

Psalm 88:1-18

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannah, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite

“O LORD of my salvation, I have cried day *and* night before thee: let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; for my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength: free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? *or* thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. LORD, why casteth thou off my soul? *why* hidest thou thy face from me? *I am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up: *while* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness.”

Introduction

“Psalm 88, the introduction is really the postscript for the last Psalm, the introduction that you see written there. It’s interesting, when you read the Hebrew, these are just placed, they’re part of the text that’s placed there, and you have to decide if it’s a postscript or an introduction. This is about being in the dance, and when you read Psalm 88, you know it has nothing to do with dancing. So it’s certainly in regards to 87, which speaks of the coming Kingdom. Psalm 88 is the darkest of all of the Psalms. Even when the Psalmist is usually worn

out, throwing in the towel, going down for the third time, they end on an up-note. This Psalm ends with the word “darkness.” It is just, you know, the original moshpit. You know, you talk about potholes, this is one of them. And it goes deep, and it goes dark, and it asks some very huge and difficult questions. Look, let’s read through it, then we’ll back up, see if we can take it a second time. It says, **“O LORD of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; for my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.”** *‘What do you think about that?’* **“Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent [precede] thee. LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.”** That’s a Blue’s song, man. That is really something. Look, it is a dark and somber place that this author through the Holy Spirit is writing. We do find the word “Jehovah” four times, you’ll see there, right as it begins, **“O LORD”**, and that is his covenant name. You’ll find that down in verse 9, you find it in verse 13 and in verse 14. So he’s crying to Jehovah, knowing that he is the God of covenant, and four times here in verse 1, 2, 9 and 13 he’s saying that he’s praying. He’s said ***‘I’ve cried daily and night,’ verse 1, verse 2, ‘let my prayer come before thee.’*** In ***verse 9, ‘I’ve called daily upon thee,’*** In ***verse 13, ‘I have cried O LORD, in the morning my prayer shall precede me.’***

So, it seems and sounds hopeless as you read through. But you remember that he is crying to Jehovah-God, the God of covenant, and four times through the prayer, when someone's completely hopeless, they give up, they throw in the towel. Four times through this, he says he's crying, praying, calling on the LORD. So, it's interesting to observe the soul of the Psalmist as the LORD let's his cry go to the page, even in the deepest and darkest time, he hasn't turned away from God. Let's look at it here, he says **"O LORD of my salvation,"** that's important, isn't it? **"I have cried day and night before thee:"** When was the last time I prayed that way, day and night? There have been some hard times in life, I'm glad they don't come very often.

'LORD, You Have To Get Me Out Of This, Dead People Don't Appreciate The Remarkable Things You Do'

"Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;" (verses 1-2) So it begins in faith. But then he says **"for my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth night unto the grave." (verse 3)** all of us know that from time to time, our souls being full of troubles. Some of us have experienced our souls drawing nigh unto the grave, through one thing or another, and you realize your mortality, you realize how frail you really are, the day earlier you thought you were much different. **"I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand." (verses 4-5)** That's exciting. Now by the way, this is not true. This is Old Testament, this is writer's insight into God. Understand the light that you and I walk in and how wonderful it is. There's nowhere in the New Testament which teaches that when we pass into eternity that we're remembered no more, that we're cut off from God's hand. He says **"Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps." (verse 6)** And you know what the deeps are, you don't want to go into the deeps, gives me the creeps. Think of what a different perspective we have at the end of this life. **"Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah." (verse 7)** For you and I, 2,000 years ago, his wrath was laid hard and fully upon the One on the cross. He absorbed the wrath of God, so that you and I never have to do that. **"Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah." (verse 7)** *"Think*

