

## Psalm 13 – Lament

*The Bible Project have a couple of helpful videos on the Psalms which might be helpful. One is an overview of the book The second might be more relevant for this series is How to read the Psalms.*

*You could start by showing one of these or by sending the link to your Small Group*

*An Overview <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9phNEaPrv8>*

*How to read the Psalms [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpony22k\\_7uk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpony22k_7uk)*

1. What do you understand about lament?
2. Read Psalm 13
3. This Psalm is written by David, the enemy he talks about could be Saul or Absalom or even death. What do we know about this period of David's life that would produce this kind of prayer?
4. We can split Psalm 13 into different verses (v1-2, 3-4, 5-6) what would you say David is expressing/doing in each part?
5. Does your prayer life have the kind of honesty with God as shown in this Psalm?
6. What do you tend to do when you experience, sorrow, anger, pain? Do you involve God in how you process it and deal with it?
7. How does David's example of communicating with God provide an example for your prayer life?
8. All the Psalms of lament (except Psalm 88) end with the psalmist lifting their eyes or turning their heart to God in praise. What does this show us about how we lament in our prayers?
9. How easy do you find it when you are angry to return to praise?
10. Have some time to be still, listen to a Psalm and in this time pray to God about the things that are bringing you sorrow, anger, heartache.... Feel free to share them or not in the time of prayer together. Use this link to help with this response. It is a song used in the Family Service based on Psalm 13.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMy9CoDkxDA>

## Psalm 121 – Trusting in God

Have you ever been on a pilgrimage? What were your experiences on the way and how did you feel on arrival?

Read Psalm 121

1. Psalm 121 is one of 15 psalms known collectively as the Songs of Ascent. Can you imagine why they might have this title?
2. The psalmist lifts up his eyes to the hills (v1). What do you think he might be looking at or even looking out for?
3. The pilgrims are on their way to Jerusalem, probably taking the road from Jericho. What do you know about this ancient route? Can you think of others in the Bible (think NT) who travelled this road? (Clue: Luke 10: 25-37; Luke 9: 51). Any remarks?
4. The pilgrim has a challenging journey ahead of him. There are physical difficulties (sheer physical hardship, thirst etc) and dangers from robbers. But he is sure of one thing; he will receive help from the Lord (v2). How sure are we that God will help us in the challenges that life throws at us?
5. According to the psalmist, God will not let your foot slip (v3). When the going gets rough, we need a firm foothold. What do you think the psalmist means here? How can we translate this assurance to our lives?
6. There is much exhortation in the Bible to stand firm in our faith (eg. 1 Cor 15: 1; Php 4: 1). How easy do you find it to stand firm when faced with life's trials?
7. The Lord watches over the pilgrim continuously, never slumbering. God protects him from the sun during the day and the moon at night (vv 5-6). What a wonderful, reassuring message for the pilgrim. Do we feel God's ever-present protection in our lives? If yes, great! If not, what can we do about it?

8. What's more, God will keep the pilgrim from all harm, watching over his life, his comings and goings, both now and for evermore (vv 7-8). By extension, this protection applies to us. We are told it is advisable to take out life assurance policies, but in the light of God's all-embracing protection, do we really need such man-made policies?

9. We are pilgrims on our respective journeys, suffering the vicissitudes of life along the way. How do we feel about your pilgrimage? Where is your destination?

11. God makes all these promises known through the psalmist. What must we do to reap the benefit of God's promises?

## Psalm 8 – Praise

Begin by reading some verse from Psalms to praise to.

You could ask the members of your group if they have got a favourite or Psalm that fits well. (it doesn't have to be a whole Psalm but a few verses from a Psalm. Alternatively you can give each person one of these to read to the rest of you.

Psalm 63:1-4  
Psalm 138:1-5  
Psalm 9:1,2  
Psalm 66:1-5  
Psalm 145:1-21  
Psalm 13  
Psalm 89:5-8  
Psalm 150  
Psalm 18:1-3  
Psalm 92:1-8  
Psalm 23  
Psalm 103:1-12  
Psalm 30:1-5  
Psalm 105:1-4

We are continuing our journey through the sermon series. We started in our sadness and despair but in that moment we just to lift our eyes up and lament, lament isn't complaining but directing it to God. From venting at God we then trusted God, this week we are taking the next step from trust to praise.

In The 1030 Service Stephen looked at Psalm 43, drawing out the praise that comes in the middle of lament. In the Family Service we looked at Psalm 8, we will mostly use this Psalm today.

