

In Our Feelings, Week 2: Grief and Lament in Psalm 13

Intro Question

- Who here had a childhood pet growing up? What kind of pet was it and what was its name? [Give a chance for a few people to share.](#) How many of you still have that pet today? [There will likely be a mix of answers.](#)
- We love our pets deeply. Many of us experienced loss for the first time when one of our pets passed away.
- All of us have lost something. Whether it's a loved one, a friendship that ended, moving to a new home, the loss of a season as we graduate or move on from something. When we lose something we care about, the feeling that results is **grief**. It's a complex mixture of sadness, confusion, anger, regret, and other emotions and we can feel it very deeply.
- The question isn't really whether we will ever feel grief—we all will. So what matters is what we do with that grief. Does God care about the things we feel sad about? How do we handle and process our grief as disciples of Jesus?
- The psalms give us an answer. The book of psalms contains the whole range of human emotions, from rapturous joy to seething rage. From disgust and injustice to thankfulness and comfort. It also makes space for grief. Let's read one example of that.

****Read Psalm 13****

- This psalm is an example of a type of prayer called **Lament**.
- A lament is **a prayer in pain that leads to trust**.
- It's a gift God has given us to come to him with the deep feelings we have and to be fully honest with him. There's a rhythm to lament, and we're going to take some time to learn that rhythm, so that when we feel grief, we can process it in a healthy way.

1. Turn to God

- We all turn somewhere with the feelings we experience. Grief is something that wants to be let out. When we feel deeply, whatever the feeling, it begins to build up and we feel the pressure. If we stuff it down, it builds up more and more.
- It's like inflating a balloon. The more air you put in, the more it grows and pressurizes. The air needs somewhere to go, and if there is no release, then we all know what happens. It blows up. That can be what happens when we ignore the deep feelings we

experience. They eventually come out whether we want them to or not, often through anger, snapping at our loved ones, or becoming depressed.

- The psalmist (the writer of the psalm) decides that before he turns anywhere else, he will turn to God with his pain.
- That's the first step in the rhythm of lament: turn to God before you turn to distraction, numbing, or anything else. God is the one who can help us to process emotions at the deepest levels.

2. Name the pain (vv. 1-2)

- The next step in the rhythm of lament is to be honest with ourselves and with God by **naming the pain we feel**.
- The psalmist does this by asking bold questions that might make us uncomfortable in church. "How long?"
- ****Ask: Reading verses 1-2, what are some emotions you would say the psalmist might be feeling? You can look at the feelings wheel if you need to! (you can print and hand out the feelings wheel pdf from the admin page, it's also at the end of this doc)****
- This author feels like God has forgotten him, abandoned him. He feels that he is alone to wrestle with his thoughts. He feels sorrow, he feels confusion, he feels abandonment, he feels forgotten, insignificant. Emotions are complex, there's often a lot going on at once.
- The psalms don't run away from these feelings or bottle them up, they express them fully and vividly. They don't hold back. They often portray their emotions poetically using vivid language. Notice these two examples and pay attention to the intense language.
 - ◆ **Examples: Psalm 6:6-7, Psalm 31:10, 12** ****Point out some of the poetic language and how intense they are: "I flood my bed with weeping," "I drench my couch in tears," "My bones grow weak," "I have become like broken pottery."**
- God would rather you bring your raw feelings to him than to turn away from him in your anger and grief. Honest expression brings us closer to God, not away from him. The important thing is that we're naming the pain honestly *to God* rather than elsewhere.
- The Bible encourages us to wait and be patient in the Lord, but it doesn't pretend like it's easy. God gives us a space to be *fully* honest with how we're feeling, even when how we're feeling is really intense and uncomfortable.

- What is your pain? What are you grieving about? What have you lost, whether it's big or small? What are you struggling through? Even if it feels small, the Lord cares.

3. Ask boldly (vv. 3-4)

- The next step in the rhythm of lament is to ask boldly for God to meet us in our grief.
- In the pain of feeling like God has turned away, the psalmist asks for God to turn back to him and "Look on me." He asks that silence be replaced by answering. The psalmist feels that if God would only look at him, he would be saved from death.
- How do you wish the Lord would meet you in your grief? Do you wish that he would rescue you or deliver you? Do you want him to simply comfort you? Do you want him to save your family member, restore a relationship, give you guidance, give you hope?

4. Trust (vv. 5-6)

- The last step in the rhythm of lament is where we place our trust in God.
- This isn't a shallow or cliché trust. It comes after intense honesty about real feelings.
- The word 'but' in the psalm indicates a turn in the psalmist. He pours out and acknowledges his feelings in vv. 1-4, and then *even in light of those feelings*, he **chooses** to trust the Lord. Trust is not an emotion, it's a decision.
- That means you can decide to trust God regardless of how you're feeling in any particular moment. The psalmist looks beyond his situation and feelings to what he knows is true and unchanging: God's love and salvation.
- He even says will sing God's praises! How can he decide to sing God's praises when he feels like God has turned away from him? The answer comes in the last line in v. 6, "For he has been good to me."
- He doesn't say, "I will sing because everything's great," or "I will sing because I feel like it." Instead, he reminds himself of the ways God has been good to him in the past and present. Praise is not based on present feelings, but past faithfulness and future promise.

How have you seen God's goodness in your life?

This is why we are able to put our trust in God even while we grieve:

- 1) He makes room for *all* of our emotion so that we can turn to him in grief.

- 2) We can ask boldly for him to step into our situations to comfort and guide us.
- 3) He is a God who has been faithful to us even when we don't see or feel it.

God has promised one day to return and make all things new and wipe every tear from our eyes. Until then, we lament and cling to hope, even when we feel the weight of the world.

So what are you grieving? What is a loss you're lamenting, big or small? We're going to take a couple of minutes now to write out our own lament to God as music plays.

****Give 3-5 minutes for everyone to write their own lament/prayer to God. Here are some recommended songs you can play during this time:**

Do You Feel It, Too? By Common Hymnal
Reason to Sing by All Sons & Daughters
Worn (Unplugged) by Tenth Avenue North
Beautiful Things by Gungor
Satisfied in You (Psalm 42) by The Sing Team

Reflection Questions:

1. What stood out to you most from Psalm 13 or tonight's message?
2. Have you ever experienced a loss that changed you? What did that season teach you?
3. Which step of lament do you struggle with the most? Turning to God, Naming the Pain, Asking Boldly, or Trusting.
4. What is one loss, disappointment, or grief you may need to bring honestly before God right now?

