

PSALM 88 STUDY NOTES (4/3/22)

Psalm 88 Context: Here, we have the rare Psalm where the writer cries out to God in their hopelessness, but does *not* end the Psalm affirming the goodness or character of God. Here, we truly see a person lost in a burdened state, seeking a God who doesn't seem to be there.

Additional Study Notes:

- A "maskil" Psalm is designated as a *teaching* psalm. While the Psalm is filled with pain and grief and (perhaps) hopelessness, it is still meant to teach us something about God and life lived with God.

For Additional Study (most are available to borrow from CFC):

- NIV Study Bible
- ESV Study Bible
- Other commentaries available upon request

Discussion Questions

CATCHING UP ON LAST WEEK

- (1) What's been most significant for you from our study in Joshua (so far)?
What's stuck with you as meaningful or impactful?

TODAY'S TEXT

KNOWING God

- (2) What questions do you (or members of your group) have about this passage? Discuss.
- (3) What does this passage tell us about God?
- (4) What does this passage tell us about humanity?
- (5) Alpha and Omega Question: How has the practice of regularly reading the Psalms been helpful for you? Do you have 1-2 favorites so far?
- (6) This is one of the darkest Psalms in the Bible. What phrases, words, or ideas are most surprising or impactful for you?

GROWING Together

(7) If people in your group are following the Alpha and Omega reading plan, take time to discuss/encourage their reading for 5-10 minutes.*

- (8) Do you enjoy the darkness of this Psalm? Does it make you uncomfortable? Why do you think that is (or isn't)?
- (9) If willing, share a time when you felt buried in grief and felt as if God's good character was absent. How did you navigate that time?
- (10) How does *questioning* the goodness of God in times of suffering actually *affirm* the reality of His goodness and humanity's assumption of justice in the world?
- (11) How does Christ sympathize with our suffering? How does He offer us the promise of hope and redemption in our suffering?
- (12) What questions, ideas, or themes would you want to study further?

SHOWING God to Others

- (13) What in this passage serves as good news for the world around us?

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- (14) For next week, spend some time reading Psalm 25. What's interesting?
What questions do you have?

QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN (from Children's Director Emily Reiser)

- (15) What stood out to you in this Psalm? What did you find interesting and what was confusing?
- (16) This Psalm is very dark and comes from a place of sadness. Have you ever felt this hopeless before? Is it ok to feel sad sometimes? Who can we go to when we feel this way?
- (17) If you haven't felt this way, have you ever known anyone that is sad and living in darkness? How can you help them? Who can you tell them about who loves them and can help carry their burdens?