

## Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 17

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke and his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 17, Communal Lament, Psalm 44.

Let's begin with prayer together. Father, we, by your grace would take our shoes off our feet as we recognize that we're on very holy ground in your sacred word. And we would humble ourselves before you and recognize our uncleanness. Thank you that in your holiness, you purified us, you sanctified us.

You made us your holy nation, your holy people. You consecrated us. I thank you, Lord, for the refreshing of my friends who have come, each different one come and listen to your word.

They're an encouragement to me. I thank you for them. Thank you for Bill Mounce and this unique opportunity for students around the world to dig into your word with some depth and savor its meat.

And hopefully, they'll find it as honey, sweeter than the honeycomb and more healing than honey. Meet our every need. Meet our need in presenting your word today, in Christ's name.

Amen. All right. Well, our assignment today is going to be Psalm 44.

I want to turn there in your notes. There's a, I don't know if on your syllabus, I give a page that goes with it, but anyway, it's on page, no, it's no pages, 222 of your notes. So to orient ourselves again, we are looking at different approaches.

After we gave a lecture on hermeneutics I think you can now see how important that is, where we said there were any object has to generate the appropriate method of study. We noted that the Scripture has three aspects to it. There is all Scripture inspired of God.

There is God who is the ultimate author and he is without error. He is perfection. He inspired the human writer.

And we have this wonderful mixture of the word of God and perfectly the word of man. And they come together in what Welford called his concursive theory, fully the word of God, fully the word of man. And then there is, and we have to come with sympathy.

We have to come with faith. We're meeting God in spirit. And so, to meet God in Spirit, we must come in the Spirit to have a relationship with him so that his Spirit can speak to us.

So that was fundamental. And we saw there is the text itself and the text is subject to scientific investigation with laws of philology and so forth, and word study and grammar and historical background and all that we're doing in the course. We're able to do textual work, but we must never forget the spiritual aspect of it.

Ultimately, we must come with the Holy Spirit to the word of God. And then we moved into different approaches. We look at the historical approach and we saw the dominant person in the Psalter is the king.

In fact, we're going to see it today in these psalms. I think the average person reading it doesn't realize that the Psalms are mostly about the king and Israel is identified with the king and they're about Christ. We are identified with Christ and pray these prayers with him.

That's a little different way, I think, than we normally read the Psalms or they have been read. Then we got into the form critical approach in which we noticed that we can group psalms into different kinds of psalms. So, there are four different types of psalms. There's the hymn of praise, there's the song of grateful praise, and then there is the petition or lament psalms.

And fourthly, there are instruction psalms that along the way an editor puts a psalm in to encourage whoever's reading through the working with the psalms to be encouraged, to be ethical because hymns without ethics and life is detestable to God. We're constantly being reminded of the need to be righteous.

We define righteousness in the Psalter as a complete dependence upon God. It's not adherence to the law, but rather its dependence upon God who lives out the law in us. The righteous are those who are concerned about the community and they do not revenge themselves.

The righteous are dependent upon God. They're often depicted as the poor, as the afflicted, and the dependent, the lowly. And so, these are the petitions.

It has to be righteous when we come in praise to God, hence these instruction psalms are what I'm talking about. Then we focused on the, and then the third, there is a praise and a grateful praise and petition psalms. And then there are instruction psalms.

So, we went through the hymns of praise and we saw their motifs and what's involved. And we got into the doxological theology that in their songs of praise, God

is using their songs of praise in order to teach us theology about himself. And we looked through this wonderful data about God's sublime attributes that they are celebrating in the reality of life.

And then we looked at a song of, so we looked and then our approach has been to look at it broadly and then specifically. So, after the songs of praise, we took up, I think, what were they? We did Psalm 8 and Psalm 100. Those were our two songs of praise that we considered.

And our song of grateful praise was Psalm 92. And there were other many other psalms, but 15, but we did one. And the psalmist has conquered his enemy and it's an assurance that the righteous will flourish.

And we looked at that in Psalm 92. So, that was a song of grateful praise. And then we got into petition psalms.

And we noticed that they're very concerned about the enemy. 47 of the 50 petition psalms make reference to the enemy. And it's really spiritual warfare because the enemy is the wicked, which is the opposite of the righteous.

So, instead of being dependent upon God, the wicked are dependent upon themselves and they will avenge themselves rather than look to God. And they are self-absorbed rather than loving God and loving their neighbor. In essence, they're selfish, and self-serving in what they do.

And this is the wicked in this psalm. So, we talked about that. And also, we talked about imprecatory prayers where the psalmist will pray that they will be judged for the wrong that they did.

And we saw that those prayers are ethical, but they're not appropriate for the church today because this is the age of grace. This is not the age of judgment. And we wrestled with that.

And then we took up as our method to look at it very broadly. And then we centered on individual laments. And we looked at the very first one, which was Psalm 3. And then we did yesterday on the Great Messianic Psalm of Jesus on the cross, which is an individual lament.

