

Evening Worship

Opening Prayer

Hymn: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." (PsH 579)

For musical accompaniment click [here](#)

Bible Reading: Psalm 80

Communal Sharing and Prayer

Offering: Calvinist Cadet Corps

Hymn: "I Need Thee Every Hour." (LUYH 322)

For musical accompaniment click [here](#)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 13

Meditation: "The Christian's Lament"

See below for Pastor Ken's written meditation

Hymns: "God, Be Merciful to Me." Psalm 51 (PsH 255; LUYH 623)

For musical accompaniment click [here](#)

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand." (PsH 493, LUYH 465)

For musical accompaniment click [here](#)

Time for Reflection and Discussion

1. Why do we Christians sing few Hymns of lament today?
2. Should we sing more?

Closing Prayer

Doxology: "If You but Trust in God to Guide You." (PsH 446)

For musical accompaniment click [here](#)

Dear people of God gathered in our homes,

In the Christian community it is taught that we must treat God with proper respect. He is worthy of that. He is sovereign, holy, and glorious. He holds the whole world in his hands—if we can imagine that. And so, when we speak of him we must do so with respect. Moses says in the third commandment, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God." We are not to make light of his holiness. We must not speak irreverently or sacrilegiously.

But if that is true, what are we to do with Psalm 13? Did you catch what the Psalmist all says there? Read verses 1 and 2 again. David says, "How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?" Are we allowed to talk to God like that? Isn't this irreverent? Isn't this blasphemy?

Look at verse 3: "Look on me and answer, O LORD my God!" Can we call God to account like this? We can do that? This is in the Bible? What are we to make of this?

To answer this, we need to appreciate the kind of relationship we have with God. Yes, our God is sovereign, majestic, glorious and holy—but he is not removed from us. He is relational. He is close to us—like in a marriage.

I think of my marriage. I'm close to Mary Ann. We get along. We have fun together. We have a good marriage. But sometimes? Sometimes we have words with each other. We are open and frank. Sometimes I say to her, "Why did you do this?" Sometimes she says to me, "I don't appreciate that!" There are times when we are plain upset and angry with each other.

That's not always bad. That's how marriage works. I love her; she loves me. But part of our love is that we are completely open. I tell her what's on my mind. She tells me what is on her's.

God has that kind of relationship with us. Sometimes God is angry with us. He tells us what is on his heart. Sometimes he accuses us of adultery. Not idolatry but *adultery*. Read Hosea sometime! In that book God accuses Israel of flirting with the other gods. Sometimes we do stray, and so God says, "Explain yourself!"

Sometimes we get upset with God too. Who doesn't? Sometimes we feel removed. We feel like God has left us. And so, we tell him, "Why, LORD? How long? Will you forget me forever?"

In Psalm 13 the Psalmist is not questioning his relationship with God. He's not asking for a divorce. He's not saying, "Look on me, or it's over! I'm out of here!" No! Verse 3 says, "Look on me and answer, O LORD *my* God!"

Psalm 13 gets at the heart of true prayer. In prayer we respectfully, reverently bring our concerns, doubts, fears, concerns, and angers to our God. We may do so. We are invited to do so. We cry out.

It is noteworthy that roughly one third of the Psalter is lament. That is what Psalm 13 is. According to my dictionary a lament is when you feel or express sorrow, grief, or regret. In the Bible times, when God's people felt sorrow, grief, and separation from God, they would often pray—and even sing—Psalms of lament. They would sing out, "O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!" (Psalm 3: 1) "Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress." (Psalm 4: 1) "Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my sighing. Listen to my cry for help." (Psalm 5: 1-2). "O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath." (Psalm 6: 1)

We need these Psalms. It is good to express our thoughts and our fears to God. Especially today. With all the uncertainty associated with COVID-19, it is good to pray, "How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?"

Of course, we pray to God keeping in mind the appropriate boundaries. We don't question God's sovereignty. Nor do we toss aside his holiness. We remember that God is always good. It is within these boundaries that we cry out. Not because we are hopeless. Not because God has left us. We cry out because we know that God has given us much already.

I think of the last 2 verses of Psalm 13. In verses 5 and 6 the Psalmist says, "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me." Ponder those words. The Psalmist says, "I trust." That is: "I gives myself over to you." He trusts God's "unfailing love." That's what God's love is; it is unfailing, never ending. And so, the Psalmist rejoices in God's salvation, his redemption, his love *in action*.

If the Psalmist could sing this in the Old Testament, we can sing it even more in the New. God is in the business of rolling back sin and death. He gave us Christ. He suffered and died, and he rose on Easter. We have his Word and his promises. We have the Holy Spirit to lead and to guide.

And so, we do trust. We rejoice and we sing. God has been good to us in Christ. And within the covenant relationship with our God we also continue to pray, cry out, and lament. It's good to do so. Maybe especially today.

We can do so right now. How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?

Amen