

WALKING IN THE WILDERNESS

Psalm 88:1-18

Key Verses is verses 1-4.

Psalm 88

¹O lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:

²Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;

³For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

⁴I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:

⁵Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. ⁶Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

⁷Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. ⁸Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.

⁹Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

¹⁰Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.

¹¹Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?

¹²Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

¹³But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

¹⁴LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?

¹⁵I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

¹⁶Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

¹⁷They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

¹⁸Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

Introduction:

Is it not strange that we should wander around under our own guidance?
Is it not strange that we should want to do the things that please us the most?

If we look to the OT we see that man has always looked to his own things,
and always went about his business for himself. And today it is no different.

People naturally are drawn to pleasure and self reward. The problem is that
this is a result of SIN which they cannot see.

Think about the OT for a bit.

1. What was the motivation for the people to follow after something that they could not see?
2. Were they about to go it on their own?
3. What was the motivational factor that changed their course of their actions?

➤ Well Exodus 3 tells us quite plainly.

Moses was sent by the Lord to call them to repentance. (to turn to God).
The people were not motivated before the Lord called them.

You see on their own, they would have continued in Egypt with the ungodly
people if it were not for the Lord who “called them out of Egypt”.

This was a miraculous call from the Lord, without which they were doomed.
It is the same today here in the new dispensation of the New Covenant that
the Lord has given to us, that unless “The Lord Calls” by His Word we are
doomed.

➤ The authority of God is the miracle by which we are saved.

As we look at Psalm 88.

- The call is mighty and miraculous.
- The 88th Psalm was authored by Heman the Ezrahite, one of the sons of Korah.

We can examine the life of the Psalmist as he records for us the difficulties
that he was facing.

He had lived a life, to a point where he was now confronted by the very fact of
his frailty of his flesh, and the very need to cast himself before the Lord.

How he had lived a life of rejecting the LORD had now become the very focus
of his remaining life that he had left. (can we identify with this?)

I. BEING HELD IN EGYPT - IS A TYPE OF THE UNGODLY WORLD

A. The Cry of Salvation.

Verse 1. ¹O lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:

1. The cry was not an ordinary cry, as if to cry to one's self in a moment of weakness or distress, or trying to overcome an emotional event.
2. But it was an eternal cry unto the Lord he says. His soul was now in danger of an eternal hell.
3. I was a cry of Salvation to the only one who could save him from his wretched state that he was in and where he was heading to eternally.
4. It was also not just a temporary moment of outpouring of his weakness, but it was a sincere cry of DAY and NIGHT coming before the Lord.

This is an indication of a man's predicament that he can do nothing in himself and therefore he seeks the help of the Lord, who could satisfy his cry.

5. It was after all a "Cry of Salvation."
6. It was a petition to the Lord, and it came as he continuously put "himself" before the Lord.
7. Therefore he could utter these saving words of "O Lord God of my salvation.

Perhaps the Psalmist was reflecting back on the saving grace he saw that the Lord had upon his people in Egypt, as we see in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 3:7-9

⁷And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

⁸And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

⁹Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

- We know for a fact that the Lord is always listening out for that cry.
- Because we can see it in the scriptures, both in the OT and NT.

Joel 2:32

And it **shall** come to pass, that **whosoever shall call** on the name of the LORD **shall** be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem **shall** be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD **shall call**.

Acts 2:21

And it **shall** come to pass, that **whosoever shall call** on the name of the Lord **shall be saved**.

Romans 10:13

For **whosoever shall call** upon the name of the Lord **shall** be saved.

1. So, it is no wonder that the Psalmist would place that call upon the ear of the Lord.
2. As he cried day and night before the Lord pouring out his distress.
3. His cry was not to himself or any other, but it was before the Lord.

Verse 2. ²Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;

1. He was a man afflicted by the world for sure.
2. He was a spiritually sick and physically sick, suffering man.
3. Yet despite all that physical suffering he knew he was suffering spiritually.
4. He knew that he had to seek the Lord whilst he could still be found.
5. His call was a cry for God's mercy.
6. When he said, "Let my prayer come before you", this was a petition to God that God would consider his condition, not just physically but also spiritually, because we see that in the follow up verses.
7. "Incline thy ear" was his request to the Lord.

In reality he was begging God to hear his desperate call for salvation.

- **Coming before the Lord is serious business.**
- **He was desperate. Desperate times call for desperate measures.**

The psalmist did not leave the request there and walk away. But instead; we see a little more of his character being revealed to the Lord.

Verse 3. ³For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

1. He reveals to the Lord through his prayer that his soul is full of troubles.

If your soul is full of troubles; now is the acceptable time to reveal it to the Lord. This is an eternal life lesson which needs urgent attention.

2. Again, if your soul is troubled, bring it to the Lord.

Remember the Hymn we often sing; "oh soul are you wearied and troubled, no light in the darkness you see. There is light for a look at the Saviour, and life more abundant and free.

3. Realizing his life may end soon, the psalmist says he does not want to enter the grave where everything is already set as permanent and cannot be changed.
4. He wants to make right with the Lord whilst he has the time and the opportunity which may never come again.
5. To acknowledge that your soul is full of troubles it to acknowledge your sin. Which only the Lord can deal with.