And I think that's where we ended. We have not done a communal lament. And in your notes, I've given you two communal laments, Psalm 90 and Psalm 44.

But I think I'll limit myself to just one, Psalm 44. And that's where we are. So, I think we now have a context of where we are in our course.

It's a psalm, you could call it a prayer for martyrs. These psalms of lament give us a theology that enables us to go through suffering. And we noticed that the dominant mood of the psalm is lament.

A third of the Psalter are these lament psalms. It's a dominant mood. And we noticed from Professor Mobley that suffering is not marginal.

It's not something we put behind us. Suffering is absolutely essential to the spiritual life. So, these psalms teach us a lot about suffering and how to relate to suffering.

It might be helpful to distinguish between deserved sufferings and undeserved sufferings because we don't have too much of a problem with deserved sufferings. By deserved sufferings, I mean, that we are punished for violating some law. We all understand that.

So, if I exceed the speed limit, I might feel the anguish of seeing flashing red lights in my rearview mirror. I think maybe you're more pious than I am, but I suspect most have had that experience of flashing red lights in your rearview mirror. You not only have the anxiety of the policeman, but then you might feel the financial pinch of being fined a couple of hundred dollars or having your insurance penalized.

So, we understand that deserved sufferings are where you have violated some law. So, the other side of it though, and so there are some, we call these penitential psalms, like Psalm 51, we looked at, and that is, it's a deserved suffering. In his case, the suffering was really his conscience.

He couldn't live with that burden on him. He needed salvation from his guilt. Also, he was under a sentence of death, but he had submitted himself to a sentence of death.

We saw the amazing grace of God in deserved suffering and God forgiving David. Undeserved sufferings are where you have violated no law. So, you haven't violated a law and all of a sudden you see flashing red lights in your rearview mirror.

You've done nothing wrong. Then you're penalized besides, and you know, it's unjust. It's unfair and that's undeserved suffering.

And that's how the psalmists are. They are, well, there are two kinds of undeserved sufferings. Undeserved sufferings are of two kinds.

They can be because you're innocent or because you're doing good, as a missionary might be martyred. So, it's one thing if it's very unjust, if the policeman stops me, fines me, I've done nothing wrong. I've violated no law.

It's just unjust, but he does it. But let us push it on the other side that it is because I'm doing good. So, let's suppose I stop to allow a crippled person to cross in front of me.

And in that act, now the policeman stops me and gives me a ticket and penalizes me because I'm doing good. That's extreme. And so, that's what we have in the psalter.

We have the innocent suffering, but then it goes beyond that as in Psalm 44, they are dealing with, actually, because you could see this in verse 22 if you have it. Yet for your sake, we face death all day long. We are considered a sheep to be slaughtered.

This is undeserved suffering for doing good. They are suffering because they are serving God. And where do you recognize that verse? Yes, Paul uses it in Romans chapter eight.

He picks that right up. See, I'm saying, I think Christ and the apostles have memorized this Psalter. I'm amazed at how Paul and the apostles can just pick out these verses.

This is a unique verse where you have, for your sake, we face death all day long. He's saying that's true of the apostolic community because they were doing good and preaching the gospel. And because Peter healed the lame man and carried on the works of Jesus, Peter was put in jail.

And eventually, they ended up as martyrs and that's worse. So, this is really undeserved suffering because you're doing good. And so, using the analogy of the policeman, I tried to help us understand the different kinds of sufferings from deserved sufferings to undeserved and the undeserved to distinguish between the innocent and those who are actually doing good, like missionaries, and they suffer because they are doing good.

So, this is a psalm for martyrs and it gives them truths to live by. Unless we have these truths to live by, when we believe in God as just, and we go through this experience of unjust suffering, whether innocent or because we're doing good, we're in danger of making a shipwreck of our faith. Where's God? Why is it unjust? God is just.

God is good. And here I am suffering. And there are people who make shipwreck of their faith because they don't know how to handle that.

The psalmist himself faced that. He almost lost his faith. You could see that in Psalm 73 if you want to turn there with me, that opens up the second book of the Psalter.

And this is a psalm by Asaph. And he says, and you see, he starts off with them, he doesn't deny God. There's always praise.

He starts off with a note of praise. Surely God is good to Israel. So, whatever he acts beneficially and he acts in a style that's beautiful.

And he affirms that, but to those who are pure in heart, but as for me, my feet had almost slipped. That is off the ladder of faith. I had nearly lost my foothold for I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

And he describes them, what they're like. And then he says in verse 12, this is what the wicked are like. They're always free of care.

They go on to amass wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. And because of that, because of the prosperity of the wicked and his own suffering, in his case, innocent, not because he was doing good.

But he says in verse 2, I almost slipped. I almost lost my foothold. I almost left the path of faith and righteousness.

And he makes an honest confession. And what happens to him, which is his own study. And maybe in this course, later on, I'll do Psalm 73.

