

Gleanings of Grace

Psalm 77

Lesson 22

Psalm 77 is a psalm of Asaph. It begins as many psalms do, with the writer in despair, struggling with his thoughts and emotions. Then, as he contemplates his dilemma, he finds himself complaining and worse off, rather than relieved. But Asaph does not remain in a state of complaining. Rather, he made conscious choices to place his thoughts elsewhere. In this psalm, we discover that the right placement of our thoughts can lead us from despair to rejoicing. What a glorious remedy God has made available to each one who belongs to Him.

OBSERVATION: Psalm 77

1. Read Psalm 77 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns/titles that refer to God.
Key Words: *God and remember(ed)/remembrance*
3. In his distress, the psalmist asked a series of questions in verses 7-10. Mark the question marks (?) by circling them.
4. The contrasting word *but* is used in verse 10. Mark the word and record what is being contrasted.
5. This chapter is fraught with words expressing the psalmist's emotions. Scan the chapter and list some of those words.

Background:

1. Although King David was the most prolific writer of the psalms (about 80 of the 150 psalms), he was not the only author. We know of 5 other authors including Moses and Solomon. The introduction to this psalm says: To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph. Psalms 39, 62, and 77 were directed to Jeduthun. What is revealed about him in the following verses:

1 Chronicles 16:41,42

2 Chronicles 35:15

2. Asaph, the author of Psalm 77, wrote 12 psalms. He wrote Psalm 50 and Psalms 73-83. What do the following verses reveal about Asaph?

1 Chronicles 16:5

1 Chronicles 16:37

2 Chronicles 29:30

3. According to Nehemiah 12:46, when worship in the temple was re-established, who did they use as a pattern?

a. What were the two components of worship mentioned in this verse?

- 1.) Asaph knew much about *praise* and *thanksgiving*. Yet, we discover in Psalm 77, that he also knew how to express his feelings of despair. And - he knew how to bring himself out of despair. Express your thoughts as you contemplate studying this psalm, considering the man who wrote it.

Read Psalm 77:1-6

1. Although Psalm 77:1 is the beginning verse of Psalm 77, it is written in hindsight. It is written after the victories found at the end of the psalm. What did the psalmist say that he did?

a. Describe what it is like when you "cry out to God".

b. What did God do in response?

- 1.) How do you know God hears you when you *cry out to Him*? Challenge: Use Scriptural support for your answer.

2. In verses 2 and 4, the psalmist describes how he felt before he wrote this psalm. What did he write?
 - a. What do Psalm 50:15 and Psalm 88:1-3 teach about calling out to the LORD in trouble?

 - b. What do you think the psalmist meant when he wrote, *my soul refused to be comforted*?
 - 1.) What thoughts or beliefs prevent our *soul* from being *comforted*?

3. According to verse 3, what two things did not help his *trouble*?
 - a. Most of the time, *remembering God* brings relief and comfort. What thoughts might have at first prevented that from happening?

 - b. In what ways is the feeling of being *overwhelmed* a result of complaining?
 - 1.) At the end of his life, David admonished us regarding *fretting*. What did he write in Psalm 37:8b?
 - a.) What have you discovered to be some of the *harm* produced by *fretting*?

4. In Psalm 77:5,6, Asaph addressed his troubles more aggressively. What does it practically mean to you to (as it relates to helping you out of feelings of despair):

Consider the days of old

Call to remembrance your song in the night

Meditate within your heart

Make diligent search with your spirit

- a. How might applying these actions help in times of *trouble*?

Read Psalm 77:7-10

1. In his *trouble*, Asaph began to question the LORD. Next to each question, record the verse that refutes his thinking.

Will the Lord cast off forever? Lamentations 3:31,32

Will He be favorable no more? Proverbs 8:35

Has His mercy ceased forever? Psalm 100:5

Has His promise failed forevermore? 2 Corinthians 1:20

Has God forgotten to be gracious? Psalm 103:8

Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Psalm 145:9

2. What are some questions you entertain in times of your own *troubles*?

3. According to Ephesians 6:14, what is the first piece of armor?
 - a. How does the application of God's truth combat the lies we entertain about God, ourselves, and our situations?

Read Psalm 77:11,12

1. Asaph decided to do something about the place he was in. Psalm 77:11 begins with the words, *I will*. Using verses 11,12, list the actions Asaph decided to take.
 - a. Why is thinking some of the things on this list more helpful than his choices in the verses prior to these?

2. Using synonyms, define the word *remember*.

3. What are some examples of what God has done for you in the past that would be helpful for you to choose to remember?
 - a. Record the *reminder* of Psalm 111:4.

Read Psalm 77:13-20

1. Much of these verses speak of God's faithfulness to Israel during their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. However, verses 13-15 apply to all believers as well. List what Asaph declared about God.
 - a. Why are these truths helpful *reminders* when we are experiencing times of *trouble*?

REVIEW: Psalm 77

1. What will you glean from the study of Psalm 77 that you will apply in your own life in times of *trouble*?
2. What did you learn about:

Complaining

Remembering

Rejoicing

*And I said, "My strength and my hope have perished from the LORD."
Remember my affliction and roaming, the wormwood and the gall.
My soul still remembers and sinks within me.
This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.
Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.
They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.
- Lamentations 3:18-23*

Observation Worksheet

Psalm 77

I cried out to God with my voice-- to God with my voice; and He gave ear to me. ²In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; my soul refused to be comforted. ³I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah ⁴You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. ⁵I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. ⁶I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search. ⁷Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? ⁸Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed forevermore? ⁹Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah ¹⁰And I said, "This is my anguish; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." ¹¹I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. ¹²I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds. ¹³Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God? ¹⁴You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples. ¹⁵You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah ¹⁶The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they were afraid; the depths also trembled. ¹⁷The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about. ¹⁸The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook. ¹⁹Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps were not known. ²⁰You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.