

Psalm 89

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[0 : 0 0] Is this echoing a little bit? Is that me or? I feel like it is. So if you were here last week, we started to look at the shape of the Psalms. We started to look at first Psalms 1 and 2 as an introduction to the Psalms, to the book of Psalms. Psalm 1 as an introduction to the book as a whole, particularly introducing us to what we were calling this picture of the blessed life, saying if you want true happiness, if you want to be a recipient of the blessing of God, Psalm 1 would tell us where you need to place yourself is before the Word of God, to delight in the Word of God.

And Psalm 2 was an introduction not necessarily to the whole book of Psalms, but particularly to the first book or the first volume of Psalms. Remember we said there were five books in the book of Psalms. There's five volumes. And Psalm 2 introduces us to the first of those volumes. And it's saying not just to delight yourself in the Word of God, but to take refuge.

That Word will drive you to take refuge in God's Son, God's anointed one. And I mentioned last time that as that was written in contemporary to the psalmist, when that was written, when he said those words, the picture, the understanding that the people who heard that would have had was that this anointed one, God's Son, was none other than Israel's King.

It was the King of the people of God, that nation that God claimed as His own. And tonight, again, we're probably, I told you last time we're going to be looking at the shape of the psalms as a whole, as a book. Tonight we're going to cover a huge chunk of the psalms. And I want to just walk you through some of what that looks like before we get to our first psalm that we're going to sing from Psalm 72. Psalm 2 introduces us to say to take refuge in God's anointed one, Jesus, not Jesus Christ yet, but God's anointed one, the Son.

His Son. His King. So the story of the first volume in the book of Psalms is the story of the King.

[2 : 3 2] This is where we see over and over and over again, and I said every psalm in that first book, all 41 psalms are in some way tied to David. And these are some of our favorites, the ones that tell us of his kingship, the ones who tell us of his abiding in the shepherdhood of God.

These are high points of the story of David. And it's a good thing, but book one closes, and book two opens in Psalm 42. Book two of the psalms opens, and the picture is not as good anymore. It's not as positive. It's a little more bumpy. It opens with ten psalms that aren't about David at all. And in fact, they don't point us to take refuge in God's Son, God's anointed one.

They point us to take refuge in God. And the question is why? Why would they point us away from God's Son? Well, the first time that we hear from David again is in Psalm 51, where it opens with these words at the top of the psalm in your Bibles. It says, A psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba, after he had taken another man's wife and had her husband killed on the front lines of his war to hide his lust for her. And we've got to ask ourselves, what hope, right, if we're supposed to take refuge in this anointed one, this Son of God, what hope is there in a king who's just like we are? How can we take refuge in someone who needs prophets to tell him his efforts to cover up his wrongs, haven't hidden them from God? Yet the story of David isn't done. It's definitely tottering at this point, a bit more wobbly than before, but the story still goes on. The light still burns. We follow David through another 20 psalms, most of them being cast in the shadow of pursuit. And the question is, will David's enemies catch up with him? Will our king be caught?

The final words we hear from David in this second volume of the psalms are found in Psalm 70. Here's the words that David speaks. The picture is not, again, as positive as we may hope. David says, may all who seek you, Lord, rejoice and be glad in you. May those who love your salvation say evermore, God is great, but I am poor and needy. I am poor and needy. You're king. I am poor and needy. Hasten to me, O God. You are my deliverer, O Lord. Do not delay. The second book of Psalms, the second volume of five, closes on what may look like a high note. It closes with Psalm 72, not with the words of David, but with the words of his son, Solomon. And the kingship seems to be so firmly established. It's teetering. It's wobbling. But now it's established at this point so firmly that the king in this psalm is seen as the answer to every major dilemma of the people of God. And we're going to begin tonight by singing the words from this psalm. Psalm 72 in sing-psalms on page 92. It's in the blue book.

We'll sing verses 1 to 7 to the tune of Rockingham. Psalm 72 in sing-psalms verses 1 to 7. It begins, Endow the king with justice, Lord, the royal son with righteousness, your people, your afflicted ones.

[6 : 47] He'll judge with truth and uprightness. Psalm 72, verses 1 to 7. And we'll stand to sing. And now the king with justice, Lord, the royal son with righteousness, your people, your Lord, the wicked ones. He'll judge with truth and uprightness. The mountains will bring peace to them. The hills, the fruit, of righteousness. He will defend and save the poor and crush all those who them oppress.

Lord, the royal son and moon endure. So will he live time without end. He'll be like showers on the end.

Like rains that on moon fields descend. The righteous then will blossom forth.

Throughout his everlasting day. Throughout his everlasting day. Until the moon no longer shines.

Peace in abundance will remain. Peace in abundance will remain. So we'll turn now to the reading of God's word. And we're just going to continue reading from Psalm 72.

[10 : 04] Psalm 72. The psalm, as it's in the sing psalms, finishes with these words. Until the moon no longer shines, peace in abundance will remain.

So we're going to continue singing, picking up in verse 8 in Psalm 72. It's on page 586 on the Red Bibles, if you're looking at one of those.