6. Just like the Psalmist we must realize that our life could end sooner than we would like to think about it. Are you ready now?
 - As in the next verses 4-8. He sees himself a marked man at that moment.
 - If anything should happen to him before the Lord has cleansed (saved) him, and taken away his troubles (sin), he would end up with the others in the pit of Hell.
 - He says it as it is in verse 4-8. A very worried man indeed of his eternal destiny.

Verse 4. ⁴I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:

⁵Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.

⁶Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

⁷Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.

⁸Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.

- ✓ The revelation of his call upon the Lord is one that he as a man has no strength to determine his final resting place.
- 1. The result of being far from the Lord is very real. The consequence as the Psalmist put it is.
 - a) Although you may be free from this life, and free among the dead the consequence of that **has not ended**.
 - b) You will become one of the slain among the dead.
 - c) Those who the Lord will chose not to remember anymore.
 - d) Cut off from the Lords hand forever.
 - e) Forever in darkness. Verse 6.
 - f) Forever under wrath of the Lord.
 - g) Separated from your loved ones eternally.
 - h) Never able to come back to them.
- ✓ **How terrible it will be to be separated from God and all those that you love.**

II. BEING LIBERATED IN THE WILDERNESS – ITS YOUR CHOICE TO CHOOSE

B. The Cry of Salvation Heard.

Verse 9. ⁹Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

- ✓ What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.

- ✓ What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

That's what our example of the Psalmist did.

1. I have mourned for you oh Lord.
 2. I have called daily upon you.
 3. I have stretched out my hands unto you for salvation oh Lord.
- **Just like a child would put up its arms for its father to pick him up and wipe away all his tears.**
 - **The picture is the Psalmist is crying, by reason of his affliction and he is putting out his outstretched arms unto the Lord for Him to bear him up.**
 - **“Please pick me up Oh Lord, I cannot do it on my own”**

And Now, as we turn to verses 10-12.

Verse 10-12. ¹⁰Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.

¹¹Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?

¹²Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

1. How many of us were spiritually dead?
2. We were all spiritually dead at one stage.

A spiritually dead person cannot inherit the kingdom of God. They will continue to walk in the “wilderness of Zin” as they did in the days Joshua and Caleb, who were the only ones God spared to enter the land. (Num 14:38).

- In the New Testament in 1Corinthians 15:51-54.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54

⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

- All the questions the Psalmist asked back in Psalm 88:10-12 can be seen here in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

The wonders to the dead in Christ are revealed at the end of time when they will be resurrected in their glorified bodies.

God is not a God of forgetfulness but a God of promises which he will reveal.

III. THOSE ALLOWED TO WALK IN THE PROMISED LAND – REQUIRES A SAVING FAITH

1. Just as Joshua and Caleb, could enter and walk in the Promised Land.
2. So too can those who call upon the Lord for salvation as in the case of Psalm 88.

Verses 13-18 ¹³**But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent *(come to)* thee.**

1. The cry was unto God.
2. It was a daily regular prayer.
3. Every morning he prayed to the Lord to uphold him.
4. This life of ours here on earth **has sin in the flesh** which creates sores in the flesh.
5. Whilst we can come to the Lord in prayer we can only ask the Lord for His grace that is sufficient to bear our infirmities.

¹⁴**LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?**

1. Just as the Apostle Paul asked the Lord to deliver him from the thorn in his flesh, the request by the Psalmist is also made.
2. We sometimes think that God cannot hear us, and sometimes we expect God to heal us. But all we can do is ask according to His will.
3. It sometimes feels to us that God is not listening or hiding His face from us when we don't get an answer straight away.
4. But that is the weakness of our flesh. Just as the Apostle Paul asked God to deliver him from his affliction.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And he said unto me, My **grace is sufficient** for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- We need to remember that because we are from the lineage of Adam we are all afflicted by sin.

¹⁵**I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. *(distraught)***

1. One thing in the flesh we can be certain of is; **that we are born to die.**
2. Sin has afflicted everyone who has been born from their youth up.
3. Whilst and when we are separated from God, his terror is against us.
4. It is only when we come to the Lord for salvation can we stop being distraught.

16Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

That is quite obvious:

1. God's wrath is against the unbeliever.
2. He has cut off the unbeliever.
3. The judgement of God is therefore the terror spoken of, that cuts off the unbeliever.

Without God we cannot have peace.

4. It constantly causes our soul to be at unrest.
5. Therefore man seeks to find his own rest for his soul to replace that unrest he feels from Gods impending judgement. (the fool has said in his heart there is no God for this very reason). (Psalm 14:1 & Ps 53:1)

17They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

1. The explanation the Psalm gives us is that Gods judgment is all about the unbeliever just as in a body of water.
2. It flows all around the person to totally consume him.

18Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

1. The Psalm finishes with the reminder that every friend and ever person that you love or that loves you will be totally separated from you.
2. As an unbeliever You will be in total darkness.

In the scriptures

- **It describes Hell as being a place where the unbeliever is cast into outer darkness.**
- **Where there is no light.**

Matthew 25:30

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into **outer darkness**: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jude 1:6

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under **darkness** unto the judgment of the great day.

Matthew 10:28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in **hell**.

- Friend, we pray that you will take notice of the Lord. And call upon him whilst he can still be found in your breath before it is too late.

PRAY.....All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give.