He goes into the sanctuary and then he sees their end and he gets a total picture of it. And that's what happens in Psalm 73. So, when we go through these times of undeserved suffering, we're in danger of losing our faith and just walking off the path.

If you saw the movie, Miracles from Heaven, this woman, when her daughter had this, what appeared to be a fatal ailment, said, I could no longer believe in God. And that's a not unusual thing.

Moody Institute used to put out science pictures. And I remember one in particular, I don't know what it had to do with science, but they had a dialogue between a pilot and he was a novice. And he, I think one of the first times he flew solo. And he is in correspondence with the controllers at, I think Colorado Spring Airport.

And everything on the tape is going normal. They stay on the beam and you're on the right altitude. You have the right, everything's fine.

They're assuring him everything's okay. And all of a sudden he says, I'm in a cloud. I can't see where I am.

And they said that's fine. Just keep going. You'll be all right.

You'll come out of the cloud. But in that cloud where he lost visual contact, he panicked. And the next thing you hear on the tape, I'm in a spin.

Then they say to him, let go of the stick. The plane will right itself. He says, I can't.

And I'm in a spin. And he's in panic mode at this point. And the control tower assures him.

This happens three or four times. Each time he's crying out in panic because he'd lost visual contact. He's in this cloud.

He's afraid. And the last time he says, I can't. And that's the end of the tape.

He was shipwrecked because he lost visual contact. And I thought to myself, that is a picture of the life of faith. When we lose rational contact, we can't see where we are.

It doesn't make any sense. That's when we're in danger of crashing and people do. What we have to do when we're in a cloud and we lose, in the metaphor, rational contact, we don't understand what God is doing.

What we have to do is switch to the control, to the panel of our instruments. We have to fly by instrument at that point. And what the Psalms give us are truths to live by.

We have to fly by instrument through this time when we've lost rational contact. It doesn't make any sense, but there are truths we can lay hold of. Psalm 44, like all these Psalms, give us truths to lay hold of.

It's kind of the instrument panel by which we can guide our ship through the crises of life. So that's how I read the Psalm. And as we'll read it, think to yourself, what's enabling this Psalmist as he's going through undeserved sufferings for doing good.

Why does he not make a shipwreck? And the Psalm ends up within the Psalter. And at the end of the Psalm, his situation is not resolved. And there hasn't been an answer yet as we would normally think of an answer.

So, let's read Psalm 222. It's of the sons of Korach, a maskil, which would mean making prudent I don't know why we have several Psalms marked maskil because all the Psalms make us prudent. So, I think I really don't know what this is.

I know what it means etymologically, but I don't know why it's uniquely the Psalm because every Psalm is a maskil as far as I'm concerned. So, therefore, I don't

understand. There must be something else going on here, but we don't know what it means.

There weren't words in the Psalms. We don't know what they mean. Most of these technical terms, we don't really know what they mean.

By the way, we don't know what Selah means either. The way you normally would study a word like Selah, you might go to the ancient versions, like the Septuagint or the Latin or the Targum. And I don't think they knew what it meant either because they translated everlasting.

I think they may have been reading a different word. The word Netzach means that, not Selah. And then you look to the rabbis, can they help us out? They don't know what it means.

Then you might look to cognate languages today and scholarly work. Does anybody know what Selah means? 60 different definitions have been proposed in the literature and there's no consensus. So, I conclude, we don't know.

And at this point, we can't know. So, I let it go. I don't know why they are.

People say they mean to heighten the voice or something like that. They do seem to be at pauses, but some occur right in the middle of a verse. I don't understand the pause in the middle of a verse.

So, I really don't know what Selah means. In the NIV, we didn't translate it in 1984 because it was a non-meaningful word, maybe a word for the musician, but we're now going to put it back in because it's in the text. But understand nobody knows what it means.

Okay. All right. So that's the word meschiel. I don't know what that means for sure either. We have heard with our ears, O God, our ancestors have told us what you did in their days and days long ago. With your hand, you drove out the nations and planted our ancestors.

You crushed the peoples and made our ancestors flourish. By the word, yeah, notice the parallelism. You read in parallelism and notice how they're related.

Notice 2A, you drove out. Notice the escalation in 2B, you crushed. Notice the development from planted to flourishing.

You could see what's going on there. When you put on the lens of reading poetry, you begin to see how it's being escalated and intensified as you read through it. So, I just noticed that.



I'm just encouraging you when you're reading your Psalms that notice parallelism and it can be a rich meditation upon it. It was not by their sword, verse 3, it was not by their sword they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory. It was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face for you loved them.

You are my King and my God who decrees victories for Jacob. Through you, we push back our enemies. Through your name, we trample our foes.

I put no trust in my bow. My sword does not bring me victory, but you give us victory over our enemies. You put our adversaries to shame.

In God, we make our boasts all day long and we will praise your name forever. But now you have rejected and humbled us. You no longer go out with our armies.

