

REMEMBERING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

WHEN GOD
SEEMS SILENT

PRECEPT

PSALM 77:1-15

¹I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. ²When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. ³I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint. ⁴You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak. ⁵I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; ⁶I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked: ⁷"Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?" ⁸Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time?

(Read the rest of verses 9-15)

PROMISE

What is a dark night of the soul? R. C. Sproul describes it as a spiritual depression, a kind of depression that is "linked to a crisis of faith, a crisis that comes when one senses the absence of God or gives rise to a feeling of abandonment by Him." Many faithful Christians experience these dark nights of the soul when it seems like God is far away or silent. Great men in the Bible experienced this at one point of their lives. David, in the many chapters of Psalms, writes about his battle with anguish, loneliness, fear of the enemy, and deep despair. We also see his huge grief in losing his sons in 2 Samuel 12:15-23 and 2 Samuel 12:18-33. In Psalm 42:1 he said, "*Why are you depressed, O my soul? Why is my heart so sad?*" Elijah, in 1 Kings 19:4 said in his prayer while being discouraged and afraid, "*I have had enough Lord, he said. Take my life.*" After his great spiritual victories over the prophets of Baal, this mighty man of God feared and ran for his life, far away from the threats of Jezebel. Jonah, after being called by God to go to Nineveh, fled as far as he could. But when he was swallowed by a giant fish and was given a second chance, he preached God's message in Nineveh and many got saved. Instead of rejoicing, he got mad and said this, "*Now O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live*" (Jonah 4:3). He uttered these words out of resentment, jealousy, frustration, and disappointment. Job, the righteous man of God, lost literally everything and suffered physical illness. Though Job maintained his faithfulness to God throughout his life, he still struggled deeply through the trenches of pain. He said in Job 3:26, "*I have no peace or rest—only troubles and worries.*" Jesus Himself was deeply anguished over what lays before Him. He knew what was to come, and that God had called Him to a journey of great suffering. He knew what must happen in order for us to live truly free. Our Saviour and Lord was willing to pay the price on our behalf, but it wasn't an easy road. Isaiah prophesied that Christ would be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In Mark 14:34-36, Jesus said, "*My soul is deeply grieved and overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.*" The truth is, everyone will go through this valley of life, but we must remember that the presence of spiritual depression does not mean the absence of faith. There is a rainbow after the storm, there is a sunrise after a whole night of darkness. The presence of God will surely come after the dark night of your soul.

We can learn from Psalm 77:1-15 that we can make it through seasons of God's silence by reminding ourselves of who God is and who He will continue to be. When Asaph was in distress, troubled, and overwhelmed, he sought the Lord and longed for the renewal of his communion with God. In verses 11-12 he said, "*But then I recall all You have done, O Lord; I remember Your wonderful deeds of long ago. I will reflect on all You have done and meditate on all Your mighty deeds.*" The presence of spiritual depression always gives way to the presence of God when we remember God's faithfulness in the past in our lives.

PRACTICE

1. Spiritual Darkness. Have you been through a dark night of the soul (crisis in your faith)? How has God shown His faithfulness to you in the past?

2. God's Faithfulness. How did the Bible model what to do when God seems silent? What does Psalm 77 tell us about this?

PRAYER

I. Unreached

- Pray for the unreached to encounter God in miraculous ways.

II. Nations

- Pray that your eyes be opened on how we can be a part of the Great Commission.

III. Strength

- Pray that the global church will find strength in their sufferings (Romans 8:18).

IV. Giving

- Pray that giving would be faithful, as well as joyful, consistent, and sacrificial.

V. Prayer

- Pray that the church would be deeply committed to seeking God in prayer (Colossians 4:2).

VI. Growth

- Pray that the church will trust Jesus to grow His church, in His way and in His power.

VII. Relationships

- May unity and harmony manifest in healthy relationships among God's people.