about that it's kind of depressing, **"Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth."** (verse 8) Is this an illness, is it leprosy, is it some terrible thing? Even his friendships and his fellows are removed from him. He says **'God's the one whose done it,'** you'll look there from *verse 6*, **'Thou hast, thy wrath, thou hast, thou hast, thou hast, thou hast,'** he's acknowledging **'LORD, this is something, I don't understand, you're doing this to my life, you've made me an abomination, I am shut up, I cannot come forth, I'm like one in prison.'** And by the way, it's interesting, in verse 8 there he says **"Thou hast put away mine acquaintance"**, the Talmud in commenting on this Psalm says that's speaking of the Gentiles. Very interesting, look in *verse 18*, it says, **"Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."** The Talmud says *"Lover is the Messiah, friend is the Gentiles, the Messiah of the Gentiles has been put far away."* That's just an interesting idea. But here, he says in *verse 9*, **"Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee."** And here's faith again, **"I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee."** in this darkest, deepest pit. He says **Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.** (verse 10) **'LORD, you have to get me out of this, dead people don't appreciate the remarkable things you do.'** Listen to this question, **"shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah"** Yeah, that's why we're here tonight, of course, that's what we're looking forward to. **"shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah"** **'What do you think about that?'** Look, it is in the New Testament, where we have the tremendous revelation of coming into the LORD's presence, into his house, **'an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away, you know, let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me, in my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you, I'm going to prepare a place for you, that where I am you may also be, if I go to prepare a place for you I'll come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am you may be also. Wither I go the way you know,' 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, how do we know the way?' 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by me.'** Read Revelation chapter 21 and 22, maybe my favorite chapters in the whole Bible, the picture of heaven [and heaven brought to earth, cf. Revelation 1:1-23], you know, the glory of the Lord,

what lies ahead of us [see http://www.unityinchrist.com/revelation/Revelation_21-22.htm]. But here this Psalmist, without the New Testament, without the full knowledge of Messiah, just he is down and dirty here, **“Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?”** (verses 10-11) *‘LORD, what purpose is there in my death? No one is going to tell of your graciousness and your wonders and your lovingkindness.’* **“Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?”** (verse 12) What a morbid view of death. One of the philosophers of the last 20th century, I forget his name now, said, *“The reason that we sing Old Langsine so loud on New Years Eve is we’re trying to drown out the macabre sound of grass growing upon our graves.”* I thought, *‘There’s a guy with a perspective.’* That’s a fun New Year’s Eve to spend with him.

The Big Question When Life Stinks: “Why LORD?”

OK, look, verse 13 to 18 asks the Big Question now, when life stinks, when it’s this bad, when it’s terrible, **‘LORD I’m crying to you, what’s the deal, what’s going on?’** The Big Question is asked now in 13 to 18, the Big Question, is always the same. **‘Why? Why LORD? Why my kid? Why my life? Why my health? Why my marriage? Why my job, why my Mom, why my Dad? Why?’** And we get to the point, almost where the Psalmist is here, where he’s saying **‘Look, I know it’s not gonna change, I don’t care, I just want to know why.’** You know, he’s cast off his hope to some degree, and you just get to that point. Sometimes you get to that point with an illness, you know, you go from doctor to doctor to doctor to doctor to doctor, and you can’t get a diagnosis, and you finally say *‘I don’t care what I have, I just want to know what it is, even if they can’t cure it, somebody just tell me what I have!’*

When We Have No Answer To Prayer

And this Psalm now cries out, look what it says, **“But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent [precede] thee.”** (13) **‘It’ll be up early, go before you, my prayers will be going before you LORD.’** Here’s the question. **“LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?”** (verse 14) Though he’s

praying throughout, he's saying **'unanswered prayer is the struggle of my life. What have I done, why are you doing this, why are you hiding yourself from me? Why have you cast me off?'** And now he says, **"I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted."** (verse 15) And as we look at this, look, we wonder, are there shades of Golgotha here? **'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'** **"unto thee have I cried O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent [precede] thee" 'it's going to go before you, LORD,' "why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted." (verses 14-15) "Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." (verses 16-18)** There's a great loneliness in this too. Loneliness is a plague in our culture [you ain't kidding, and even us believers suffer from it, way too often, just as David did here---but don't feel too bad, you're in good company here with the writer of this Psalm]. **"Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."**, it seems like everybody disappeared. And look, sometimes in life, we come to this place. We have an advantage, you know, again, Peter tells us **'The things that were written aforetimes, the things that the prophets wrote, they longed to look into them, to understand them to see what they meant.'** And it says **'They were written for you and I who are the heirs of Salvation.'** You know, in our darkest day in the most difficult time, we have one that says **'Satan has desired to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not. When you're restored strengthen your brethren.'** You know, we're told in the Book of Hebrews, it says, **"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."** **Hebrews 13:8** says **'He's the same, Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.'** And if he prayed for the disciples in Gethsemane, their Gethsemane and his Gethsemane, when that great trial came, that dark night, you know, we read through a Psalm like this, and this Psalmist is genuinely expressing the fact he has no answer. All he has is **'Why?'** in the final analysis. He cries unto the LORD, he names God's covenant name, you and I would use the name Jesus. We have so much more light. And we know, because he's the same yesterday, today and forever.

