

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

Phil O. Waldo
Lead Pastor



1224 Hancock Drive
Boone, Iowa 50036

Phone: 515 432-3329

Website: www.booneopenbible.com
E-mail: office@booneopenbible.com
pastor@booneopenbible.com

SERMON TITLE	Dealing with Despair
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SERIES	
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DATE	8/29/2021
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KEY SCRIPTURE	Psalms 13
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SYNOPSIS	Doubt and discouragement are natural, but we can overcome when we remember God's goodness.
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HIGHLIGHTS	
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☞ Dealing with Despair

Psalms 13

1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

☞ 3 Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; 4 my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

☞ 5 But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.

Clearly, David was discouraged when he started writing this psalm. He was obviously down in the dumps. He feels as though the Lord doesn't care about his situation. He feels abandoned and utterly defeated. Whatever is weighing on him makes him feel as though he is close to death. That is a miserable place to be. For some, it has been a lot like this and you may be asking the same kind of questions.

There is no indication that David had done anything wrong to deserve whatever he was going through. If there was, he surely would have confessed it and repented in order to get relief. But here, it seems as though there is no logical reason for his situation, it just is a rotten time.

At the outset, though, I noticed that even though David had some hard questions of the Lord, he was still addressing him as Lord. He didn't abandon his faith; he didn't give up on God; but he certainly was questioning what was going on. For many of us, it's much the same. We have gone through some hard times. Things don't make any sense. We wonder where God is in the midst of all that is happening. We can identify with this psalm. We are confused and confounded. What is at the heart of this chaos?

☞ The Core of Consternation

Consternation = dismay that hinders or throws into confusion

1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

At the heart of despair and discouragement is the struggle with our own thoughts. The questions are simply an expression of the feelings. We feel forgotten. We feel abandoned. We feel defeated. We wrestle with our feelings, and our troubled thoughts run rampant. But feelings are not in charge. Truth is...

☞ **God has not forgotten you.** You may feel that way, but that is not the truth.



Isaiah 49:15

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!

☞ **God has not abandoned you.**

Psalms 22:24

he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

Psalms 38:9

All my longings lie open before you, O Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you.

God is not unaware of your situation. He not uncaring. He is with you.

☞ **The enemy is defeated.** Yes, he still causes trouble, but ultimately, has no authority in your life. Here's the truth...

Luke 10:19

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

1 John 4:4

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

You are a winner! God is with you. God cares about you. The enemy has no power over you. The core of the confusion is in your own mind. Your feelings are getting the better of you. Those feelings and thoughts have to be brought under the authority of God's word.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The feelings are normal. The questions are normal, too. But we can overcome when we submit our thoughts and feelings to the truth. By God's grace we can.

☞ **The Plea for Perspective**

3 Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; 4 my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.



This was a great prayer. We need the light of God to shine upon us and to give us His wisdom and knowledge. No matter what problem we are in, we should cry out with all our heart, "Enlighten my eyes." "Help me to see from your perspective."

☞ **God sees the big picture.** He knows what we don't know. He's watching over us and wants to see us grow. What we see as a problem, he sees as a plan. He doesn't waste a moment; our lives are in his hand.

Isaiah 55:8-9

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

☞ **We need enlightenment.** God may not fully explain what's going on, but he can help us to see more from his perspective and he can help us to trust him through it all.

Ephesians 1:17-19

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

There is hope because God is with us. There is great power in the Lord and he can sustain us in the midst of all of our troubles.

☞ **The Response of Remembrance**

5 But I trust in your **unfailing love**; my heart rejoices in your **salvation**. 6 I will sing to the Lord, for he has been **good to me**.

Here, we see a shift in the train of thought. Where there was doubt and discouragement, now there is determination.

Boice... David moved from being depressed and feeling abandoned by God, to singing joy. "The fact that we feel abandoned itself means that we really know God is there. To be abandoned you need somebody to be abandoned by. Because we are Christians and have been taught by God in the Scriptures, we know that God still loves us and will be faithful to us, regardless of our feelings."

☞ **Remember God's works.**

Psalms 77:11-12

11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
12 I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.



We have the scriptures, filled with testimonies of God's greatness. We have stories of God's provision and healing even in our modern times. You may have a personal testimony of God's work in your life. At the very least, he saved you from eternity in hell. So, remember!

☞ **Rely on God's love.**

I trust = have confidence; feel safe and secure

Unfailing love = kindness; mercy; faithfulness

Psalms 103:8

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

This is God's fundamental character. I can have confidence in this and therefore, feel safe and secure. No matter what happens, I know that God loves me, has mercy on me and is always faithful. So, I am encouraged and strengthened in my faith. Rely on God's love.

☞ **Rejoice in God's deliverance.**

Rejoice = be glad; express joy; spin around

Salvation = deliverance; victory

As I said, at the very least, we know that God provided salvation from damnation. And, we know that the ultimate victory will be ours through Christ. In the end, we win! So, we can rejoice.

Habakkuk 3:17-18

17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

He is our Savior; therefore, we rejoice. He saved us before, he will save us again. Rejoice!

☞ **Resound with praise.**

Sing = loud singing; shouting; express joy

Good = (dealt bountifully) = to deal fully and adequately with; to repay; to reward

God will repay us for the years of trouble and turmoil. (Joel 2:25). That could still happen in this life, but guaranteed, there is a reward for us in heaven.

Psalms 32:11

11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Isaiah 63:7



7 I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us — yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

*What a transition! In the beginning of the Psalm, David was overwhelmed by his feelings and believed that God forgot him and was hiding from him. Yet now he saw how God had **dealt bountifully with** him. Because his eyes were enlightened, David could now see God's goodness, and what a change in perspective that was!*

Before God can enlighten our eyes, we must agree that we don't see everything. We need to realize that our feelings are not giving us full and accurate information. But if we will do this, and cry out to the LORD, He will enlighten our eyes and bring us from a place of despair to a place of trust, joy, and confidence!

**☞ Realize what is at the core of the feelings.
Request God's perspective on the circumstances.
Remember all that God has already done and rely on him.
Rejoice in God's goodness.**

Perhaps you are stuck in the first couple of verses of this Psalm. You feel abandoned, like God isn't listening and doesn't care. You feel overwhelmed and utterly defeated. Those feelings are common. Even David, a man after God's own heart, had those kinds of feelings. But you can't stay there forever.

You need to cry out to God for his perspective on things. "Lord, help me to see what you see. Help me to keep the faith in the midst of troubles and doubts." "Lord, hear my cry and answer."

Keep on praising the Lord, regardless of circumstances. There is healing in singing his praises. It invites his presence and, in his presence, there is fullness of joy. (Psalm 16:11) There is power, protection and peace in his presence. And, God promises his presence when we praise him. In fact, let's do a little praising right now. Let's encourage ourselves in the Lord.

(songshow) Faithful Now

Remember God's love and goodness. God is good... all the time... Don't you forget it. If you're struggling to really trust in his goodness, then ask a few people nearby to remind you. Perhaps others can testify of God's goodness. Let's encourage each other before we go.