Psalm 72 verse 8. Psalm 72 verse 8. I'll read from verse 8 to the end of the psalm. And I'll start just by reading again the first verse of the psalm to put it in context.

This is God's word. Endow the king with your justice, O God. The royal son with your righteousness.

And he continues in verse 8. He will rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. The desert tribes will bow down before him and his enemies will lick the dust.

[11 : 05] The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him. The kings of Sheba and Seba will present him with gifts. All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.

And he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no help and no one to help them. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. Long may he live. May gold from Sheba be given to him.

May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long. Let corn abound throughout the land on the tops of the hills. May it sway. Let its fruit flourish like Lebanon.

Let it thrive like the grass of the field. May his name endure forever. May it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him and they will call him blessed.

[12 : 19] Praise be to the God, the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever.

May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen. This concludes the prayers of David, son of Jesse.

This is God's word. It's quite a picture, isn't it? Book two, volume two of the Psalms ends on the peak of a roller coaster.

And one wants even to ask Solomon, is it you? Is this you? Are you the king who will fill the shoes of your father, David?

Is this you or should we expect another? The peak of the roller coaster. But we all know that after the peak comes the hard plummet to the bottom.

[13 : 20] Book three of the Psalms opens after Psalm 72 with Psalm 73 and a sobering account of the frailty of all mankind.

David and his descendants have all but disappeared from the scene. Reality strikes at the heart. These kings who were supposed to defend the cause of the poor and crush the oppressed.

Where are they? Where is the one with dominion from sea to sea who holds the blood of the needy as precious in his sight, whose name endures forever and whose fame as long as the sun, and in whom the people are blessed and whom the nations call blessed?

Where is he? Is the question that the Psalms leave us with. There is one place when David reappears in this third book.

One Psalm, we're told, was his. It comes just at the end of this third book in Psalm 86. And David's sad words sound no different from where we last heard him in Psalm 71.

[14 : 37] He says, Hear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am yet poor and needy. I am poor and needy.

Your king is poor and needy. For us today, we're going to look at the final, the final Psalm of this third book though.

A reflection on the decline of the Davidic line. And what has turned out to be an empty answer to Solomon's great vision in Psalm 72 for the king.

So we'll stand as we sing from Psalm 89 in the Scottish Psalter. It's on page 344 in the blue book. We'll sing verses 1 to 5.

And we'll sing to the tune of St. Andrew. Verses 1 to 5 of Psalm 89. And we'll continue to stand afterward as we turn to pray. God's mercies I will ever sing.

[15 : 40] And with my mouth I shall, Thy faithfulness make known, To be to generations all. Psalm 89 verses 1 to 5.

Please stand and sing. God's mercies I will ever sing.

God's mercies I will ever sing. And with my mouth I shall, Thy faithfulness may be known, To generations all.

For mercy shall be built, Said I, For ever to endure, Thy faithfulness In the heavens Thou will Is As As As As As As As As As As As As As As As As As

As As As As As As Let I thy seed establish thou forever to remain, And will to generations all thy throne build and maintain.

[18 : 37] The praises of thy wonders, Lord, the heavens shall express, And in the congregation all saves thy faithfulness.

We pray that God would grant us understanding of his word. Heavenly Father, as we do come before you once again to hear what you have to say about the blessed life, To hear what you have to say about our pursuit of happiness, True and deep and significant and lasting happiness that oftentimes we don't even see available for us.

We ask that you would guide our every step, our every word, our every meditation. Taking seriously what we learned last week about what the blessed life looks like, A tree planted by the stream of your word, drawing nourishment from its pages, Soaking in all that you've revealed about the way to obtain such happiness, We come to the Psalms once again and ask that you would light our paths, That we might see this anointed one in whom we are to take refuge.

Show us a king worthy in whom we might take refuge, That we might be those trees, That you might show us the soil in which we are to be rooted, Planted, nurtured, sustained, In which we might be fruitful, And know this life as it was meant to be lived in your presence.

By your grace we ask this and much more. And we ask it in the name of Jesus, That you would have us and have your way in us tonight.

[21 : 23] Amen and amen. You may be seated. So we've been looking a bit more at the landscape of the Psalms.

We've even looked already a bit more at that landscape as a whole, Considering their storyline, A notion many of us, I would imagine, May have never even thought of before, That these Psalms, these songs, Somehow tell a story, And are somehow scaped together.

Now how could they though? How could they tell a story? They're so different. They're so random. They're, They're Psalms. They're, They're songs.

But as varied as they are, As different as they are, And they are, You walk through the Psalms, And they're as diverse in how, And what they communicate, At almost every point.

But as varied as they are, If you step back from the individual plants, To take a look at the whole, You'd find that the Psalms are much more like a garden, Than like a patch of untamed wilderness.

[22 : 38] The Psalms are like a garden, And not just any garden. The Psalms are like, Are most like, An English garden.

That's, Its sole purpose, Is not for the rote cultivation of food, But to tell a story. Catherine and I had a garden in, In the States, Where we had one tomato plant.

We planted it. We watered it. We thought we were doing the right thing. Keeping it.

