



## Week 30: Psalms 81-90

### Study Guide for the week of July 20-26

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Ps 88, a psalm of lament

This psalm has been called the “psalm without hope.” It is a lament to God about the darkness of the soul, but it is an atypical lament for it does not eventually move to praise as other lament psalms do. Circle or highlight all the psalmist’s references to prayer. Then do the same with his references to darkness and finally his references to death. Does the psalmist hide any of his feelings or frustrations from God?

What role does prayer play in Ps 88? In your life? The one thing the psalmist holds on to is prayer – are you as stubborn in prayer?

The psalmist’s cry for help in verse 13 becomes a cry for an explanation in verse 14. Does God explain himself? An Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann wrote, “Psalm 88 shows us what the cross is about: faithfulness in scenes of complete abandonment.” Is your faith patient? Is your patience faithful?

Ps 88 reminds us that even when we stand in utter darkness, we don’t stand alone. Write your own psalm of lament that cries into the darkness with the stubbornness of patient, faithful prayer. Remember, you are not alone!

#### Discussion starters

1. Reread Ps 82. What is the key word or theme in this psalm? Justice is a recurring theme throughout the Bible; why do you think this is so? How does justice impact power and the distribution of power? What happens in the world when injustice prevails? Is God’s intention for creation that some people live at the expense of others? Where do you see that happening today? Is it happening in your own life?
2. What is your attitude when you come to worship – longing to be with God and his people, begrudging, burdened, with an eye to critique your “experience?” Why do you think you view worship this way? How does Ps 84 model the right attitude toward worship? Did you recognize the lyrics of the worship song, “Better is One Day?” Go ahead and sing the song with your small group and make a joyful noise to the Lord!
3. Reread Ps 85:10. What would life look like if righteousness and peace kissed? What would be different in your life? What would be the same?
4. What would you like to see happen in your life before you die? Notice the question isn’t “what do you want to do” but “what do you want to become.” Reread Ps 90:12. What are you learning that helps you make more of the time you have? How are you growing in wisdom? How is wisdom different from knowledge? Can a person have knowledge without wisdom?

#### Bible verse to memorize: Ps 86:15