

From GLUM to GLAD

Psalm 61

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David.

v1 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. v2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. v3 For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. v4 I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. Selah v5 For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. v6 Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations. v7 May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him. v8 Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfil my vows day after day.

We all face difficult times and situations in our lives. Sometimes of our own making because of the choices we make, but at other times because of the actions of others. In this Psalm David is on the run from Absalom, his own son, who has usurped his father's position, and had taken his throne through a coup.

Regardless of how we ended up in the place we find ourselves, there are many things we can do when we are in that place. This short, very personal Psalm of David, gives us a wonderful pattern to follow when we find ourselves in that difficult place.

I have called this message, **From GLUM to GLAD**. In eight verses David moves from being down in the dumps to looking forward to being in the presence of God.

I. **Firstly, WHAT you can DO when you find yourself IN A DIFFICULT PLACE - v1-4**

1. **CALL OUT TO GOD.** *v1 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.*

The first word of the Psalm is "SHAMA" - HEAR. David's deepest pain is not that his own son had turned against him. His deepest pain was that he felt as if GOD HAD ABANDONED HIM.

By using the word SHAMA, David is thinking about

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 *v1 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, v2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. v3 Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. v4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. v5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. v6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. v7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. v8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. v9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

When GOD FEELS FAR AWAY, the best thing you can do is

FACE HIS DIRECTION

2. **CALL OUT TO GOD, FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE.** *v2 From the ends of the earth I call to you,*

Let me remind you of this wonderful truth,

GOD IS NEVER FAR FROM YOU.

We are reminded of the truth from

Psalms 139:7-12 *Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? v8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. v9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, v10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. v11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," v12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

GOD SEES YOU

- 3. CALL OUT TO GOD, FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL.** *v2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint;*

GOD ALWAYS HEARS OUR HEART!

While many may say to us that we must, "PUT ON A BRAVE FACE", God always hears our heart. The bible is full of people who CRY OUT TO GOD. Even JESUS, in his greatest time of need turned to his FATHER, "My God, My God, why have you FORSAKEN ME?"

- 4. CALL OUT TO GOD, FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE, REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL, AND ASK HIM TO RESTORE YOU.** *v2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. v3 For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. v4 I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.*

High mountains have always been seen as places of security. David often hid in caves high up in the mountains. Masada, was a place where the Jews hid long after this Psalm was written. **Thaba 'Nchu** in South Africa is famous for a place where Tswana and Sotho hid from the attack of **Mzilikazi's** Ndebele tribes.

David is thinking about JERUSALEM which is situated on a mountain. More especially, David was thinking about the Tabernacle, that had been moved to Jerusalem at this time. What David did not know, was that he was POINTING TO JESUS

LEAD ME TO THE ROCK CALLED JESUS!

Acts 4:8-12 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ..., v10 ... know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. v11 He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone." v12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

THERE IS NO BETTER PLACE TO GO WHEN YOU ARE IN A DIFFICULT PLACE WHICH IS JESUS!

II. Secondly, WHAT you can THINK when you find yourself IN A DIFFICULT PLACE - v5-8

- 1. RECALL YOUR COMMITMENT.** *v5 For you have heard my vows,...*

You may be tempted to abandon God when you are in a difficult place. Trials often come into our lives to test our faith. Listen to JOB in

Job 19:20-27 *I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped with only the skin of my teeth. v21 "Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. v22 Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh? v23 "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, v24 that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! v25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. v26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; v27 I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

James 1:2-4 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, v3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. v4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

2. REMEMBER, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. *v5 ...; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name...*

We belong to a great body of FAITH called the CHURCH. We even have those who have gone before cheering us on:

Heb 12:1 *Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

3. FOCUS ON CHRIST. *v6 Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations. v7 May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.*

The question of who David is speaking about in this passage is simple. He can't be talking about himself for the request is FAR GREATER than himself.

HE IS POINTING TO JESUS.

JESUS is the ONLY ONE who can give LIFE.

JESUS is the ONLY ONE who can give IMPACT "MANY GENERATIONS".

JESUS is the ONLY ONE who is ENTHRONED IN GOD'S PRESENCE FOREVER.

JESUS is the ONLY ONE who is LOVE.

JESUS is the ONLY ONE who has the POWER to PROTECT.

Heb 12:1 *Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

v2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. v3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

4. FILL YOUR HEART AND MIND WITH PRAISE. *v8 Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfil my vows day after day.*

YOU ARE (or become) WHAT YOU THINK - Proverbs 23:7 *for as a man thinks in his heart, so is he; ...*

Conclusion

You don't need to struggle when you are in a difficult place! Turn to Jesus or turn to His Followers for help.