And in the end, We had neither tomatoes, Nor a story. It told, Well, If it was a story, It was a pathetic story.

But the Psalms, If they are a garden, They're not, They're not, They're not for tomatoes. They're for a story. We need to see that. If you've, If you've ever seen an English garden, You may have noticed this.

[23 : 42] English gardens tell stories. And in the midst of them, Though, Though you might feel like you're in the middle, Of a wild blossoming of growth, Once you step back, You begin to see, That there's purpose, Behind these plantings.

There's a gardener somewhere. A gardener, Who's planted these, Just so, To build on each other. And compliment one another. And ultimately, To tell a story.

The Psalms are an English garden, That we must step back from, To see the story, That is being woven, Before us.

So we've, We've stepped back, And we have, We have seen something. What have we seen? We've seen, We've seen, That the Psalms, Tell the story, Of the blessed life, And how it is wrapped up, With what God reveals, In his word.

Most importantly, That this blessing, Flows, Through the refuge, That is to be had, In his, Anointed one. His, Son.

[24 : 52] The one who finds blessing, In these, God's written word, And God's incarnate word, God's son, Will be, Like a tree, Planted, Established, Flourishing, And fruitful.

This is Psalm 1 and 2, That we looked at last week. But we said last week, That this son, This anointed one, Was understood, For the longest time, As none other, Than Israel's king, Who was anointed, On the day, Of his coronation.

A king, Who came, From one chosen man, David. So after Psalm 2, What follows, Is the ascent, Of David, To Israel's, Throne.

It's real bumpy at first. It reminds me, Of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Trying to make it up, Some very rocky slope. Ka-clunk, Ka-clunk. And you never know, At some point, If she's actually going, To make it, Up this hill.

But by the end of book 2, Remember, I said that there were five books, Five volumes, It's very important to understand, In terms of, Seeing the shape, Of the Psalms. At the end of book 2, David's kingship, As much as it, It was, It was, It was, It was interesting to see, How struggling he was, Himself.

[26 : 17] At the end, Through the words of Solomon, His son, The kingship is so firmly established, The view of it is so clear, That in Psalm 72, The king is seen, As the answer to every major dilemma, Of the people of God.

But this vision, Turned out to be, Rather empty, Because the shoes, Were too big, For David, Or Solomon, Or any other king, Who followed, After them, To fill.

So here we return, To our question, For today, Where is the blessed life, Rooted?

What soil, Can sustain, A tree, In the midst, Of such uncertainty? When there seems to be, Such disorder, And confusion, Welling up around us, Whether it's your life, Or the life of the people, Who would have heard this psalm, When it was first penned, What soil, Will anchor us, To the foundation, Of truth?

What will tether us, Amidst the weather, Of the world? The storyline, Of David's throne, That brings us, To Psalm 89, The last psalm, In that third book, That light, Is dimly lit, Barely, Flickering, On the verge, Of being snuffed, Out, What soil, Will anchor us, When our lights, Are dim, And when we cannot, Even sometimes, See the God, Behind the story, That's where we're, What we're looking for tonight, The soil, That will root us, As trees, Playing off of the picture again, Of Psalm 1, That we be trees, So we're told, That this psalm, If you look in your Bibles above, Is of Ethan,

[28 : 34] The Ezraite, He's a, He's a character, We don't know much about, Other than what we read, In 1 Kings 4, That when God granted, Solomon wisdom, David's son, Solomon, Was wiser, Than all other men, Including this guy, Who is identified, By name, As apparently, One of the wisest, In the land, Ethan, Then, Had watched, Solomon, Rise to power, Rise in wisdom, Rise in fame, And then drop, With the roller coaster, This king, Who was supposed to be, Wiser, Than he, His psalm, Psalm 89, Answers, Those questions, What can keep us going, In such a time, As this, What will help us, Live the blessed life, Now, The happy life, Now, Even though, Everything around us, Tells us, To give up,

And go home, When the carpet's been, Pulled out, From underneath us, When hope's, Light, Seems, Dimmest, Psalm 89, Answers, Our questions, Perhaps, You're there, And you need, Somewhere, To be rooted, Somewhere, To be anchored, Well, Ethan, Tell us, Tell us, Where can we find, The soil we seek, So he begins, And this, Listen to how he begins, He says, In verse 1, I will sing, Of the Lord's great love, Forever, With my mouth, I will make known, Your faithfulness, Through all generations, I will declare, That your love, Stands firm, Forever, And that you, Established your faithfulness, In heaven itself, You said, I have made, A covenant, With my chosen one, I have sworn, To David, My servant, I will establish, Your line, Forever, And make your throne, Firm, Through all generations, Selah, So here it is, Here it is, We didn't have to look far, Where's the soil?

It's here, It's the great, Love of the Lord, That's worth, Singing about, And his faithfulness, Faithfulness, That we, Make known, It's his love, That stands firm, And his faithfulness, That is established, Even as the Lord, Establishes, The throne, And the line, Of David, And makes, His throne, Firm, Ethan, In the midst, Of the adversity, Surrounding him, Looks into, The character, Of God, And find solace, From the coming, Night, Ethan was wise, Right?

