

WHEN YOU CAN'T FIND THE WORDS

WEEK 1
I NEED YOU.



CENTRAL CITY CHURCH

A NOTE FOR PROCESSING YOUR REFLECTIONS WITH A GROUP

In walking through the Psalms, our hope and prayer is that each of us can find the words to express our every emotion to God. What are we allowed to say? What do we want to say? And how does God respond?

In the days of the psalms, they would have been read or sung aloud among a community of people. Naturally, this would have sparked all sorts of dialogue and reflection within the group.

That said, our daily readings will lead to all sorts of insights, but they are limited to our perspective and life experiences. Our hope for you is that you have someone to process and share some of your reflections with, whether it be a friend, spouse, your family or a group of friends.

At Central City, we call those groups of friend's small groups. We want to encourage you to meet with your small group throughout this season and process these readings together. It could be as simple as praying and asking God to show you one or two friends to join you in conversation.

NOT SURE WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER? ONE OPTION IS TO PROCESS THESE QUESTIONS, IN LIGHT OF THE WEEK'S READINGS:

- What do these psalms tell us about God?
- What do these psalms tell us about humanity/myself?
- In light of these, what is God inviting me to do and say?

YOU CAN ALSO USE THE WEEKLY REFLECTION GUIDE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

To find a small group, visit CentralCity.co/Grow to view information about our current small groups.

WHEN YOU CAN'T FIND THE WORDS

"I Need You."—Lament Psalms

OPENING DISCUSSION

Of the range of emotions you've ever felt (Happy, sad, disgusted, angry, hatred, fear, etc) which if your least favorite emotion and which is your favorite? Which one is the hardest, and which is the most enjoyable?

Read this lament: Psalm 3

DISCUSS:

Any initial observations from the text?

Laments deal with heavy emotions. We talked on Sunday about how emotions aren't good or bad, holy or unholy—they are just data. Do you agree or disagree with this?

Have you ever had an "Enemy"? Why or why not?

How do you go about loving your enemy? Is it possible to love your enemy and still cry out for justice or even feel vindictive? Why or why not?

If you were to write a lament psalm, what would it be about? What makes you angry?

Lament psalms are also about trust.

What makes it hard to trust God?

Do you think it's possible to trust God about something you're unwilling to be honest about?

Why is it important to trust God?

How has trusting God worked in your life? Has it been a benefit to you when you've chosen to trust? Did things work out?

Any other thoughts from this Psalm?

MONDAY IN THE WOODS: Psalm 13

I was in the middle of the Colorado wilderness when I first heard this verse. I was straddling a fence in my faith. I didn't believe that God could reach out to people, I had no idea how he could reach out to me. I was lost. I didn't trust God. I was hiking with a group of people from Young Life for an entire week. I was being pushed physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When my YL leader shared this verse with me, for the first time I really felt like things clicked and I felt a weight lifted off of my shoulders. Verses 1-4 really hit me hard. I never felt connected to any scripture before. Then he read verse 5. I never thought that God could use people to reach out to me.

When I prayed that day I realized how many people in my life God had been using to lead me to God.

How has God used people in your life to reach out to you? Can you think back to a time when God used someone to reach out to you during a time of need? What verses in your life do you feel connected to?

—Kevin McCaw

"God, you are with us in the woods, when we are lost, when we are being pushed. Bring us those people who can speak into our lives and give us hope. Thank you for scripture that helps us connect with you. Amen."

TUESDAY FUTURE HOPE: Psalm 27

“Whom shall I fear?” “Of whom shall I be afraid?” If I’m honest I can make a very long list of fears, and a probably longer list of people I fear.

Psalms of lament often sound more confident than I feel. My situation feels overwhelming and I feel crushed under the pressures and fears and expectations of life.

A couple years ago, I went through a dark season of depression. But it was in reading psalms like this one that brought me hope, that in the confidence of someone who knew pain and despair, I could also find confidence in God. That if David could say these words in the midst of his struggles, I could as well. And the more I say these words, “The Lord is my light and my salvation – The Lord is the stronghold of my life,” the more I believe them, the more they start to be true.

Often in times of lament, in times of darkness, of pain, we can lean on the confidence and the faith of those around us and those throughout God’s story who have poured out their heart.

Reading words like these and other laments throughout the Psalms and throughout scripture lift my eyes from myself and my situation to the goodness of God, the faithfulness of God. These words remind me that God “will keep me safe”, that “the Lord will receive me”, all of me, and that “I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

Sometimes seasons of darkness feel never-ending, but when we cry out to God, he does not forsake us. “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

Who are the people or the words you lean on when you experience dark seasons?

—Allyssa Graves

“Thank you, God, for your faithfulness. Thank you for being by our side always, not letting us walk through anything alone. Amen.”

WEDNESDAY AN AMBUSH OF SORROWS: Psalm 64

Beginning my relationship with Christ in my early 20s and continuing to grow closer to Him was extremely hard. The world is a land of temptation where masses of people indulge in actions that shimmer in the majority's eyes. It produces a culture of, "follow me because I followed them and they followed...." Surrounded by more people who viewed Jesus as a stranger rather than their Savior, it was a struggle to decipher who had my heart in mind. The words of the people who are not following Jesus are jagged and filled with retaliation, casting a shroud of enticing conformity. Whether it be in person or on social media, the enemies' words were shot like an ambush of arrows, aiming to prove why His promises are false. (picture the arrow scene from the movie 300).

Turning to God is as important and dire as ever during these times. "Who do I follow, Him or them? If I abide, will their words grow softer?" I did not know how to deflect words and actions thrown my way.

This is where I had to kneel and let God provide and pave His path for me.

Allowing God to fight these battles and serve as our shield has granted peace because He hears not only the broad cries but even the most specific worries on our heart.

—Brayden Randleman

"God, when the world around me sends a flurry of hate, be my shield and my strength. Protect me from what is wrong and fill my heart, mind and eyes with Your light. I pray for the archers that they can lay down their weapons and pride and seek you. Amen."

THURSDAY FREEDOM OVER SHAME: Psalm 65

Shame is the great isolator, the great intimidator, a destroyer of relationships, peace, and joy. Ask me and I can tell you all about it. I got caught in a situation where my actions and inactions left me feeling taken advantage of and powerless, and then hurt my partner too. That shame became one that was so soul crushing and isolating that even God couldn't recuse me from that hole of self-loathing...until He did.

Maybe you know what I'm talking about when I say I allowed despair and sin to become my identity. Maybe you have an area of your life that is too painful to move past. Through God's grace we don't have to harbor that anymore, He states, "when we were overwhelmed by sins, [I] forgave [your] transgressions" – 65:3. What that's saying is we don't have to hold onto our sins. Maybe you're like me and you think, "how could God love someone like me, vile, stupid, and so utterly terrible? And why would God heal me when I got what I deserved?" That's what we think when we partner with sin and allow it to become us, but listen to who He is first before you stay with that mindset. He is the "hope of all the Earth," the one who formed mountains by [His] power," who's "armed with strength," "who stilled the roaring of the seas"- 65:5-7.

He goes even further to state, "We are filled with the good things of Your house. You answer us with awesome and righteous deed."- 65:4-5. What God's trying to explain is that we're to be filled with everything that belongs in His house, joy, peace, forgiveness, wisdom, laughter, healing. We get to make that exchange with him, our garbage for his riches in His house!! Before Christ we were overwhelmed by our sin, but now we don't have to be, we are filled. We are loved. We are forgiven. And that's the bottom line. There's healing when you hand over your secret shame, your "too big" of a problem, that spot in your heart & mind you never visit because it's too painful. Stop living as the past you, before you accepted Jesus, start living as the Christ filled child of God that you are. Make that exchange... your mess for His goodness and watch the miracle of healing happen.

—Bayli Campbell

"God, today I am handing my shame over to you. Fill me with your joy, peace, forgiveness, wisdom, laughter and healing. Amen."

FRIDAY HIS LOVE ENDURES: Psalm 136

I'm very aware of my need for God. It's easy to ask him for things—

God, help me through today

Lord, give me strength

Father, please provide.

But I often forget to thank God when he does deliver, strengthen, and provide. I forget that my need for God is rooted in his steadfastness.

Psalm 136 is a picture of God's steadfast love for his people. The psalmist opens by praising the God of gods and Lord of lords, describing him as creator of the sun, moon and stars. The following verses recount how God delivered the Israelites from Egypt through the Passover and by parting the Red Sea so they could outrun Pharaoh's army. The psalmist describes the battles that God won to provide land for his people and concludes with a reminder that God still sustains and cares for his people.

Now, you can't read Psalm 136 without noticing the phrase, "for his steadfast love endures forever," and I think that's the point. The psalmist inserts this truth after every line to remind us that God's actions were not arbitrary. It's not like God did these things because he doesn't care about his people. He did these things because of his steadfast love. We praise him *because of his love*. He created the universe *because of his love*. He delivered Israel *because of his love*. He won victory for his people *because of his love*. He will continue to provide *because of his love*.

How is God's steadfast love evident in your life? Has he created something that you appreciate, delivered you from sin, won a victory on your behalf, or sustained you?

—Rebecca Laughlin

"Lord, I need you. I needed you when you gave me life, when you delivered me from sin, when you won victory over death, and as you continue to provide for me. Thank you for your steadfast love! Amen."