You made us retreat before the enemy and our adversaries have plundered us. You gave us up to be devoured like sheep and have scattered us among the nations. You sold your people for a pittance gaining nothing from their sale.

You have made us reproach to our neighbors, the scorn and derision of those who are around us. You have made us a byword among the nations and the people shake their heads at us. I live in disgrace all day long and my face is covered with shame at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me because of the enemy who is bent on revenge.

All this came upon us, though we had not forgotten you. We had not been false to your covenant. Our hearts had not turned back.

Our feet had not strayed from your path, but you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals. You covered us over with deep darkness. If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign God, would not God have discovered it since he knows the secrets of the heart? Yet for your sake, we face death all day long.

We are considered as sheep for the slaughter. Awake Lord, why do you sleep? Rouse yourself. Do not reject us forever.

Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression? We are brought down to the dust. Our bodies cling to the ground. Rise up and help us, rescue us because of your unfailing love.

For the direct of music to the tune of Louis." And that's the psalm. Now we've been in form discussion and motifs. And I think you can divide the psalm into these motifs.

You have a direct address. He's talking to God, the rightful God. And then I think you could see, well, where would you put the confidence and praise as you read the psalm? How many verses? Where do you see confidence and praise in Psalm one through eight? Right.

And we'll come back to that. And actually, what we have here in one through eight, the verse one, if you looked at your Hebrew, you could see, I didn't play it out on the page. It's a quatrain.

There are basically two ABs in that particular one. The same is true in verse three. All right.

Then what do we get after then, and I think you would say, that's praise. We will boast in your name all day long. And I think also it functions as confidence.

Our father's trusted in you and you gave them the land. So, I think you could see it's also, so I put it together as confidence and praise. So, what happens then in verse nine? Lament.

Yeah, that's where you get the lament. And this may be considered a complaint as well. Now what you have here, there's a new motif that you don't get in many psalms.

And that lament goes through verse 16. Then you get a new motif, which is unique. Well, this is what makes it the suffering for doing good, that next step, because here it is protest.

And you have a new motif of protest and that runs from 17 through. And how far would you say there is the protest? And where does petition begin? Right. Beginning at 23, you begin Awake O Lord.

And that begins the petition. So, I think once you have the lens of understanding, you begin to discretize and understand the composition of how it's being put together. Now, in addition to that, so we have in verses one through eight, we have the confidence and praise, and verses nine through 16, we have the lament and 17 through 22, we have the protest and 23 through 26, we have the petition.

Now what's interesting here is the structure of the psalm. It seems to me there is such a, in all these psalms, with all of their emotions, anguish of heart, there's always this tremendous symmetry and structure that shows they're not panicked like the pilot we talked about, whose emotions took over his reason. Their emotions have not taken over their cogent thinking.

And they think clearly. This particular psalm, I said, there are two lines in verse one, and there's two lines in verse three, which makes it in verses one through eight in the praise and confidence, we actually have 10 lines of Hebrew poetry. Then in verses nine through 16, we have eight lines of Hebrew poetry.

If you count it out nine through 16, I hope it's eight. Then in the protest, you have six lines of Hebrew poetry. That would be 17 through 22.

Then in the petition, we have four lines of Hebrew poetry. So you go 10 lines, eight lines, six lines, four lines. I don't think that's accidental.

I think it shows this psalm is in full control of what he's doing. In all of his anguish, and he's boasting in God, in all of that, his emotions have not destroyed his way, his ability to think. And he says, I see serenity and composure and something else is going on.

Proposed by a, I don't know, he used to live in Ritterbosch at Free University, Amsterdam. He says, it's in the shape of a ziggurat. And I give you a picture of a ziggurat on page 224.

There's a ziggurat and you can see it has a big base. Then you have another plateau on top of that. Then you have the pavilion on the top.

That's where the prayer was made. It was at the very top. This psalm seems to be constructed like a ziggurat, with one section being built upon the other.

The climactic moment is the petition at the end. My friend did this for me and he showed me, Bruce, the poet climbing up the ziggurat. So, that gives us an overall outline of the psalm.

I think when you understand motifs, then we can begin to do a little better work. It's not that we didn't understand the psalm and we could use the psalm as Paul did, but I think we can take it just another step. And that's what this course is about.

It's a bit more advanced. I've been taking this poem and reading it. It's really interesting when you read through all the stuff that you've provided here.

It really amplifies these psalms. All the background material, Bruce, that you've pulled together. That God should take somebody like me who didn't even know there were seminaries and make me a professor.

I'm doing this kind of work. It's just amazing. Well, you know, that context yesterday, you know, over in Samuel, where he went through the whole story of David and all those players, all those things.

Well, man, it just made Psalm 51 explode. Bless you. Bless all of you because you have a heart for it and you celebrate and you love the truth.

And that's why it's a privilege. I mean, I could have taught in a university, but I didn't want to teach in a university. I wanted to teach with God's people and I want to prepare pastors and people who love the word.