If he prayed for his disciples in Gethsemane, whatever dark place you're in this evening, however difficult it is, he prays for us that our faith doesn't fail. **'He ever lives, and he makes intercession for the saints,'** easy for me to say, I understand, I'm sitting here, things in my life are pretty good right now. Whoever is the most broken person in this room tonight, you're in the darkest place, I know it's hard to hear. And I'm not being cavalier, I'm not trying to make light of where anybody is. But he's the same yesterday, today and forever. And your name, the Bible says, is on his lips tonight before the Father's throne. He ever liveth and maketh intercession for the saints, plural, he's able to do that, he's omniscient, he's all powerful, he's all-knowing, he's omnipresent. And he can have every one of his children's names on his lips at the same time, there's no restriction in that. And wherever you are this evening, however broken that is, however cast off you seem to be, however big the question "Why?" might be, we just have more light than this. **"Shall the dead arise and praise thee?"** That's why we're in church, that's what we're expecting, we're supposed to walk worthy, Ephesians says, to walk worthy of our vocation, of our calling. Part of our vocation is stepping through the veil from this world to the next that surrounds us tonight, it's there [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/cor15-16.htm>]. It's part of what we're called to, so much different. Imagine how the Psalm would be different if this person writing was in the same light that you and I are in, and enjoy the same privilege that we have. So we have a great privilege, we look at this, we know this evening that in fact there is hope, that there is life beyond the grave, that there is someone on the other side of eternity that constantly upholds us, however low we feel, however big our question "Why?" is. We've come to the bottom now, there's no, you can come safely now every Wednesday night, because there's no other Psalm that goes this low. Everything's uphill from here, so you don't have to worry.

Psalm 89:1-52

"I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy

faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? *who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him. O LORD God of hosts, who *is* a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine: *as for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, *and* high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou *art* the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the LORD *is* our defense; and the Holy One of Israel *is* our king. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I

sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as a faithful witness in heaven.* Selah. But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown *by casting it to the ground.* Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of the sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah. How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like a fire? Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man *is he that liveth,* and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah. LORD, where *are* thy former lovingkindnesses, *which* thou swarest unto David in thy truth? Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants; *how* I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the mighty people; wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed. Blessed *be* the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.”

Introduction

Even Psalm 89 now as we come to Psalm 89, it's going to ask some hard questions, the first 37 verses talk about God's glory, his faithfulness, and so forth. And then as we get to verse 38, there's some problem, we don't know whether this was written when they were carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, or was written after some great military defeat, we're not sure, but the first 37 verses talk about God's faithfulness, and who he's been and what he does, '*and we know this is the way you are.*' And then it says '*But presently, LORD, we're in this situation that's terrible, it stinks, let me know where you're at. We know who you've been,*' so the Psalm ends by saying '*So how long is it going to be, before you step up to the plate again? because we know who you are.*' And it's an interesting journey, as we head into Psalm 89.

