



Week 7

God's Faithfulness

God is faithful across all generations and circumstances.

Week 7, Day 1

Psalm 90:1-6, 10

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

*2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

3 You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

*4 For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.*

*5 You sweep them away; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning;*

*6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.*

*10 The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.*

Understanding the Passage:

Psalm 90 is a meditation on God's faithfulness in contrast to our transient and fleeting lives. Traditionally attributed to Moses, this psalm functions like a hinge between human mortality and divine permanence. This is the only psalm in all of the psalter that is attributed to Moses. The connection is likely associated with Moses' prayer in Exodus 32:12 for God to "turn." We come and go like grass, but God remains the steady dwelling place "in all generations."

The psalm's imagery humbles us: God turns us back to dust, yet even as He reminds us of our limits, God reveals Himself as limitless. The human story is measured in decades. God's is measured in eternities.

There is comfort here. The frailty of human life is not evidence of God's distance, but of God's steadfastness. God does not change with the passing seasons of our strength or weakness. He has always been our home and before the mountains, before the world, before us.

Rather than a human-oriented meditation on mortality and transcendence, the psalm is straight-up prayer. It's directed toward God asking for wisdom in reckoning with our eventual end. The prayer asks for wisdom, but it also asks for mercy in light of what might be on the other side of death. Rolf A Jacobson describes the two philosophical sides to this psalm: "the poem sets up a tension between God's eternal presence as gracious blessing and God's eternal presence as judging decree." In both God is our faithful caregiver. That is, we find warmth and parent-like comfort in God who is eternal. Simultaneously, we feel the weight of God's forever-ness. God's seen everything, knows everything, and is there for everything. That secures us sometimes and trips us sometimes, depending on the circumstance.

We land, in worship of the eternal God, with the hope paraphrased by Isaac Watts in his hymn paraphrase of Psalm 90: *O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, be thou our guard while troubles last, and our eternal home.*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What does it mean for God to be your *dwelling place*? Where in your life do you sense that stability most clearly?
2. This psalm contrasts our brevity with God's endurance. How might remembering your limits draw you closer to the eternal?
3. How have you experienced God's steadiness in a season when everything else felt transient or uncertain?

Week 7, Day 2

Psalm 77:11-20

11 I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD;

I will remember your wonders of old.

12 I will meditate on all your work,

and muse on your mighty deeds.

13 Your way, O God, is holy.

What god is so great as our God?

14 You are the God who works wonders;

you have displayed your might among the peoples.

*15 With your strong arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. Selah*

*19 Your way was through the sea,
your path through the mighty waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.*

*20 You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

Understanding the Passage:

Psalm 77 begins as a lament but turns into remembrance. It doesn't easily fit into any of the categories of the psalms we've covered so far in Scripture Shared. The psalmist recounts God's past acts of redemption. This does not inform God, but anchors the soul in what is already true. When the psalmist remembers the Red Sea, he is reminding himself that the same God who led Israel through chaos still leads through chaos now.

There is mystery in verse 19: "Your footprints were unseen." God's faithfulness is often traced only in hindsight. We rarely perceive His steps in real time, but later realize God has led us through the deep.

Recounting God's deeds is a spiritual discipline. It keeps us tethered to the story of divine reliability when our present experience tempts us toward despair. This discipline can be outlined by the four actions Psalm 77 prescribes: call to mind, remember, muse, and meditate. And to each of these, deeds of the Lord, wonders of old, all your work, and mighty deeds – respectively. As noted, this is primarily with the Exodus in view. The first 10 verses, that we didn't read for this week, set up a situation in which the God of the Exodus has abandoned his responsibility for his people that he demonstrated in that old story.

Nancy Bowen notes the frequency with which the Psalms refer to Egypt as a geographical stand-in for the troubles an individual or community faces – the name of Egypt is derived from the same Hebrew root that means "troubles." We're reminded, therefore, that the God who delivers the Israelites from slavery and oppression continues to deliver his people from all manner of slavery and oppression as a hallmark of this God's character.