I didn't want to teach people who wouldn't spiritually empathize with it. That was not my calling. So, this is my calling is to feed the church and that's my shepherding.

And that's where I've ended up. Thank you for the encouragement. The trouble with that is I know how much more I could be doing.

And now this is not pious talk. I realized I will really say, having done what I did, I didn't do that well. That's how I honestly feel.

So, thanks for that. Well, anyway, all right. Now, furthermore, for far as structure is concerned, it falls into each of these 10, 8, 6, and 4 fall into two halves.

You can see that in the praise and confidence section in the first five lines, which is verses one through three, he's looking at the past and why he has confidence from the past. And in the next five lines in verses four through eight, he expresses his own confidence and we move into the present. So, you start with verse one, we have heard with our ears, our God, our ancestors have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago.

But then that shifts to verse nine, you are my King, my God. And through you, we push back enemies and he takes them to the present. So, he goes from the past to the present.

You got five and five. I don't think it's accidental. In the lament section in verses nine through 16, those eight lines also divide into two halves.

The first four deal with his defeat on the battlefield. You rejected and humbled us, and don't go out with our armies. We made us retreat before the enemy.

In the next four lines, he talks about his humiliation, how he feels he's been humiliated because he represents the living God and he's been defeated and he feels ashamed. Again, Jesus must have felt all of that when he was on the cross and they shame him and rebuke him and so forth, but he knew who he was. So, the 10 goes into a five and a five.

The eight goes into a four and a four. And the protest in verses 17 through 22 is you have the protest that we were faithful. We haven't turned back.

This is undeserved suffering. We haven't violated your law. So, we know it's undeserved suffering.

So, you've got three lines where he says that, and then he has three lines that prove it. That's in verses 20 through 22. In other words, if there is any fault, if it is deserved suffering, then he expects a prophet to stand up and say, you are the man and you're guilty.

And so, as in the case of Joshua and I, and he pours out his face, he's humbled. He's on the ground. They've gone down into defeat.

And God says a prophetic word, there's sin in the camp. But there's no prophetic word. There's no condemnation.

It's simply presenting us with the reality of what saints must go through and they must live by faith. So, this must have been a great comfort to the apostles, all of whom are going down into a martyr's death and preaching the word of God. And so has this king and his army gone down.

So, it's a great word of comfort to us. It's why I call it a martyr's prayer, giving us truths to live by in our suffering. The petition also falls into two parts.

You have questions, why do you sleep? Why do you hide your face? And then the reality, we're brought down to the deaths, rise up, help us, rescue us because of your unfailing love. So, that's the overall structure of the Psalms. And even the way you have even like a four and four that will divide into a two and a two and so forth.

It's just, and the six goes into a three and a three and so forth. Bruce, do you think that in our day and age of prosperity, materialism, health and wealth, and access to great medical stuff, do you think we have a misunderstanding of suffering? I really do. I don't think, I think part of the problem is we don't risk ourselves enough to suffer.

So, I think that's true of me. I don't say that. I mean, I think that I don't fully enter into the sufferings of Christ because I don't risk myself in my comfort zone.

So, I think that's part of the reason for it. I think there's been a wrong emphasis on health, wealth, and prosperity. We celebrate Easter, but we don't celebrate Good Friday.

Everybody's happy about Easter, but no, Good Friday is not a dominant note. In my new tradition, I'm in, we have Lent for 40 days in which you deny yourself to enter into suffering. For 40 days, you live in Lent.

For 50 days, you live in Pentecost, which I think is helpful. So, I've never, coming out of my older tradition, I never, that to me belonged to some kind of Roman Catholic where I wasn't, hadn't been. So, I didn't identify with it.

I've never had an Ash Wednesday, but now I go to Ash Wednesday to remind myself of my death and the darkness that life can be. You live in Lent where you suffer. I think that is spiritually good.

I've learned it's spiritually good. I'm learning that the liturgy has spiritual values that I had missed entirely. So, I think that would help.

That's going to keep you from that wealth, health, and prosperity sort of thinking because you're really constantly, I mean, if you fast and you get hungry, you don't have an idea of health, wealth, and prosperity. You recognize it's delayed and you're looking forward to Sunday when you can celebrate again because you don't, you fast on Friday, but you don't fast on Sunday sort of a thing. So, I think that the whole liturgy has some value to it.

Well, people are praying for the sick. We're just praying that anything that disturbs us, the disturbance would go away. We don't want it to go away.

Lord, you've got to get us away. When he's undeserved or deserved or whatever, he's dealing with you spiritually. Right.

It gives us the hope that he will answer prayer in this life. But we know, and this is why without faith, you cannot please God. We live for Easter Sunday and Easter Sunday is beyond death.

We live for the eternal city. We don't live for this city. We live for the eternal city, who for the hope that was before him endured the cross.

