

When Life Goes Dark

Psalm 88

Bulletin Notes

God wants the mess.

- cry honestly
- plead desperately
- stay with God

Looking Back

The Bible is filled with men and women who cry out to God in messy ways. And God has preserved those examples for us in the Psalms. One-third of the Psalter are Psalms of lament. They are filled with grief and anguish, angry venting about other people, and a lot of complaining to God about the way things are. What are these chapters doing in our Bible??? The truth is they are doing us a lot of good...

As much as we wish our spiritual lives were in a state of continual spring (marked by abundant growth and discernible activity from God), the truth is that we all experience seasons of winter. God's Word helps us identify these seasons and guides us as we process these messy emotions and experiences with Him and others in an authentic, Biblically grounded way.

Thinking It Through (agree/disagree/consider/contemplate)

"We should bring to God what is in us, not what ought to be in us." C.S. Lewis

"It's better to be an honest mess before God than a dishonest saint." John Ortberg

"When I try to raise my thoughts to Heaven – there is such convicting emptiness that those very thoughts return like sharp knives and hurt my very soul. Love – the word – it brings nothing. I am told God loves me – and yet the reality of darkness and coldness and emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul....." Mother Teresa

*"The true believer does not always rise from his knees full of encouragement and fresh hope. There are times when one may remain down in the dumps and yet still have prayed well."
Mike Mason*

Working It Out

1. Read Psalm 88:1-5. What words or phrases stand out? How would you describe the tone or mood of the Psalm?
 2. Read verses 6-12. Do these verses make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?
 3. Have you ever been through a time in your life where you felt like this Psalm?
 4. Why do you think God has preserved this for us in Scripture?
 5. What do you think about the phrase, "God wants the mess." Do you agree or disagree?
 6. What does it look like to bring our mess before God? (this Psalm shows us a pattern – cry honestly, plead desperately, stay with God)
 7. How can you love others right now who are going through a season of disorientation?
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