1. Read Psalm 8
2. How does this psalm begin and end? What is significant about God's name that reminds us that he is worthy of our praise and worship?
3. How does the fact that God is Lord, the one who is in control, change your attitude as you approach him in worship? If God truly is Lord (the one who is in control), what does that mean for you as you go about your life?
4. How does the fact the God is LORD – (YHWH) change your attitude as you approach him in worship?
5. Read verse 2, what is the impact of our praise, how is this relevant in the context of Psalm 43 (reading at The 1030 Service) and situations we have been lamenting? Why do you think the Psalmist mentions children and infants? How does this make our praise even more impressive? (if struggling think about the value and place in society that children and infants had in those times)

6. How does God's creation reveal his greatness? Where is his glory? What are the sun, moon, and stars to God?
  - a. You might like to read Genesis 1.14-19 and then consider these facts
    - i. Our sun is one of 100 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy.
    - ii. The Milky Way is 100,000 light years wide (a light year is the distance light travels in a year, which is 5 trillion, 865 billion, 696 million miles.
    - iii. The average distance between our neighboring galaxies is 10 million light years. The sun is the closest star to earth.
    - iv. The sun is an immense sphere of glowing gas 860,000 miles in diameter.
    - v. The sun is 93 million miles from earth.
    - vi. Our sun is classified as a G2 dwarf star. Other stars are 1,000 times larger.
7. How would the average person see the position of humankind in the planet today? Does this align with the Psalmist view in v4-5?
8. What does it mean that God is mindful and cares for us? How does that make you feel in the context of the Psalm so far?
9. Read verses 6-8, the Psalmist sees this as something that is worth praising God for. Do you take the same view, why? Why not?
10. What does the echo of verse 1 in verse 9 tell us, how does it set the Psalm?
11. Ask everyone in the group to share something that they would like to praise God for today. It could be something from the Psalm 8, else where in scripture or something from their own lives. This could then lead into a time of praying for one another's needs.

## Psalm 40 – Moving Forward with God

Read Psalm 40 in both the NIV (or your own Bible) and the following Message version

A David Psalm

40 1-3 I waited and waited and waited for GOD. At last he looked; finally he listened. He lifted me out of the ditch, pulled me from deep mud. He stood me up on a solid rock to make sure I wouldn't slip. He taught me how to sing the latest God-song, a praise-song to our God. More and more people are seeing this: they enter the mystery, abandoning themselves to GOD.

4-5 Blessed are you who give yourselves over to GOD, turn your backs on the world's "sure thing," ignore what the world worships; The world's a huge stockpile of GOD-wonders and God-thoughts. Nothing and no one comes close to you! I start talking about you, telling what I know, and quickly run out of words. Neither numbers nor words account for you.

6 Doing something for you, bringing something to you— that's not what you're after. Being religious, acting pious— that's not what you're asking for. You've opened my ears so I can listen.

7-8 So I answered, "I'm coming. I read in your letter what you wrote about me, And I'm coming to the party you're throwing for me." That's when God's Word entered my life, became part of my very being.

9-10 I've preached you to the whole congregation, I've kept back nothing, GOD—you know that. I didn't keep the news of your ways a secret, didn't keep it to myself. I told it all, how dependable you are, how thorough. I didn't hold back pieces of love and truth For myself alone. I told it all, let the congregation know the whole story.

11-12 Now GOD, don't hold out on me, don't hold back your passion. Your love and truth are all that keeps me together. When troubles ganged up on me, a mob of sins past counting, I was so swamped by guilt I couldn't see my way clear. More guilt in my heart than hair on my head, so heavy the guilt that my heart gave out.

13-15 Soften up, GOD, and intervene; hurry and get me some help, So those who are trying to kidnap my soul will be embarrassed and lose face, So anyone who gets a kick out of making me miserable will be heckled and disgraced, So those who pray for my ruin will be booed and jeered without mercy.

16-17 But all who are hunting for you— oh, let them sing and be happy. Let those who know what you're all about tell the world you're great and not quitting. And me? I'm a mess. I'm nothing and have nothing: make something of me. You can do it; you've got what it takes— but God, don't put it off.

### Psalm 40 Study Questions

1. What leaps out at you from this psalm? What differences do you see in the different versions? Are you encouraged by this psalm - if so, in what ways. Are you challenged by this psalm - if so, how?
2. What is "the pit"? What does that mean to you?

3. What happened to the Psalmist when he waited upon God?
  - a. Vs. 1:
  - b. Vs. 2:
  - c. Vs. 3:
4. What happened to others when the Psalmist waited upon God?
  - a. Vs. 3:
  - b. Vs. 4:
5. How did the Psalmist feel about God in verse 5?
6. What did the Psalmist resolve to do in verses 6-8?
7. The Psalmist's resolve resulted in what type of activity?
  - a. Vs. 9:
  - b. Vs. 10:
8. Read Genesis 41:1 and Acts 24:27 in their contexts. Why does God make His choice servants wait, especially when they could accomplish so much if they were free?
9. What did the Psalmist ask God for in his prayers?
  - a. Vs. 11
  - b. Vs. 12 – 13
  - c. Vs. 14 – 15
  - d. Vs. 16
  - e. Vs. 17
10. Why can pragmatism ("if it works, it must be okay") be dangerous? Do ungodly methods sometimes "work"?
11. When the Lord rescues you from the pit, how would you proclaim His goodness?
12. Use this psalm to pray for one another, to pray for situations where you may be 'in the pit' and to proclaim the Lord's goodness

Some helpful references

<https://www.bible-studys.org/BibleBooks/Psalms/Psalm40.html>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-40/>

<https://bible.org/seriespage/psalm-40-when-youre-pit>