Second, Only to Solomon, Himself, He could see, What was taking place, When Solomon's, Rule began to fail, And was passed, To the next king, In line, He knew, The darkness, That lay ahead, For the kingdom, But he was still, Able, To shout, To the Lord, In the midst, Of his trials, And these, Are the words, That came out, Of his mouth, I will sing, Of the Lord's, Great love, Forever, And with my mouth, I will make known, Your faithfulness, Through all, Generations, Why this, Though?

[32 : 19] Why this? Why these, Words? Why find hope, In the love, And faithfulness, Of God? What do these, Mean?

And I'm, I'm very glad you asked, Because, These are two, Of the most important, Words, In the Old Testament, God's, Love, And faithfulness, When Ethan, Talks of the great, Love, Of the Lord, He is speaking, Of God's, Unwillingness, To falter, In the relationships, He's entered, Into, He's speaking, Of God's, Unwillingness, To falter, In the relationships, That he's, Entered, Into, You see, Ever since creation, Was run amok, By his creatures, Ever since Adam, And Eve, First rejected, His ways, In the garden, Of Eden, Instead of, Instead, They went, And they followed, After their own ways, Instead of, Of just getting rid, Of the whole plan, God entered,

Into a relationship, To save them, From themselves, And because of his, Great love, He will not, Tolerate anything, Less than, Accomplishing, His, Purposes, What about faithfulness?

Well, Where, Where this great love of God, Is his default mode, With his relationships, To his people, Faithfulness, Is his default mode, Within, Himself.

This word, Is the word, That we get our word, Amen, From. Do you know what, Amen means, When you say that, At the end of a prayer? It means, Let it be, Let it be, I put myself, With you Lord, Let these things be, If they're, Within your will, It's a word, That's, It's sometimes, Translated, Truth, It is God's, Trueness, To himself, His unwavering, Devotion, To his own, Nature, A consistency, Of character, Found supremely, And, In an ultimate sense, Solely, In, God, We pray, After our prayers, Not my will, But yours, Be done, Amen, Let it be, God doesn't say that, His is simply, Amen, And, Amen, His will, Stands, Because his character,

[35 : 05] Is sure, He is, The Alpha, And the Omega, Nothing splits, His purposes, Nothing conjures up, Friction, Within him, Why hope, In the great love, Of the Lord, Why hope, In his faithfulness, Because in the floodwaters, Of uncertainty, They are the island, That is never, Drowned, Someone, Put it this way, Though earth, Give way, Beneath me, And wind, Give way, To rain, And waters, Come and siege me, Though I struggle, On in vain, Still I will hope, For break, Of dawn, When still, Gives way, To still, In God, My God, Who with his hand, Will rescue, From all, Ills, This earthen, Place, Is not my, Home, I look, For one, By faith,

Alone, It's just the task, In sight, I have, When God, Will make, All right, The great love, Of the Lord, And his undying, Faithfulness, Ground, Our hope, In the midst, Of uncertainty, They provide us, Our hope, In the midst, Of adversity, This is the soil, That the blessed life, Is rooted in, This is where, The blessed life, Draws its sustenance, And why the blessed life, Can survive, The happy life, Can happen, And even thrive, In whatever seasons come, Faithfulness, Faithfulness, And love, Love, And faithfulness, Love, As God's, Modus operandum, With his people, Faithfulness,

As his trueness, To, Him, Self, And with this in mind, With these two, Let me just give you, A fly by guide, To Psalm 89, In which Ethan shows us, How being rooted, In the great love, And faithfulness, Of the Lord, Shapes four key aspects, Of our lives, Our praises, Our promises, Our problems, And our prayers, Our praises, Our promises, Our problems, And our prayers, Four key aspects, First, Our praises, Let's see, How our praises, Ought to focus, On this, Focus, On the faithfulness, And love, Of God, Though Ethan has been, Praising the Lord, Since verse one, Let's pick up, With him, In verse five, He says, The heavens, Praise, Your wonders,

Oh Lord, You see, They praise him, Your faithfulness too, In the assembly, Of the holy ones, For who, In the skies above, Can compare, With the Lord, Who is like the Lord, Among the heavenly beings, In the counsel, Of the holy ones, God is greatly feared, He is more awesome, Than all, Who surround him, And now he turns his attention, To God, Look in verse eight, He says, Oh Lord, God almighty, Who is like you, You are mighty, Oh Lord, And your faithfulness, Surrounds you, It envelops you, And it sets you apart, This faithfulness, You rule, Over the surging sea, When its waves mount up, You still them, You see, God is all about, Calming the seas, He created them, In the beginning, And though they have been, Thrown into tumult, By rebellion, The rebellion of his creatures, In his faithfulness,

He brings them back, Into submission, Be aware, Be aware, We see many, Many throughout history, In our myths, And legends, Displaying their so-called power, By throwing the seas, Into an uproar, But the Lord, Is the one, Who ultimately, Calms the seas, And puts them back, In their place, When we see Jesus, Calming the seas, He's pointing back, To this piece, Of God's plan, God's character, God's prerogatives, He's saying, You know the God you worship, Me and him, We do the same things, We've got the same agenda, And this is why the disciples, When he calms the seas, You see them turning, And worshiping him,