And it was, that's Paul, he's enduring everything. And he says, if there's no resurrection, we are utter fools for Christ. And that verse that's so difficult where people abuse it, where he says, why would they be baptized for the dead? And this is where people make a mistake by bad exegesis.

So, you have the Mormons and they baptized for the dead thinking that somebody else can be baptized and take the place of the dead and give them a baptism. And what Paul was talking about, is that here you have people who are dying and

suffering for Christ and they're martyrs. Why would anybody be baptized to take their place? That's what he means by that.

So, the only reason you would be baptized and identify with that and take their place and become a martyr is because you know there's something beyond death, even as it was for the martyrs before you. So, we have to live in light of the resurrection and not of this world. I appreciate it.

I appreciate your interaction because you prayed that I'd be refreshed and you all refreshed me by God's grace. It was our Sunday morning prayer. Be refreshed.

And I have been refreshed in every way. We'll drop it there, but it's been a great refreshment. All right.

Now let's just go through it. Now that we have a good idea of where we're going in this psalm, we've covered, I think, some of the essential elements. Let me just ask then, I said that when we go through times of undeserved suffering and we lose rational contact and we likened it to a pilot who finds himself in a cloud and he loses visual contact and he can crash his plane and he has to learn to fly by instruments.

So, I'm saying, what are the instruments? What's our instrument panel telling us that enables us to fly the craft through this time we lose rational contact when we seem so unfair and so unjust. So, what are some truths that came through to you as you're reading through it? And we'll come back and just think about it for a moment. Do you want answers? Yes, I do.

And you're talking about this psalm? From this psalm. As I'm just looking over the psalm in general, I would say, when you are in that place, the confidence, scriptures, or I mean, the confidence section. And what do you get out of the confidence section? You said something very significant there in the confidence section.

What gave him confidence? And you said the scriptures. And that's what he did. Our fathers have told us and we beat up on the fathers because they didn't teach the next generation, but there were some who must've passed on.

So, what he does is our fathers have told us, and it is the scriptures and that history that sustain him. Because as I say, God has sustained his church through all of these martyrdoms and all of this confusion and all of this persecution. We're still here.

And he goes right back to Joshua. Now this has to be written before the exile because he's still a king in battle. This doesn't happen after the exile.

So, this has to be written before 600 BC. And Joshua is about 1200 BC. So, it's already 600 years old.

But anyway, it's already another way. We go back to Joshua 2,600 years ago, the saints were already going back to Joshua. So, it's a common source of strength, spiritual strength to us.

So, I think, Melanie, that's a wonderful answer that he went back to scripture, but he didn't have the full, I mean, and we have the whole revelation of God. So, we have an even greater than Joshua. We have the true Joshua and he conquered death.

So it is that tradition that can help to sustain us, the tradition of the saints throughout the ages. Then you have the great roll call of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 of all those different ones who had that great roll call of faith. What I find so interesting, I mentioned, you have the first one is Abel. The second one is Enoch and the third one is Noah.

Abel believed God and what happened to him? Murdered, martyred from the blood of Abel to Zechariah, the son of Barakai, which was the last we've mentioned in the Bible. Abel was murdered. If there is no resurrection, then Cain won and Abel, if there's none.

See that text is assuming God is just. The only way it can be just is it had to be after his death. That's the very first story in the Bible where the righteous are put to death.

That's the first story. That's incredible to me. That's where you start.

So, it really shows you that they had hoped something that may have been vague and not clear until the resurrection, but in their hearts, they knew who their God was. Well, that was his response. And the next one is Enoch.

What happened to him? Translated, he didn't die. So, the first one dies. The second one didn't die.

And what happened to Noah? Everybody else died. And so, these are the first great heroes of faith. And so, what's normative? I would like to think it's Enoch.

And if I was sadistic, I might go with Noah, but I don't like Abel. So, you can't judge life by the consequences because some people are martyred and some people are translated and some people go through a flood. The only thing they all have in common is faith and they please God.

God was pleased in his own sovereignty that he would reward their faith differently. But they all end up beyond death with Enoch and are with God. They will all end up there.



All right. So, it's a great history that we have behind us here. It's given us a history that they're all kind of experienced.

So, they go back to Joshua, that wonderful experience. That's what we're reading about. We have heard with our ears and somebody had to tell them.

Our ancestors have told us. So, thank God for the, as I put in the notes, for parents who were not tongue-tied and could speak to their children and communicate. They told him what they did in their days.

He says already, this is before the exile and days long ago. Amazing. With your hand, you drove out the nations and you planted our ancestors and you crushed the peoples and made our ancestors flourish.

We commented on the parallelism and how that works. But we're looking back, obviously at Joshua and they took the land that God had given them because the time of grace for the Canaanites had ended and the time of judgment had come. God replaced them with his holy people.

He crushed them. But by contrast, he made the ancestors flourish. Then he says, it was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their own arm bring them the victory.