Who God Is, A Covenant-Keeping God

It begins by saying, as we did this evening, **“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever...”** we actually have those words in a song. First four verses are kind of an introduction. **“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.” (verse 1)** and certainly that’s always our responsibility to the next generation. Look, mercies and faithfulness run through this Psalm, each word is used 7 times. “Mercies” is translated in some of your translations “lovingkindness,” it speaks of covenant love, but 7 times the “mercies of the LORD are mentioned through the Psalm, 7 times “faithfulness” is mentioned through the Psalm. And they kind of put out in front of us in the sense that when we talk of his faithfulness over and over, that’s kind of looking back, remembering who he’s been. Speaking of his lovingkindness and his mercy enables us to look forward, knowing he’s gonna be who he’s been, he’s not gonna change. And if he’s been faithful through all these things in the past, he’s going to show his lovingkindness tomorrow, his mercies are new every morning. So, the Psalmist says **“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.” (verse 1)** and I like that, because we’re going to be standing by his throne, looking at the Lamb that was slain, we’re going to be singing about his mercies. **“For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.” (verse 2)** He sounds way better than the last guy, doesn’t he? And it seems like the LORD now speaks and says **“I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.” (verses 3-4)** *‘What do you think about that?’* I kind of like it in the Psalm when that “Selah”, when it follows the Psalmist, something the Psalmist is saying, it’s something we all think about, but I love it when it follows something the LORD is saying. The first two verses, the Psalmist says **“I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.” (verses 1-2)** and then the voice of the LORD, **“I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.” (verses 3-4)** in other

words, of course it's gonna happen, there's a covenant. **"I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah."** and then Jehovah says **'What do you think about that?'** I like it when it comes down, **'What do you think about that, down there?'**

God, And That Which Is Not God

Verse 5 to verse 15 speak of the hope now, the great hope, the Psalmist says, **"And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints."** (verse 5) and what's emphatic through this, we're going to see it over and over, **'Thy, thee, thine, thou,'** as we go through this, so take note of that. **"The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints."** And aren't we glad when we gather? His faithfulness in the congregation of the saints? How wonderful it is to gather and sense his presence, as we gather together. **"For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?"** (verse 6) listen, important verse, you want to underline that, you want to note Micah chapter 7, verse 18 is an important verse (*if I can find it, my fingers don't work anymore, my computer notes I forgot*), **Micah 7:18** says this, **"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."** **'Whose a God like you?'** the question here is, **"For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD?"** an important question. Look, again, we'll say this from time to time, but it's worthy to put you in remembrance of this, you and I see something every day that God can't see. We see something every day that God **cannot** see, and it's put forth here. **'Who in heaven can be compared to the LORD?'** where in Micah it says, **'Who in heaven is like unto thee?'** The thing that you and I see every day that God can't see is our equals. He can't see his equal anywhere. **"For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD?"** Micah says **'Who in heaven is like unto thee?'** The idea is, you and I every day see miserable, complaining, selfish, coffee-drinking, phone-talking, driving in traffic human beings with horns blowing at us, and we see our equals everywhere. God looks around the heavens, he has no equal. Now, look, that puts something very important in front of us. God's holiness, when we hear of

holiness, holiness just speaks of separateness. God is separate, there's nobody like him. So these are the only two things that exist, God, and that which is not God, which is you, by the way, no matter what you think of yourself. There is God, and there is that which is not God. There is Creator, and there is creation, there's nothing else that exists. Satan is created, the angels are created. Nobody's like him, he is distinct, he is holy, he is separate. There is God and there is that which is not God. There is Creator, there is creation. This is why, look, it takes faith for you and I to receive his love. Because we have experienced love on the horizontal. Many of us have been abused, many of us have been ripped off, many of us have been betrayed. You know, you make yourself vulnerable, and you get to the point where you realize, *'To the degree that I'm going to love somebody, is to the degree that person can step on my heart and crush me.'* And some of us don't want to do that anymore. And then when God says he loves us, we're looking for one of our categories to file him in, and you're never going to enjoy his love that way. God is love, he doesn't love you because you're lovable. You ain't, really. He never sat in heaven and said *'I gotta get down there and die for them, look how cute they are, I gotta get down there and buy one of them, I'm going down there and die for them.'* That had nothing to do with it, it is his very nature. The ancient rabbis would say that's the great mystery, Jehovah loves us because he loves us, there's no reason. So you either receive his love by faith, or you never enjoy it. Because your whole life you're trying to earn something, you're trying to work your way up, you're trying to get from D's to C's, and from C's to B's, or from B's to A's. You know, I thought if you ever got to B's, somebody would Be happy around me. *'You can do better than that,'* nothing's ever good enough, you go over your relative's when you're a little kid, you sit at the little kid table, the adults sit at another table. The whole time you think, *'When am I gonna get to sit at the Big table?'* You know, the years go by, you finally get to sit at the Big table, and they say *'You're so big, we don't even recognize you,'* you've been waiting all this time to get there, and they don't even know who you are when you move up. You know, your whole life you want to get a raise, you want to get a better job, the whole thing is trying to impress, trying to have somebody recognize you, but then God says ***'I love you, I know you completely, I knew you yesterday, tomorrow, I know the whole story, I know the end, I know who you are, I know who you are going to be-- and I love you, the way you are. We had a problem because of your sin, so I sent my Son into the world to die,***