[40 : 12] God calms the seas, He goes on, You crushed Rahab, An untamable sea monster, You crushed her, Like one of the slain, With your strong arm, You scattered your enemies, Verse 11, The heavens are yours, And yours also the earth, You founded the world, And all that is in it, You created the north, And the south, Tabor and Hermon, These two majestic mountains, In Israel, They sing for joy, At your name, Creation, You see, Joins in the praise, Your arm is endued, With power, Your hand is strong, Your right hand, Exalted, Righteousness, And justice, Are the foundation, Of your throne, And listen, Love, And faithfulness, Go, Before you, You see, Many of us, Love, Love, To worship, We love, To praise, We would say that,

We would say, Somehow, We're bringing our lives, Under submission, To God, Under his reign, Under his rule, But our worship, Our worship, Often deteriorates, Into a narcissistic, Ploy, To get God, To do, What we want him, To do, Years ago, I was, I was a leader, In a youth group, That I had actually, Come up through, And one of the songs, That was newer, At the time, Was, It's not about me, Do you know this song?

It's kind of not, It doesn't compare, With the psalms, At all, But every, Every now, And again, When we, We boys, Were going, Through a period, Of a special, Self-aggrandizement, Right?

We were going, Through these periods, Our youth leader, This guy, Who was a great, Man in my life, Particularly, He would, Sanctify us, By singing this to us, It's not about you, It's all about God, Jesse, It's all about God, It's not about you, It's, And he would go on, Until we were thoroughly, Reminded, That, That over and over again, Until our worship, Was no longer, Distorted by our own reflection, He would sing this, To remind us, Where our worship, Where our praises, Are to be focused, Some of us, It's not even, Our praises aren't even, Deficient in this way, Some of us, It's not even that we, We try and praise God, Worship God, To get him to do what we want, Some of us, We find ourselves, If we really think about, Why do we worship God, Why do we praise God, We worship and praise God,

It's not so much, That we do it, But why we do it, We do it, Because, Only at grace, For our meals, God provided a meal, God provides, It's a good thing, To say grace, But, That's the primary reason, We worship God, Is that he provided for us, Or he comforted us, He kept us comfortable, It turns into something, Where we're praising God, Not because of he, And who he is, Loving and faithful, To himself, But because of what he does, For us, And not even in a, Real significant sense, Usually just, Just, I got a bonus at work, That's when I'll turn to God, When Ethan praises the Lord though, What we see, Is not a reflection of him, But of the enthroned, God of creation, Ruling in power, And might,

[44 : 05] And majesty, And authority, As love and faithfulness, Go before him, Our praises, If they are rightly tethered, To the character of God, Focus on these, Because really, What else is there, That is more significant, Than this, That God, In his mercy and grace, Has not destroyed us, In our narcissism, In our self-aggrandizement, But has sought our salvation, But has sought our salvation, By his steadfast love, And faithfulness, He has called a people, And committed himself, To a people, And he is committed, To himself, What else is there, That's more important, Or central, Than these, An undying love, Towards his people, And an unfailing faithfulness, Towards himself, Ethan finishes, This section, By returning, To the theme of blessing, Blessed are those, Who have learned,

To acclaim you, This literally says, Blessed are those, Who know, The festal shout, Who are familiar, With the praises, Associated, With the feasts, Of Israel, Where they would celebrate, The acts of love, And the acts of faithfulness, Of God, In history, Blessed are they, That can praise God, For what he has done, In the past, And what he will surely, Do again, In the days, To come, Blessed are those, It says, Who walk, In the light of your presence, O Lord, Not for what you do for me, Providing me, With these trinkets in life, But for what you've done, To save a people, For yourself, They rejoice, In your name, All day long, They exult, In your righteousness, For you are their glory, And strength, And by your favor, You exult, Our horn, Indeed, Our shield,

Belongs to the Lord, Our king, Our horn, Our shield, Our king, Belongs to the Holy One, Of Israel, Our praises, Our praises, Our praises, Our praises, Our promises, on it. Secondly, our promises are anchored in it. Ethan praise shifts in verse 19 from the general to the specific. Now he recounts the promises God made to David and how he had promised to David his perpetual love and faithfulness. Watch this. He says in verse 19, once you spoke in a vision to your faithful people, you said, I have bestowed strength on a warrior. I have exalted a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant. With my sacred oil I have anointed him.

Remember last week it was the anointed one in whom we would be blessed, in whom we were to take refuge if we wanted to be significantly, deeply happy. I found David and with my sacred oil I anointed him. He was my anointed one. My hand will sustain him. Surely my arm will strengthen him.

No enemy will subject him to tribute. No wicked man will oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. And here it is. My faithful love, my faithfulness and steadfast love will be with him. And through my name his horn will be exalted. His prodigy, the promise of God to take David as the object of his affection and through David to take his people. I will set, he says, his hand over the sea. His right hand over the rivers. It's an unbelievable picture of what David's kingdom would look like. A king who grips the waters of the earth and embraces between them the land.

