

Weekly Summary: God Shines In Our Darkness

This Psalm is uncharacteristic in that it has a remarkably dark ending. Heman cries out to the Lord and prays to him, yet God hides his face from him. This man is surrounded by darkness and there is no light getting through. What is a prayer like this doing in the Bible? Rather be naive about the inevitable disappointment in life, we can learn that although darkness can last a long time, it is often the best place to learn about God's grace. Ultimately, that Jesus descended into darkness so that we can look forward to living in the light.

Homework Leading Into This Week: Psalm 88

Scripture Reading: Psalm 130

Sad Songs

Week 4: Paint It Black

- ❖ Psalm 88:18 - You have taken from me friend and neighbor—darkness is my closest friend.
 - ◆ Darkness can make us feel like dawn will never come.
- ❖ Psalm 88:1-2 - Lord, you are the God who saves me; day and night I cry out to you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry.
- ❖ Psalm 88:3-5 - I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one without strength. 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.
- ❖ Psalm 88:6-9 - You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths. Your wrath lies heavily on me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves. You have taken from me my closest friends and have made me repulsive to them. I am confined and cannot escape; my eyes are dim with grief. I call to you, Lord, every day; I spread out my hands to you.
 - ◆ Darkness reveals if you love God or merely use God.
- ❖ Psalm 88:10-14 - Do you show your wonders to the dead? Do their spirits rise up and praise you? Is your love declared in the grave, your faithfulness in Destruction? Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion? But I cry to you for help, Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you. Why, Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?
- ❖ Psalm 88:15-18 - From my youth I have suffered and been close to death; I have borne your terrors and am in despair. Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have

destroyed me. All day long they surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me. You have taken from me friend and neighbor—darkness is my closest friend.

- ❖ Mark 15:33 - At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.
 - ❖ Mark 15:34 - And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).
 - ❖ Revelation 22:3-5 - No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.
- ◆ Because Jesus suffered the ultimate darkness, your darkness will end in **light**.

Points to Ponder

1. Has there ever been a time when your expectations shaped your interpretation of something?
2. Jason talked about “external darkness” and “internal darkness”. Tell about a time when you experienced one or both.
3. Agree or Disagree: Darkness reveals if you love God or merely use God.
4. Name some dark / light contrasts in the Bible. How do you react to the fact that Psalm 88 ends in darkness?
5. Why does a future resurrection give hope in any darkness? What can you do to keep this in mind?
6. What was most helpful from this series?

Homework For Next Week: Acts 1:1-3

Worship Through Song at The CORE:

1. “All The Poor & Powerless” - by All Sons & Daughters
2. “Broken Vessels” - by Hillsong
3. “The Valley” - by Ellie Holcomb
4. “Lord I Need You” - by Matt Maher