to take the penalty for your sins, so I can both be just and the justifier of the ungodly, and I love you just the way you are, I'm the God that calls things that are not as though they were. I look at you when you're justified, sanctified, and glorified, everlasting life. If you have Christ, you have it now. It's going to be manifest fully later.

[Comment: now don't get the wrong impression, that Pastor Joe is endorsing God's grace as a license to sin. He is a Calvary Chapel pastor. They don't teach that, but that we are supposed to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Pastor Joe is talking about a spiritual principle, a spiritual concept here. see

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/whatisgrace/whatisgraceintro.htm>]

We either step out of the boat onto the water, or we never enjoy it. *Human beings can't float, what do you mean 'Come to me? If I step outa the boat onto the water I'm gonna sink.'* You ain't never gonna walk with him unless you get outa the boat onto the water. He says he loves you, it's been taken care of in his Son's death, ***'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes shall not perish but have, no have someday, but have the second you're saved, everlasting life.'***

[Comment: in the sense that the Holy Spirit dwells in those who are saved, they have eternal life residing in them. But doctrinally, Biblically speaking, you are not immortal until the resurrection to immortality which occurs at Jesus' 2nd coming. See this Calvary Chapel expository sermon on 1st Corinthians 15 at:

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/cor15-16.htm>]

But look, there is someone else that said *'I'm going to be like the Most High, I'm going to sit on the sides of the congregation of the north.'* You read Isaiah chapter 14, you hear Lucifer's voice say *'I'm going to do this. I'm going to ascend to the mount of the congregation, I'm going to sit on the sides of the north, I'm going to be like the Most High.'* The Scripture says there ain't nobody like him. It's never gonna happen. In fact, you read Isaiah 14, and then 200 years later you read Ezekiel, or around 100 years later, Ezekiel 28 answers Isaiah 14, in Isaiah 14 Satan says *'I will,'* then in Ezekiel 28 five times God says ***'O yeah, I will,'*** and he answers the five *'I will's'* 200 years later in a different prophet. Remarkable verse here. When we go by it we don't think much, ***"For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD?"*** and he's holy, he's separate. His love is holy, it's separate, it can't be measured, there's no graph you can put it on, you receive it by faith. His forgiveness is a holy forgiveness, it's not a human forgiveness, there's not strings attached. You

receive it by faith or you'll never enjoy it. [I get the distinct feeling too, that some things, concepts like this we're gonna have to more thoroughly learn in the Kingdom after Jesus' 2nd coming.] His grace is a holy grace, not like a human grace. You receive it by faith or you'll never enjoy it. His peace that he wants to give you, not as the world gives, **'My peace I give to you,'** you either receive it by faith or you never enjoy it. You don't deserve it, just get over it, you ain't moving up to the Big Table because you got big, you're moving up to the Big Table because he paid your way. And he knows your name when you get there [this is a direct reference to the Wedding table, at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb that we all sit at as the future Bride of Christ in Revelation 19:7-9]. His mercy, his grace, his love, we receive it by faith, because we don't earn it, we're not worthy of it, we don't work our way into it. This Psalmist, **'I'm going to sing the mercies of the LORD for ever, I'm going to make known his faithfulness to all generations...for who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD, who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD,'** "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are about him*. O LORD God of hosts, who *is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?*" (verses 7-8) and he's going to talk about how God rules in nature, **"Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm."** (verses 9-10) "Rahab" it's a word used, is an idiom for Egypt. **"The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine: *as for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name."** (verses 11-12) two impressive, wonderful, beautiful mountains in Israel. **"Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand."** (verse 13) The whole point is, **'Who is like unto thee? Who are you going to compare with this?'** **"Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."** (verse 14) those things don't go together in this world. Justice and judgment, mercy and truth.