[48 : 06] But we have to remember that the picture is not of David himself, right? David was past. Ethan had already seen the downfall of Solomon. He's not envisioning a return to a deceased David. No, it's a vision of someone else. Someone maybe to come. He will call out to me, you are my father. This is what the Lord had said to David. My God, the rock, my savior. Look at the intimacy too between the Lord and his anointed one. I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever. His throne as long as the heavens endure. These are the promises made to David and they're drawn almost entirely from 2 Samuel 7. Promises that are kept and ensured by the love and faithfulness of the one who made them. You know, I've made a lot of promises in my day. Far more, far more promises than I've kept. The extent of my steadfast love and faithfulness is at best fractional and they can only be seen on my best days and only then by the grace of God. But these promises made to David were made by our great God who is by his very nature the promise keeper. They are anchored in his love and faithfulness. But they're not just David's promises. Ethan sees them as just as much his as they were his king's. When God makes promises, they are like this. Though directed at an individual, they're meant for a community. And when we so often get caught up in the promises that we think God gave just to us, that he's promised me health or he's promised me wealth or comfort or an easy road or whatever it is, when we get sidetracked by what we think God has promised us, we lose sight of the deep things he's promised his people. And then when hard times hit, what do we have to hold on to?

When wealth doesn't come, when health fades, when life isn't easy, did God lie to us? Or maybe we just misheard. Maybe it wasn't God. You see, these are the promises on which we must take our stand. These are the promises that are anchored in the love and faithfulness of the Lord. Verse 30 goes on to say that though the promises are kept by God, they are nonetheless conditional. If his sons, it says, forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decree and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod and their iniquity with flogging. Yet conditional as they are, they're still eternal. Look at 33. It says, but I will not take my love from him, David, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness, by my absolute consistency of character, and I will not lie to David that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun. It will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky. Our praises ought to focus on it, and our promises, the real, true, and significant promises that matter because God is the one who made them. Our promises have to be anchored in it, this love and faithfulness of the Lord. But also our problems stem from it.

Though for most of this psalm, Ethan has recounted what is pleasant, now he turns to what is very painful. David's sons did forsake the law and did not follow the statutes of the Lord. They went their own way.

We talked about this last week. Even our kings went the way of the world and disregarded God's way. And because of this, God stripped the kingdom out of their hands. Listen to Ethan recount the state that had fallen on the kingdom. This is in verse 38. But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have been very angry with your anointed one. You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust. You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds. This is your anointed one. You reduced his strongholds to ruins. All who pass by have plundered him. He has become the scorn of his neighbors. You have exalted the right hand of his foes. You have made all his enemies rejoice. You have turned back the edge of his sword and have not supported him in battle. You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the ground. You have cut short the days of his youth.

You have covered him with a mantle of shame. Selah. We've seen this word a couple times, Selah. It's a Hebrew word. It's sort of built in to release the tension that builds up. It gives a moment to breathe. It's the catch one's breath to reflect for a moment on the magnitude of what's just been said. And it makes sense here. Ethan's got a problem. All the praises, these praises focus, focused on the love and faithfulness of the Lord. All these promises anchored in the love and faithfulness of the Lord. But now all these problems stemming from just that, the love and the faithfulness of the Lord. And if you're here tonight, I want you to rethink your own life in these same terms. Are our problems really that you don't know whether the job is going to be there next month?

[54 : 50] Or that we don't know why our children are so far from the Lord right now? Or why our marriages are on the rocks? Or that cancer just struck again? Or depression? Or whatever? Are these really our problems? Is that really the problem? Or is it something bigger? Something deeper? Something more significant? Is the problem perhaps that the God who is supposed to take care of you, supposed to be your daddy, caring for you out of his great love and faithfulness, is the one who is allowing all this to happen? Or perhaps he's the one who's turned his back on us? Or worse, that he's turned against us.

You see, you see it through that lens. You know God is faithful. God is loving. Why suffering? The problem is much bigger than, can I find my meal tomorrow? If God is against us, then there's something wrong. We need to understand this first. The weight of this. And to hear God's answer.

This is what Ethan is realizing as he ponders the fall of the kingdom. The fall of the kingdom as a problem pales in comparison to the fact that God might have allowed us to slip into this, or worse, that he'd given up on us, or worse, that he himself had turned against us in his anger. The fall of the kingdom is not so bad if it doesn't point to something deeper. But if it does, what are we going to do?

What are we going to do if the hand of God is against us? If God Almighty, not just for a time, not just for our good, but is against us, against us? As in now, we are in the crosshairs of God.

That's a problem. Now we've got a problem. See, our problems stem from this. And they ought to, because this ought to be the framework through which we read our world. If the very character of God is supposed to be defined by steadfast love toward his people and absolute faithfulness to himself, and this is all we're seeing in a world around us, then something has gone terribly wrong.

[57 : 24] If you feel this tension in your life, perhaps it's even been the cause that's kept you from entering into relationship with this God, that you see it in the lives of his people elsewhere.