You may also note how this psalm leaves us hanging. What happened? Did this Exodus God show up? Did this God remember his deeds of the past? As practitioners and readers of these ancient prayers, the answer is on our side of the story.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What are some of the "wonders of old" in your own story — moments where God's faithfulness has already proven itself?
2. Why do you think the psalmist tells God about God's own deeds? What does that practice do for the worshipper?
3. When have you realized — after the fact — that God's unseen footprints had been guiding you all along?

Week 7, Day 3

Psalm 136:1–4, 23–26

*1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*2 O give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*4 who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*23 It is he who remembered us in our low estate,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*24 and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*25 who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*26 O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

Understanding the Passage:

Psalm 136 is sometimes called the “Great Hallel.” It’s a psalm of corporate thanksgiving that rehearses God’s faithfulness in creation and redemption. Its refrain repeats twenty-six times: “*for his steadfast love endures forever.*” The Hebrew word behind that phrase is **hesed**. Hesed is God’s loyal, covenant-keeping love.

The repetition is intentional. It drills into memory the truth we’re prone to forget: God’s love doesn’t expire. When we are faithless, God remains faithful. When circumstances shift, His *hesed* does not.

By calling worshippers to repeat this phrase again and again, the psalm trains the heart to remember and trains us to praise God for his covenant faithfulness no matter the circumstance. Psalms like this help our praise and worship of God become second nature.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What does it do to your faith to hear the same truth — “his steadfast love endures forever” — repeated over and over?
2. How has God’s loyal love sustained you through a season when your own love faltered?
3. Why might it be important to remember God’s faithfulness together, not just individually?

Week 7, Day 4

Psalm 30

A Psalm. A Song at the dedication of the temple. Of David.

*1 I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.*

2 O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.

3 O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol,

*restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.
5 For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
11 You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.*

Understanding the Passage:

Psalm 30 blends gratitude with honesty about suffering. It's a song of restoration and a testimony that God's faithfulness does not vanish in seasons of despair.

David testifies that God's favor lasts longer than His anger, that joy is stronger than weeping. The psalm's rhythm from mourning to dancing (e.g., from our response to trial and our response to gifts) mirrors the rhythm of resurrection itself. God's faithfulness doesn't prevent sorrow, but it promises transformation on the other side of it.

Worship that names pain alongside praise becomes mature faith. God's loyalty holds us both in the pit and at our greatest celebrations.

You may have noticed that this psalm has *three* superscriptions. The superscriptions are the words prior to the first verse that we do find in Hebrew manuscripts of the psalms. They often give instruction, background, or setting for the psalms. Here we get three – this is a psalm (that one we could have figured out on our own), this psalm is on the occasion of the dedication of the temple (a huge historical moment for Israel), and it's somehow associated with David. Perhaps it was written by him, but “of” can mean it's in honor of him, put in his mouth as a dramatic convention, or inspired by David's story. At any rate, this psalm does what Walter Brueggemann said psalms (and all scripture) can do – remake the world. Verse 11 highlights this. These words bring about dancing, singing, and joy. Their utterance in public dedication of God's house re-orders reality around the ever-faithful God who can transform any circumstance or challenge.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Where in your life are you waiting for “morning” after a long night of weeping?
2. How does Psalm 30 give permission to bring both pain and praise before God?
3. When have you experienced God turning mourning into dancing — literally or figuratively?

Week 7, Day 5

Psalm 27

Of David.

