

the TAKE HOME

Today's Scripture Passage: *Psalm 88*

1 O LORD, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you. 2 May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry. 3 For my soul is full of trouble and my life draws near the grave. 4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like a man without strength. 5 I am set apart with the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom you remember no more, who are cut off from your care. 6 You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths. 7 Your wrath lies heavily upon me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves. "Selah" 8 You have taken from me my closest friends and have made me repulsive to them. I am confined and cannot escape; 9 my eyes are dim with grief. I call to you, O LORD, every day; I spread out my hands to you. 10 Do you show your wonders to the dead? Do those who are dead rise up and praise you? "Selah" 11 Is your love declared in the grave, your faithfulness in destruction? 12 Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion? 13 But I cry to you for help, O LORD; in the morning my prayer comes before you. 14 Why, O LORD, do you reject me and hide your face from me? 15 From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death; I have suffered your terrors and am in despair. 16 Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me. 17 All day long they surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me. 18 You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the darkness is my closest friend.

Questions for Reflection, Discussion & Action

- In what ways are you tempted to emotionally disengage and “escape” from darkness without Christ's help? What are your escape routes?
- Do you tend to sanitize your prayers, holding back your true feelings? If so, why? What would you say to God if you weren't afraid to say anything?
- What does wrestling with God in prayer mean to you?
- Are you guilty of offering clichés and pat answers to those who are suffering? What have you learned from Psalm 88 that might help you to more effectively show God's grace to those in the dark?

For Further Reading:

- *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure* (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones)
- *Dark Night of the Soul* (St. John of the Cross)
- *When the Darkness Will Not Lift: Doing What We Can While We Wait for God and Joy* (John Piper)
- *God in the Dark: The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of Doubt* (Os Guinness)

Prayer Praxis (Practice):

- Set aside time to communicate with God honestly about your current circumstances. Don't hold anything back.
- Think of someone in your life that is going through a dark time. Make time to be with them and listen deeply to their laments.
- Choose a lament Psalm and pray it as your own (Ps. 22, 86, 120, 142).