Perhaps you've seen the troubles of the world, and you've asked, how can a loving God allow such atrocities to go unchecked? Or how can a loving God be the one to cause such terrible circumstances in the first place? Well, I would commend you tonight to follow in Ethan's footsteps. See, even when life was at its most uncertain, Ethan turned to God in prayer. And as at every other point in the psalm, these prayers stood in relationship to the love and faithfulness of the Lord. His praises focused on it. His promises were anchored in it. His problems stemmed from it. Now his prayers remember back to it. And we see that the best of our prayers remember back to it as well. He starts out in verse 46, and we're finishing up here in verse 46, and you can feel the emotions of this man as he comes to the brink of just losing it. He says, how long, O Lord, will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? Remember how fleeting my life is for what futility you have created all men.

What man, what woman can live and not see death or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah. Taking a breath, you can hear him gain a bit of his composure and listen. He says, O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?

Remember, O Lord, how your servant has been mocked. How I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations with which they have mocked, O Lord, every step of your anointed one. See, even when the future is uncertain, and he can ask what has happened to the love and faithfulness of the Lord, he had once known, he does not doubt ultimately that the Lord is who he is, that he is good. His prayers and questions are not, why has your love and faithfulness turned to capricious indignation?

Or, will we ever see your love and faithfulness again? Wise old Ethan, wise old Ethan, who's seen it all, knows why it's happened, that the kings and the people have been unfaithful to the Lord. His prayers are, though, how long until we see it again? Will you hide it forever? You couldn't. You couldn't. How long, then, till it shines on us again? I would encourage you to, when you are pushed to similar places in life, to nonetheless, in all honesty, seek the face of God with your questions. Not doubting the goodness of the Lord, but seeking his renewed favor, trusting in the constancy of his character, whether with regard to your praises or the promises he's made or the problems that arise in life or the prayers that quickly follow. As our attention in these matters lands on God's love and faithfulness, we will find that even in the midst of life's raging floods, we find ourselves rooted on the island of God's goodness.

[61 : 30] And this is how we can have true happiness, true blessing, even in the midst of suffering. How can, how we can experience the blessed life despite the circumstances around us? You'll be like a tree planted by the streams of God's word, finding shelter under the shade of God's king, his one true king, who Ethan only looked forward to, and you'll be nourished by God's love and faithfulness planted in it.

Our praises, our worship ought to focus on it. Our promises are anchored in it. Our problems stem from it and our prayers that follow. When we cry out to the Lord because there's nothing else to do, they remember back to it. To reinforce this, that we should find ourselves rooted in the steadfast love and faithfulness of God. Even when our questions become many, we needn't look any further than what Ethan was experiencing himself. He was caught in the middle of the kingdom's downfall. What could have driven him to doubt the Lord, though it ultimately drew him closer to seek his father's face? It makes me think of our own son when we were first beginning to discipline him. He used to, before we could even get the words out of our mouths, come running to us and grab hold of our legs, just looking for the assurance of our love. This is what Ethan does, just running to God and grabbing hold and saying,

I know punishment comes for things that we've done bad, for going our own way, that you've done this, you've worked it into the system, but just tell me that you love me. Just show me again your love and faithfulness. Ethan goes after. Ethan wrote, remember, oh Lord, how your servant has been mocked for the kingdom's destruction. Remember how I bear in my own heart the taunts of the nations, the taunts with which your enemies have mocked every step of your anointed one. But even here, the Lord was preparing the times to send one to be anointed, not with oil, but with the empowerment of his spirit in a way that no one had ever experienced before. And God was preparing the times for one who would bear the taunts and insults of the nations, not just for himself, but on their behalf. And God was preparing the times for one who would defend the cause of the poor and give deliverance to the children of the needy and crush the oppressor. One who would have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. One whose name would endure forever, whose fame would continue as long as the sun. One in whom the people would be blessed and one whom all nations would call him blessed. How long, oh Lord?

God's answer, not too long, Ethan, not too long. Just long enough for a babe to be born in a manger who would grow up and reign most supremely on the cross, giving his own blood because the blood of the nations was precious in his sight. Not too long till one would come who would finally fill the shoes that Solomon couldn't fill or any son of David after him till Jesus came and filled them completely.

This is why even here, the bleakest point in the Psalms at the close of book three, the ending that is most appropriate is in verse 52, praise be to the Lord forever. Amen and amen. Even here, the dawning of Jesus Christ, the true anointed one is in sight. We're going to close in a minute, but I do want to bring it back to our question overarching for this series of what do we do with this? How does our worship then of a God who is loving and faithful drive us then? We worship God and it drives us to join God in his work. Last week I mentioned just a very practical way of after becoming a psalmist, delighting in his word and taking refuge in his son and becoming a psalmist to declare that to the nations because the psalmist was once in our shoes and wasn't the psalmist, he became the psalmist. So we become too and we declare Jesus to the nations, the only hope of this world. It's in a very practical way as if you pray for three people, pray that God would give you three people in your life. Pray that God would give you somebody ahead of you, somebody who would commit themselves to you, who's further along the road of faith and that in that person that you pray for them and you identify them and you beg them to pour into you. That they, that you see what they have and you want that. You want the relationship they have so that you grow and you beg them to pour into you. And maybe it's someone ahead, maybe sometimes that's not possible, maybe you're looking for somebody beside you that you're going to walk together and you're going to get together regularly and you're going to challenge each other and keep each other accountable and you're going to ask each other, are you, are you out there telling this story, being the psalmist, declaring his word and showing people that refuge is to be had in his son. Somebody in front or beside, somebody behind you that you're not just looking ahead at your own growth, but you're looking behind you at those coming up the pipe and you're saying, I need to pour into somebody five years maybe behind you. Maybe you haven't been in the faith that long, maybe you don't, haven't, this hasn't been your story that long. Somebody's behind you that needs to be grown in the faith to know your story and what