It was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face for you loved them. So, Joshua had a sword, but there was also tremendous power. I mean, with Joshua, you had the walls of Jericho falling flat.

That was chapter six, but against I, he used the sword. But the sword was ineffective without God's grace behind it. God would not make it effective when it was being used for all nationalism and selfish interests.

That's what we get out of the Achan story. Then you have the story of the Gibeonites, you have the story of the five kings of the south and to destroy them, you have the tremendous miracle where God made the sun stand still and the moon stand still. I understand that to mean that the sun, they were coming down off the central height down and toward Aijalon down in the valley.

I think what happened is the sun was blinding the Canaanites. So, you have the moon, the sun behind them, the moon in front of them. I think the Canaanites were blinded.

I think that's why Joshua commanded the sun to stand still because now the sun was fighting against them. But that's the wonderful book of Joshua. But now notice what happens in their own dialogue with it.

Notice the going back and forth between the I and we. You see, you are my king, my God, who decrees victories for Jacob. And now we, through you, push back our enemies.

Through your name, we trample our foes. Now the I, I put no trust in my bow. My sword does not bring me victory, but you, and now we shift to the, in the odd verses, we shift to the we and the us.

And so I think the most plausible explanation to me is who is the I with this army? The only most plausible person is the king who leads the army. Again, I end up with the Royal Psalm in its own way. Once that's open to you, you begin to see this is about the king and his army.

They've gone down in a humiliating defeat, just like it seems as though Jesus and his army went down to a humiliating defeat on Good Friday and they all scattered from him. And he's confessing that his strength is in the Lord. But in this case, it goes back and forth.

You are my king. Through you, we push back our enemies. I put no trust in my bow.

My sword does not bring me victory. So, what he's saying is I have total confidence in you. I'm not trusting in myself.

He is an exemplar of rectitude. This is holy war at its best. Though he's conducting holy war with integrity and this is saying it's by faith.

They fought this battle by faith. And in the protest, they didn't violate any, there's no sin in the camp. So, this is a holy army that has gone down into defeat.

It's amazing. We have a psalm like this. This is a communicant of God's people for they've gone down into defeat and they're getting truths by which to live in the midst of it.

They're not giving up a life of faith. They're not going to say, well, God, you let us down. We'd better do it on our own strength and forget about it or go to another, something else we'll trust.

No, we've gone down to defeat, but we're not giving up on God in the midst of it. Almost all the stories in the Bible are stories about being in adversity and overcoming adversity through faith. Almost all the stories are in adversity and triumphing in the midst of it by faith.

Well, I think we've gotten some truths here by which to live when we're going through times of undeserved sufferings. Now we come to the lament and you can see he begins with the two parts of it, the defeat and then the humiliation of defeat. It's really in quite literal terms in verses 9 and 10, and then very metaphorical terms to show us the extent of the defeat in verses 11 and 12.

So, in more literal terms, you have rejected us and humbled us. You no longer go out with our armies. You made us retreat before the enemy and our adversaries have plundered us.

Then he uses the metaphor, you gave us to be devoured like sheep, have scattered us among the nations. You sold your people for a pittance, gaining nothing from their sale. What does that mean to you? You sold your people for a pittance.

What would that mean? It seems to me what he's saying, we lost our army and they devoured us and you sold us and we got nothing from the enemy. It was for a pittance. We didn't kill them.

They killed us. That's how I understand it. Just for pittance.

None of the enemy, they came out flourishing, prospering, and they plundered us. This is, as you say, not health, wealth, and gospel, prosperity, gospel by a long shot that we have here. Then comes his humiliation because he's representing the living God and he's the king.

I'm ashamed of where I am. He's very honest with his emotions. That's why the Psalms are loved by people because they're honest.

So, he says, you've made us a byword, us. And then, oh, verses 13 and 14, it deals with the army. You have made us a reproach to our neighbors, the scorn and derision of those around us.

You have made us a byword among them. We're just one big joke to them. He wanted to have a joke about an army.

And sometimes we joke about certain armies and they just don't seem to be able to fight. So, they become the butt of the world's jokes. And now you have the king and he lives in disgrace and he blushes shame.

My face is covered with shame. I think that means I'm blushing with embarrassment at what has happened. At the taunts of those who reproach and revile me because of the enemy who has bent on revenge.

Now comes the protest. And it's a protest that we have not broken the covenant. This is undeserved sufferings.

All this came upon us, though we had not forgotten you. And then the word forget means basically like you have to remember, remember. The opposite of remembering is forgetting, but really forgetting is a moral thing.

It entails to some extent, dismember. In other words, we did not dismember ourselves. We have remembered.

Now it's a little bit too extreme, but it helps to understand what's involved in forgetting because you're dismembering yourself from that history. We have not forgotten. We have not been false to your covenant, the 10 commandments that is.

They have loved God with all their hearts. They do not have idols and images. They have not misused God's name.

