it means to be a “good Christian.” When we pray with this posture, we miss out on the richness of what communion with God offers us. Prayer is not for us to rattle off a list of needs, desires, or surface level confession, but for us to commune with God in an ongoing conversation. Prayer provides the opportunity for us to hear from the Lord and praying through the Scriptures reveals His heart to us. The Scriptures shape, guide, and give voice to our prayers. We can trust that praying His word will lead us to pray for His purposes and will in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

***Take a moment*** to pray through Psalm 13. You may pray about the reality you wrote above, or the Spirit may move you to pray in a totally different way as you work your way through the psalm. As you pray you may find yourself *adoring* Him, *confessing your sins* to Him, *thanking* Him, and *praying for* yourself, your family, your friends, your coworkers, and your neighbors.

***How did God shepherd you as you prayed through Psalm 13?***

**How did praying through Psalm 13 differ from your typical prayers?**

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are praying for you, right now, in this very moment. What a comfort! We read in Romans 8:26-27, 34 that is true. God knows our heart and the desires of our heart before we even speak them. We find God's will for our lives as we read his word, so it only makes sense that Jesus and the Spirit would be praying God's word over us, even in Psalm 13.

***How may the Son and Spirit be praying the Father's will for you as expressed in Psalm 13?***

(Write out the Son's and Spirit's prayer on your behalf to the Father. Include your name in the prayer.)

**Living Out God's Word—Psalm 13**

As we engage with God's word through receiving and praying, we gain a greater understanding of who He is, what He has done, and what that means for us. All of this allows us to better relate and respond to God rightly. In order to be able to live out God's word, we must first receive and pray his word. Receiving and praying His word comes more naturally than living out His Word, but He calls us to be *hearers and doers* of His word. We cannot full embrace following God's will for our life without living out His word and we can't fully live out God's word without receiving and praying His word. God gave us at least three different word pictures to help us to understand the importance of living out His word.

Firstly, Jesus uses the parable of *two foundations*, where He compares the wise and foolish builder (Matthew 7:24-27). The main difference being the wise builder hears and does the word, which enables him to withstand the storms of life. Jesus adds that those who hear the word and obey it are blessed (Luke 11:28).

Secondly, Jesus uses the image of *the vine and the branch*. Not only can we not do anything apart from Christ, but we abide in His love when we obey His commands, which also results in experiencing His joy (John 15:5; 9-11).

Thirdly, we are given the picture of a *mirror*. Those who merely hear the word is like one who looks in the mirror then forgets what they look like in their disobedience—forgetting who they are in Christ, how God calls them to live, and who God is and what He has done. But the one who looks at God's word and does it, which helps in not forgetting what they heard, is blessed and finds freedom as they live *with* God and live *for* God (James 1:21-25).

In light of the reality that is pressing down on you, or how you are struggling in your relationship with God, consider how God is calling you to *trust* and *obey* Him so that you can live His word, which enables you to experience His blessing and find freedom found in Christ.

***How Can I Live Out Psalm 13?***

List 1 or 2 practical ways God is calling you to live out the truths found in Psalm 13. Here are some examples:

- When everything in the world is telling me that I'm alone and that God has abandoned me, I will remember how He has protected and provided for me over and over again, and I will praise him for his ongoing faithfulness. (verse 1).
- I will find comfort in knowing that God has sealed my salvation in Jesus, which is far better than the being saved from this season of opposition, affliction, pain, loss, chaos, and being overlooked in favor of others I see as less (verse 5).
- I will seek to rest in God's steadfast love, salvation, and gracious dealing with His people over the course of history, which includes my past, present, future. (verses 4-5)