God's Covenant Promises

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. In thy

name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the LORD is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.” (verses 15-18) Now, verse 19, as the Psalmist is speaking about his faithfulness, he starts to speak now of the covenant he made with David, which is effectual in our lives this evening, and in the nation of Israel as we watch the television each day [or read that book Pastor Joe recommended, *Start-Up Nation*]. **Verse 19** moves into the promises of God, how important they are to us, **“Then thou speakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.”** this one ruddy boy, **“I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.”** your translation may give the idea of out-winning him, the idea is *there’s no enemy that’s gonna make him pay tribute or put him into subjection.* **“nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.”** that’s a great verse, isn’t it. **“I will beat down his foes before his face,”** thanks, Dad. **“and plague them that hate him.” (verses 19-23)** yea, but we’re not allowed to enjoy that, we’re New Testament, we’re supposed to turn the other cheek, pray for those who spitefully use you. If you’re in the Old Testament you can go, *‘Oh yea, Lord, thank you.’* We’re Christians, we have to love those who spitefully use us, I’m not there, I just know the verse. [Actually, a proverb tells us, yes, in the Old Testament, to not laugh at your enemy’s calamity. Calling the Lord’s wrath down was in the national sense, militarily, not on an individual level, which was never encouraged. David was a king, his enemies were Israel’s enemies.] **Verse 24, “But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.”** “horn” = “authority.” Now as we move into this now, there’s a transitioning into seeing Jesus, the Messiah, through the lens of David, you’re going to hear some of that. **Verse 25** says **“I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.”** Rivers, plural, look, under David’s reign, Israel was expanded to over 60,000 square miles. [Comment: Also with a treaty and alliance he made with the Phoenician king Hiram, Israel formed a common Phoenician-Israelite merchant marine and navy, which sailed around the world, starting in David’s time and extending through Solomon’s reign all the way

to the end of the northern 10-tribe Israelite kingdom in 721BC. See Barry Fell's *Saga America* and *America BC*, as well as <http://www.unityinchrist.com/kings/1.html>]. Try to imagine that. Israel was expanded to north of Damascus way up in the north, all the way to the Euphrates River, all the way down to Egypt, then to the sea in the Mediterranean, it was the largest and the closest to the borders that God had talked to Abraham about of old that the nation had ever seen. He says **I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.** **"He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation."** (verse 26) now in this we're switching ahead to Christ. I don't think David ever said that. [He knew God as Yahweh, but Paul spoke of Jesus being that Rock that led Israel in the wilderness, who was Yahweh, the great I AM Moses met on the mountain of God in Midian (now Saudi Arabia, *Jabel al Lawz, Mountain of the Law* in Arabic).] Jesus did. **"He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven."** (verses 26-29) that's David's greater Son, obviously, an eternal throne. **"If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes."** (verses 30-32) It's interesting, it had talked about covenant earlier, God made a covenant with David that it would be his throne that would be established forever, although it looked like the lineage of kings ran out because of sin in David's line, and yet through Mary, David's blood, genealogy, DNA, a Son is born, who then is attached to David, even though the legal line had broken down. And his throne (Christ's) is established forever, which is the throne of Christ, which is the throne of David, whose going to rule the earth for a thousand years. So we see some interesting things here. [Comment: Apparently David's line ended with the capture of Zedekiah in 586BC by Nebuchadnezzar, who had just conquered Judah and Jerusalem, and killed Zedekiah's sons and blinded him, leading him into captivity. Jeconiah, already in Babylonian captivity, had a Godly curse on his line, that no one would rule as king from then on who was descended from Jeconiah. But Zedekiah was Jeconiah's uncle, so anyone coming from Zedekiah could still be king. Jeconiah's grandson, Zerubbabel did become a governor over Judah and Jerusalem when the captives returned to Jerusalem 70 years