I take it they have kept the Sabbath before the Lord and they haven't committed adultery or theft or murder or false witnessing. It's a holy people that are at stake here. Our feet have not strayed from your path, but you crushed us, made us the haunt of jackals, and so forth.

Before we did that, I skipped something. What do you get out of, what truth did you get out of the laments section? Do you get any truths by which to live? We got out of the confidence, the history, the scriptures, the history. God has a great, as I put it, great track record.

There's a tremendous history behind us. That history is a handmaid to our faith to sustain us. What truth do you get out of the lament? It looks pretty hopeless.

It looks pretty helpless. It looks pretty helpless, sure to us. That's a good point.

That's the reality. Well, I think for myself and a lot of us because of our prosperity, you know, theology when troubles come, we say, you left me God. Right.

Well, that's the honesty. What I'm asking is what gives us confidence? Well, that's what's going on. What I get out of it is God's sovereignty.

He didn't doubt God was sovereign over the situation. That's what I get out of it. Notice verse nine, you did it.

10, you, 11, you, 12, you, 13, you, you can't miss it. You, you, you, you, God did it. He never doubted God's sovereignty.

So, whatever suffering we're going through, be assured God had a design before it. He doesn't know what the design is. In most cases, we don't know, but he didn't doubt God was in control.

It wasn't out of hand. I think that's an important truth to lay hold of for martyrs. God is in charge of all that's going on with ISIS in his own way.

Pardon? It sustains our faith, our anchoring in the sovereignty of God. Amen. Strengthens our, whatever's going on, whether it's here, whatever's going on, even in our own lives.

That's what they did. And I would even say to add on to that, our trust. It builds your faith, but to me, that trust deep down that I know that he's sovereign.

Yeah. And because of that, we can trust in the midst of it. And that's our response to it.

Amen. I love it because in the middle of a protest, he's declaring his faith. And wouldn't it be if we did the same thing instead of just protesting and complaining?

We don't couple it with faith. Amen. And that God, whatever trial I'm going through, you put me here and I don't understand.

I'm in a cloud. I've lost rational contact, but I don't doubt you are sovereign over it all. And that's a tremendous statement of faith.

That's awesome. Just awesome. Isn't it? What an encouragement.

What an encouragement these songs are to us, to the life of faith. You know, Bruce, a couple of months ago, for some reason, I was led in my readings. I just camped on something on 75, and 75th Psalm, where you get talking about, you forgot this.

God did all these things. Tell your children and tell your children to tell their children. So, along the way, they stopped.

They just remembered. They stopped telling their children. It's a mixture, isn't it? Because in Joshua, it complains that they didn't tell their children, but here it's quite clear that there's also truth.

Some did tell their children. So, you have to put the two together to get the full picture of it. All right.

Now we came and this, the next one is, all this came, we had not forgotten you. And now our hearts had not turned back. We're dealing with our very hearts of loving God.

And this is faith. Our feet had not strayed, but what you did to the Canaanites, you've done to us. You crushed us, made us hard for jackals, covered us over with deep darkness.

So, then the proof of it is, if we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign God, would not God have discovered it since he knows the secrets of the heart? So, it isn't just outward observance. Inwardly, we have walked with integrity, faith, and love.

And he's talking about our hearts are right with God and God does not condemn their hearts. And God does not accuse them that you're outwardly hypocritical as in Psalm 50, for example. And Paul picks it up.

Yet for your sake, we face death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. What I take comfort in is what the psalm is all about that this godly army and king goes through the same suffering that I may be going through.

I have a king who has suffered with me. And I think it speaks of Jesus because he has gone through this suffering and he has been rejected and he has been shamed. They all mocked him.

Why don't you get down off the cross? But he had to do the work of God and his work entailed being on the cross and dying a humble, shameful death. So out of the first section, I get Scripture and history. In the second section, I get sovereignty.

The third section, I get an example that sustains my faith. Then we come to the last part, awake Lord, why do you sleep? Arouse yourself. Do not reject this forever.

And he's just saying, this is the way it appears. This is part of the life of faith that God seems asleep. Sometimes we knock on the door, as we'll see as Lewis said until our knuckles are bloody raw and the door never opens up.

And I add to that, I step back and I look upstairs and all the lights are out. That's how he feels. Jesus felt that on the cross, abandoned.

Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression? And then utter humiliation. It was the serpent who was supposed to be in the dust, but we're in the dust. We are brought down to the dust.

Our bodies cling to the ground like a snake. We are so humiliated. Rise up and help rescue us because of your unfailing love.

And that's the end of the psalm. It leaves us where we sometimes feel even in death, it's the end, unresolved. Then it's given over for the director of music.

It's in the canon of Scripture because God eventually answered him, but not to the psalmist. In the psalm, which tells us we must live by faith, even though we don't see the answer here and now. So, it's a great prayer for martyrs that we've just been through.

It's one of the great, and we're in the company of the great apostle Paul in this psalm.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke and his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 17, Communal Lament, Psalm 44.