- 1 *The LORD is my light and my salvation;
 whom shall I fear?
 The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
 of whom shall I be afraid?*
- 2 *When evildoers assail me
 to devour my flesh—
 my adversaries and foes—
 they shall stumble and fall.*
- 3 *Though an army encamp against me,
 my heart shall not fear;
 though war rise up against me,*

- yet I will be confident.
 4 One thing I asked of the LORD,
 that will I seek after:
 to live in the house of the LORD
 all the days of my life,
 to behold the beauty of the LORD,
 and to inquire in his temple.
 5 For he will hide me in his shelter
 in the day of trouble;
 he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
 he will set me high on a rock.
 6 Now my head is lifted up
 above my enemies all around me,
 and I will offer in his tent
 sacrifices with shouts of joy;
 I will sing and make melody to the LORD.
 7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,
 be gracious to me and answer me!
 8 "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"
 Your face, LORD, do I seek.
 9 Do not hide your face from me.
 Do not turn your servant away in anger,
 you who have been my help.
 Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,
 O God of my salvation!
 10 If my father and mother forsake me,
 the LORD will take me up.
 11 Teach me your way, O LORD,
 and lead me on a level path
 because of my enemies.
 12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,
 for false witnesses have risen against me,
 and they are breathing out violence.
 13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD
 in the land of the living.
 14 Wait for the LORD;
 be strong, and let your heart take courage;
 wait for the LORD!

Understanding the Passage:

David's confidence doesn't come from the absence of fear but from the presence of God. To "dwell in the house of the Lord" is not just to enter a building, but to root your life in God's enduring faithfulness. Waiting for the Lord is not passive; it's the act of remaining oriented toward Him when everything else wavers.

God's house lasts long enough for our waiting to make sense. Faithfulness, after all, takes time to prove itself, and God's never fails.

As you may remember from week two, we referred to the psalms as "the topography of the soul." This psalm really runs the course of hill-valley-hill. We start with a beautiful song of confidence,

trust, and sanctuary before flipping into a brief lament in verse 7. Finally, we find our way back to renewed confidence and encouragement in vv. 13-14.

Unlike many psalms with specific historical anchoring, Psalm 27 is what many psalm scholars call “open.” That is, it has no strict usage or historical situation. The gift is that it can be used in many situations and circumstances to renew one’s trust or confidence in God’s faithfulness. Namibian pastor-theologian paraphrases this psalm in his collection, *Why O Lord? Psalms and Sermons from Namibia*. This is a beautiful place for us to arrive in our journey through the psalms to see a contemporary voice wield the psalms in harrowing circumstances like apartheid (we should note that in the years following the publishing of his paraphrase, Namibia gained its independence and Kameeta became deputy speaker of their parliament – deliverance and faithfulness indeed):

*The Lord is my light and my liberation;
I will fear no so-called world powers.
The Lord protects me from all danger;
I will never be afraid.*

*When their “security forces” attack me
and try to kill me,
They stumble and fall.
Even if the whole imperialist armies surround me,
I will not be afraid;
I will still trust in God my liberator (vv. 1-3)*

*Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do,
And lead me along in this difficult situation.
Do not abandon me to the worshippers of apartheid
and their collaborators
Who attack me with lies and threats*

*I know that I will live to see in this present life
The Lord’s victory over the enemies of the oppressed people in Southern Africa.
Trust in the Lord: have faith do not despair.
Trust in the Lord. (vv. 11-14).*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What does it mean for you to “wait for the Lord”?
2. How does dwelling in God’s presence shape your courage in uncertain times?
3. Where do you need to be reminded that God’s faithfulness outlasts your fear?

Video Discussion Questions:

1. What does “hesed” mean to you as you hear it in the psalms? How would you describe God’s “covenant love” to someone who had never heard of it before?
2. What do you think the difference is between God’s faithfulness and our faithfulness?
3. How might you implement of practice of listing the ways God has been faithful? How could you tie this into your current rhythms and how might you utilize the psalms in this practice?
4. Share some ways God has been faithful in your life?
5. What does it mean to “wait for the Lord?” Is it hard to wait?
6. What’s one thing you want to carry with you after this journey through the psalms? What’s the most formative thing you’ve learned about who God is in the psalms?

Prayer requests and other notes: