

Experiencing God when Life is Hard: Worship the Lord

Today, we continue our look at several psalms from Book 4 of the Psalms (Psalms 90-106) that address how we can experience God when life is hard. We need the wisdom of these psalms because life IS often hard, right? For some of us, this is our reality now. And if not, just live long enough and you will experience this reality. And so, this block of psalms, which was meant to give encouragement to the nation of Israel as she lived in exile in Babylon, continues to be relevant in our day. We need to understand how to experience God when life is hard. Our life situation may be different than the original audience, but the response that is urged in this psalm still applies. We need to worship God.

Read Psalm 95

1. What does this psalm teach us about God?
2. What does this psalm teach about mankind?
3. Three times the psalm calls God's people to come and worship Him (vv. 1, 2, 6). What is the significance of this call? And what does the psalm call us to do when we come to worship?
4. What actions and attitude does the psalmist urge upon us in verse 6?
5. What does it mean that we are the people of God's pasture, the sheep of His hand (v. 7)? And how might this truth affect how we think about our situation when life is hard?

6. What is the warning in this passage (v. 7a-8)? How does understanding the reference to Meribah and Massah help us understand the warning (see Exodus 17:1-7)?

Steve said:

When we experience heartbreak and loss, we might find ourselves wondering if God is really good. . . if God is really for us. . . When life is hard, it's all the more important that we enter into worship and confess that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep. As Philip Yancey says, "Just because life isn't fair doesn't mean that God isn't fair. Don't confuse God and life." Worship helps us do that very thing.

7. Have you ever been in a place where, because of heartbreak, loss, lack of provision, or some other difficulty, you were tempted to wonder if God was good? How did you respond? Did you confuse God and life, or did you worship?
8. What happens in us if we choose to genuinely worship God in the midst of life's difficulties?
9. Is there any area of your life right now where this command to worship God in life's difficulties is especially relevant to you? Explain.