[67 : 52] God's doing in your life that you grow them in the faith. And then somebody who's not on this journey, who doesn't have this story as their own, to grab hold of somebody who's, who's, we talked of two ways and following the way of the world because they don't know the way of God. I haven't even heard of it yet.

Identify one. Commit to one, maybe for a year. Bring them and share this with them. Declare. Delight in his word. Take refuge in his son. In many ways, you do it in a number of ways. But tonight I want to take that one step further just in light of what we said about the faithfulness and love of God. This is bound up with a single thing. It's bound up with the story of God. The story of God shapes our praises. It shapes the promises. These aren't, we're not fickle promises about health and wealth.

It's promises that are sure and eternally significant. And it takes, it takes our, our, our, our problems and it makes them significant. You want to doubt, you want to have hard times, this is where to, this is where to find it. Is God real? Is he doing it? Will he do it? That's a problem to answer. Not whether you have a splinter in your foot or even if your life is going to be cut short. If this life is not all there is, that doesn't matter all that much. As much as we put the significance in it, it doesn't matter. The big thing matters. What will happen after? And then it, it, our prayers remember back to it. We're not only just praying these little prayers where we ask God for a toy truck. We're, we're, no, we're asking God to fulfill his story in us. So this idea of story, I just want to tell you, in those three relationships, you've got to come back to this story. We're all telling a story in life and, and, and some of our stories are probably just crazy that we, we think we're wrapped up in. But we're all telling a story and, and this is part of us, right? These superhero movies, this is coming out. Anybody see, anybody see Man of Steel this week? Anybody want to admit it?

Anybody looking forward to the sequel already? Oh yeah, okay. Um, well anyway, this is something I picked up. We were at the theater. We didn't get to see it because we went for our anniversary. Um, and, um, it wasn't out yet. All right. But can you read this, this caption? This was in the movie theater. Man of Steel, Earth's Savior. You see this? This is the stories we tell. We love comic book heroes, right? We love them because it's something innate in us. We're looking to be wrapped up in a story. You know the problem with these is there's always a sequel. There's always a sequel. The Man of Steel will never take care of the problems of the world. And that's not just because Hollywood wants to make more movie and more money on another movie. That's because he doesn't have what it takes.

And I love going to him. I really like these, these kind of superhero movies. But I wouldn't want to live in their city. Right? I wouldn't want to be in Spider-Man City where, where you're the guy who the bad guy's always coming to get. And Spider-Man's saving it, but never quite enough. So that the next time around, you're still getting thrown out of a train or whatever. It's not really good. And you know what happens when we, when we can't find our hope in superheroes? We look for them in villains.

[71 : 21] Right? Now the villains are saving the world because the superheroes couldn't do it. Okay. These are all stories. There's something innate in us looking for stories. What do you do in these three relationships? There's one thing, one central thing that should do anything. Whether you commit to these, these three relationships and you commit to meet with somebody, what do you do during that time? Whether you're praying or you crack open the Bible and you're reading it together, or you're just talking over tea, there's one thing that should shape all of it. You should be retelling the story.

Retelling our story because our story is a better story. Our story is a story of a God who's taking care of it. Who's doing something definitively and has done something definitively in our Christ.

And whether you're praying together that God would have his way in your life and in the lives of those who you touch, whether you're looking at who in my life can I go out and affect and be a part of and come alongside of and speak into their life because their lives are absolutely hopeless. They have nothing but comic book heroes. You're being poured into yourself. This is what we need. Retell the story.

Some of you are going to say, oh I can't tell the story. I don't even know the story that well. I'm going to get twist tied and all this other stuff and I'm going to go out and maybe somebody who's never heard the story, I'm going to tell them and I'm just going to confuse them. Well I tell you go out and tell them anyway and you're going to learn a whole lot about where the holes are in the story that you thought you knew and then come back and find the other two people that you're committing to and have them tell you the story and tell it back and forth and this is going to shape us as a community and change us and it's going to change our city because eventually Aberdeen is going to find out that it needs a hero and it's going to find out that everything it's ever set its eyes on, whether hero or villain never did the job. So three relationships tell the story and it affects everything. You pray together, you read the Bible together, you commit to just coffee every other week, tell the story. Put the football away for a minute and make sure that when you meet you tell the story.

We're going to close just by singing the final verses of this psalm.