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Psalm 13

Introduction – It is far more common and far more frequent than you may think. Faithful followers of Christ often feel abandoned by God. The psalm-singer's honest complaint before YHWH is almost embarrassing; are we really allowed to say such things to Almighty God? The psalm-singer teaches us, by example, the prayer to pray when you don't believe God is listening to your prayers, when you don't think He is going to listen this time, and when your frustration with God is running hot and high. And remember, this is the song of the Psalm-singer, for Jesus loved the Psalms and sang them. He would sing these psalms in times of heaviness and heartache, in times of deep distress and pain. How long, O YHWH, how long, how long!

A Psalm for You – Psalms are not given to the Chief Musician so that we have a recording of someone else's prayers. We are to learn to pray like David. Do not let a proud pietism keep you from approaching God with an attitude. He would rather hear your complaint than put up with your murmuring. Do not let your stoic, contained mannerisms keep you from pouring out your heart and tears before God. He is not afraid of your honest doubts.

Holy Complaining (vv1-2) – There is an inspired state of frustration that God intends for us to get into. And so the psalm-singer sings, repeating himself, but not with vain repetition; he sings like the widow who won't stop bothering the judge in Jesus' parable (Luke 18). We are to tell God what it is like when it appears that He has abandoned and forgotten us. We are to tell God how disappointed in Him we are. When you have trouble simply preaching to yourself the doctrines of God's exhaustive and good sovereignty (Rom 8:28) because what you want is action, not platitudes – here is what you are to do. We pray not only because we believe in the theology of deliverance; but what we need is deliverance itself.

Consecrated Commands (vv3-4) – Did you ever stop to realize that in prayer we are meeting with YHWH, counseling Him as to what He needs to do? And do you realize that this is exactly what He wants us to do, growing in wisdom, praying more and more according to His will? The psalm-singer makes three demands of God –

Consider/Pay Attention to Me! – We are to tell God how important the trouble is, and how important we are.

Hear/Answer Me When I Speak to You! – We are to tell God how important it is for Him to respond.

Enlighten my eyes/Change my Attitude and Change my Situation! – We are to tell God the consequences if He doesn't act appropriately. Like Moses, the psalm-singer tells God that He must deliver His people for the sake of His name. We are to learn to see God's will and pray, rather than hide in a "if it be your will" escape clause. This is risky, desperate praying for times of desperation.

O YHWH, My God – These demands are to be made based upon our union with God through Jesus Christ. What happens to you reflects on God, on His promises, on His reputation. Now, that doesn't mean that there won't be suffering or trials, for we are united with Christ in His sufferings and in His exaltation. But when there is death – that is when we are to look and pray for resurrection.

Faith-filled Praise (vv5-6) – Jacob wrestled with God all night, and here the psalm-singer completes a perfect time of wrestling; four complaints and three demands, seven statements in all. When you have not arrived at a settled faith it is a good indication that you have not finished wrestling with God.

Settled Faith, Joy, and Singing – The fruit of such praying is a heart that again rests in God, trusts in God, and rejoices in God. The psalm-singer takes a vow of faith, promising to sing to God because "*my heart shall (in the future) rejoice in your salvation,*" and because "*He has done bountifully with me.*" In fact, remembering all of God's faithfulness in the past and present is part of what bolsters one's faith in future grace.

The Gift of Afflictions – It is hard to see in the midst of them, but afflictions concentrate the attention, and God uses these instruments to fashion us for the weight of His glory (2 Cor 4:16-18). James teaches us that when we encounter such trials, we are to count it all joy, and seek wisdom (James 1:2-5). We are promised that the end of such trials will be the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:3-5). But these promises are not platitudes to shut us up. They are promises to make us complain before God, tell Him what to do, and wrestle for what He has said He would give.