later, but he was never a king. But after the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC, Zedekiah's daughters were entrusted by Nebuchadnezzar to Jeremiah. Jeremiah historically disappeared, right off the face of the map so to speak. There is credible legend that Jeremiah ended up with his servant Beruch and Zedekiah's daughters in Ireland, the ancient name of which in Gaelic is *Tuatha de Danaan*, which means *Tribe of Dan* in Gaelic. The throne of kings from ancient Ireland was transposed to Scotland, and then to England under King James the VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England in the early 1600s. So, although most historians ignore this history because it backs up a Bible covenant and is about Israel, it shows God has maintained David's line, apparently, in the crown of England. The Irish are aware that the ancient founding tribe of their people was named *Tuatha de Danaan*, Gaelic for *Tribe of Dan*, but haven't really made the connection yet that they are one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel. I'm a history nut, so I love this stuff. But Pastor Joe is also correct, that the line of David going to Christ will never end, and resides in Christ's heavenly throne. David, who will be resurrected with all the other saints at Christ's 2nd coming, will yet sit on his throne in Jerusalem, judging and ruling over the restored 12 tribes of Israel, We read this in Ezekiel 37:21-**24**, which is all about the Millennial restoration of the 12 tribes of Israel under David, while Christ becomes King of kings and Lord of lords, over the entire earth, his headquarters also being in Jerusalem.] But there's a promise, look, ***'Even though your children turn away, I'm gonna have it my way.'*** And for those of you with prodigals, there's some interesting I think shadows in here, that's in here, there's some interesting things, because some of us, you know, we have kids, and we know the kids get saved, or maybe it's a brother or sister in Christ, maybe it's even a mom or a dad, we have prodigals in our lives, they profess, they walk with the Lord, they say the right stuff, and then they go AWOL, and we're scratching our heads thinking *'Were they ever really saved?' or 'Are they coming back, what's the deal?'* And the Lord says some very encouraging things here, you know, if you are one of those people that have some sleepless nights over a prodigal, worrying about the phone-call coming, that there's an accident, or with alcohol or drugs, insanity, whatever. There's some consolation in here I think, as we move through this. He's going to establish the throne, he says, **"His seed" verse 29, "also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven."** **"If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep**

not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.” (verses 29-32) ‘I’m gonna deal with them, I’m gonna chasten them.’ It tells us in *Hebrews chapter 12*, **‘that the chastening of the Lord is not pleasant, but it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.’** It says **‘If we’re not chastened, then we’re not his children.’** I don’t know if you guys have noticed that, I noticed it right away when I got saved, once I got saved, and I was God’s kid, I couldn’t get away with anything anymore. Before I was saved I got away with all kinds of things. Anybody notice that? You could do all kinds of things, you didn’t caught, the police didn’t see you, you could walk right in front of your parents, they didn’t see nothing. And then the minute you get saved, everybody sees everything. Everybody pulls you over, your parents are asking you what’s wrong, your friends see it, you just get busted. And the worst part of it is, you know, before you’re saved, you hang out with your friends, and then you’re angry if they’re not sharing, they got some coke, some pot, they won’t share with you, they sneak over to the corner, then you’re mad...and then you get saved, and then everybody wants to give it to you for free. [laughter] And it’s like *‘Duh, now the devil wants everybody to be my friend, now that God’s my father, you know.’* And when you get saved you can’t get away with anything anymore because you’re God’s kid, because he loves you, he’s gonna bust you, and he’s gonna chasten you, because he loves you. He can’t bless sin. He can’t let you get away with it, he can’t stand idly by and say *‘I love you, and am going to bless you anyway.’* He would be untrue to his very nature. **‘Who is like unto thee?’** there’s nobody like him. So he says here, **“Then I will visit their transgression with the rod,” ‘I’m going to discipline them,’ “and their iniquity with stripes.” (verse 32)** Look, **“Nevertheless”** you kind of want to underline that there in your Bible, **“Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” (verse 33)** Literally, **‘I’m not going to let my faithfulness lie.’** Because you can be thinking *‘Lord, where are you? They said your name, Lord, they went to church with us, they did this, what’s going on Lord?’* He says, **‘No, no, the rod will come.’** And I guarantee you this, when you see somebody like that, either they never were really saved in the first place [which more often than not is the case, but not always], because the Bible says **‘Let a man examine himself to see if he’s in the faith’ (2nd Corinthians 13:5)** or they just got a whopping coming, hasn’t come yet. And it doesn’t come right away, because God says **‘That his goodness, his**

