

## CSI Winter Elective “Loving the Lord”

### Romance of Worship

#### Experiencing the Presence of God Through Selected Psalms

#### Managing Life When God Seems Far Away

#### Focus, Psalm 13 – Psalm 13 is what type of psalm? (Consider its mood and language or vocabulary)

- Some psalms were written in consideration of times when life is strained and praise is a forgotten impulse.
- It was necessary to set a mood and sustain it, one of loneliness and despair, for instance.

First Movement - This psalm has three movements (note the musical terminology). Remembering the psalmists' intent was to set and sustain a mood of loneliness and fear, the point of the first movement is to suggest:

- There may come a time in the life of a believer the “feeling” that God has forgotten them.
- Note the number of times the phrase “how long” is used. The use of repetition is extremely powerful when seeking to stress a particular message. Here the psalmist wants the reader/listener (and even God) to understand his/her pain. It helps to get David's, in this case, point across.
  - Remember we talked about the psalms emitting emotion. **Read the words aloud, slowly and with feeling.** Do you feel his pain; his plaintive cry? These are the words of one who truly believes he's forgotten by God (integrity).
  - He's not raising a question, can God forget? But states, He *has forgotten*.
- Because of the psalmist's fear he raises a more difficult question: since God has forgotten, and since God is eternal, does His forgetfulness last forever; hence the four-fold “how long?”
- Laments often have three pronouns expressing distress, “I”, “you” and “they”. The “you” factor is prominent here (note the repetition). You, God, have forgotten; You, God have turned away.
- The “I” element focuses on the psalm writer who is reminded of his helplessness.
- The “they” element refers to his enemies. Do they need to be identified; is it necessary? Why or why not.

#### Curiosity in the Psalm

## Second Movement

- Transition. The psalmist breaks with logic for if he truly believed that God had forgotten him, why pray? Is this a rhetorical question or does David really believe it?
- This section contains the psalmist's petition (vv3-4), which is central.
- It is a serious time when the believer feels/believes/doubts God. It is then we must pray.
- David prays to Yahweh. He doesn't spew words haphazardly. He knows in whom he trusts, which is a clue to whether his question was rhetorical or not. Even when we despair, in our heart of hearts we truly know that God is our only hope, and therefore, there is hope.
- When we feel God has forgotten us, then we need Him to answer our prayer, which is what David meant by the words, "enlighten my eyes." David's cry was that God would answer him in a manner that provided a new perspective of God in his dismal situation.
- A new perspective is needed when we believe God has forgotten us. This frame of mind prepares us for the third move.

## Mood Change

## Third Movement

- It's a noticeable change, which can only be explained that God must have answered David's prayer by providing a new perspective of His character. Specifically, David was still waiting for deliverance, but peace was experienced in that a new perspective of God was made known.
- The peace found in the new perspective is that David remembers one of God's grandest characteristics – His loyal love (This is the Hebrew word "hesed"). Yahweh's loyal love teaches us that *there is no forgetting!* This new perspective strengthened David in his faith causing him to make a future vow of praise that he will make in the congregation when he is delivered. A renewed confidence and assurance in God has been found by the Psalmist.
- We are afforded the same opportunity, which is why praise should never cease regardless of our circumstances. We have the Word of God, which only needs to be continuously studied so that our "eyes could be enlightened", so that a fresh understanding and a new insight can be attained from the Scriptures.

## The Purpose of Prayer

## Focus: Psalm 138 — Why Pray?

Psalm 138 is a dramatic Davidic hymn in which prayer is connected vitally with praise. The Psalm declares: *The purpose of prayer is to glorify God*. Many things can be said about prayer, but there can be no more profound truth than this: *Prayer glorifies God!*

Following the lead of this Psalm we might speak of prayer and praise as a spiritual plant. Prayer is the rootage of that plant, and praise is the flower. When we pray intensely, fervently, and dependently, God answers. And our response to His answer is to praise His name. This is why we pray. We pray so that when he answers us, we may renew our praise to His glory.

David's Psalm on the purpose of prayer, Psalm 138, is structured in three movements.

- Read Psalm 138. What type of Psalm is Psalm 138 and why?

### **First Movement (vv.1-3) Praise for Answered Prayer**

- David praises God by acknowledging God with his whole heart (total Being)
- David extends his praise of God into enemy territory as he dares to sing of Yahweh "before the gods" in bold witness.
  - How do we show our praise of God?
- The setting of his praise will be in the congregation in the precincts of the temple and he praises God's name because He acted in agreement with His character, thus magnifying His own name.
- Finally David gives reason for his Praise as he praises God for an answer to prayer that overwhelmed him.

### **Second Movement (vv. 4-6) Prophecy of Future Praise**

- David, directed by the Spirit of God, projects a period of time in which all the kings of earth (even those who do not recognize Yahweh) will join him in exuberant praise of Yahweh.
  - Such praise rarely comes from World leaders today.
  - These words, for David must speak to Messianic Age, when Christ rules in Kingship.
- Psalm 138 is a declarative psalm of Praise by an individual. In this type of Psalm there is one central sentence in which God is praised or acknowledged.

The central sentence in this Psalm 138 is verse 5b: “**for great is the glory of the LORD (Yahweh)!**”

- The great glory of God is demonstrated in this Psalm by his magnificent, overwhelming answer to David’s prayer. *The purpose of prayer is to glorify God.*
- How might we join in David’s same adventure of prayer? David’s experience may be ours. As we pray and as God answers, His glory may be felt in ever-new ways.

### **Third movement (vv. 7-8) Perspective For A Continued Walk**

- David turns back from his future prediction to a new perspective on his own life in continuing prayerful dependence on God.
  - Even though David has had a dramatic answer to prayer, he still recognizes that he still has to live life in a tough and unrelenting world. A life of faith makes life possible (with praise).
- David displays a new confidence in God’s determination to bless him in all respects in His (God’s) won way. God will accomplish the purposes of David’s life (and ours).
- Despite David’s confidence in God’s ever-lasting love, he recognizes he still must pray! So he closed his Psalm of praise in prayer, that God not forsake the works of his hand. Believing in God he still must pray to God.

And so it is with us, the more we affirm the greatness of God, the more we shall increase in our true dependence upon Him. ***When we pray we glorify God.***