longsuffering is there, to bring people to repentance.' And it tells us in Romans we have to be careful not to misinterpret that, because what people say is *'Hey look, ya I'm living with my girlfriend, I'm this, I'm doing that, but God's still blessing my business, we still got money.'* No, he ain't, you're running out of room, dummy! He ain't blessing nothing, you are running out of room, and the hammer is coming down! And right on the bottom of that hammer it says **'I love you, and it's coming down.'** And the New Testament says that, people misinterpret the longsuffering, and the patience and the kindness of God. He's extending it, he says, hoping that his kindness will lead you to repentance. But if not, he disciplines. So, you look at someone like that, and you think *'Were they really saved, weren't they saved? They're backslidden, now are they coming back? what's the story?'* It's either one of two things, either they were never saved in the first place, or they're headed for a whupping, and it's coming, because he's faithful. And he says it here. **'Nevertheless,'** he says, **'I'm gonna visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes,'** **"Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to become a lie, to fail."** (verses 32-33) **"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David."** You know, he's made a covenant. **"His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me."** (verses 34-36) Look, verses 36, 37, important when we look at the news today, literal Israel. **"His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah."** (verses 36-37) **'What do you think about that?'** because the Lord will say this in *Jeremiah*, **"Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon,"** which he just mentioned here in this Psalm, **'and the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar,'** he had said that earlier, **"The LORD of hosts is his name, if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me for ever."** **"Thus saith the LORD, if heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the LORD."** He said, **'Look,'** taking this literally here, he said **'the nation of Israel,'** he said, **'as long as the sun is there, and as long as the moon is there, the nation of Israel are my people.'** And you watch the news today, this is God's Word, it's what he says,

'I have no problem with that, I have no problem with that at all. I have a wild olive branch grafted in,' never had my DNA tested, maybe I'm a natural olive branch, I don't know. But those are his promises, ***and how could we not want his promise to be faithful to them, and expect his promise to be faithful to us?*** How can somebody sit around and talk about election and predestination and rule out Israel [or the family, royal family of David, which this promise in Psalm 89 is all about (see prior comment about that)]??? It's ridiculous, it's not thinking. So here, wonderfully, he says ***'that his covenant is established, and it's going to be fulfilled, it's going to be a witness to the heaven, Selah, what do you think about that?'***

'How Long LORD? Wilt Thou Hide Thyself Forever?' We Live By Promises, Not Theological Facts

Verse 38, the tone of everything changes. See that **"But"** there? ***'I'm gonna sing your mercies LORD, forever, I'm gonna make known your faithfulness to all generations, I'm gonna do this LORD, I'm gonna tell everybody, because this is who you are, this is how you are, nobody can compare with you, LORD, nobody's like you, you rule the waves, the sea, the heavens and the sun, the moon, the stars, everything, you've made a covenant with David that's not gonna be broken even if his seed goes in the wrong direction, you're gonna chasten them, you're gonna bring them back, you're gonna do this LORD, you're gonna do that, you're gonna do this, this is who you are, it's not going to change, BUT...'*** Now, there's 13 **"thou hast's"** here. **"But"** even though all that's true, the present predicament seems to contradict everything I've just said. ***"But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant:"*** which isn't true, this just seems to be the present circumstance, ***"thou has profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin."*** Jerusalem, this may be Nebuchadnezzar taking the city, we're not sure. ***"Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle."***

Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.” (verses 38-45) ***‘What do you think about that? You give us all these promises LORD, this is who you are, this is all your stuff, and in light of all that, you’ve done this, and you’ve done that,’*** you ever have that argument with God? *‘This is who you say you are, these are the promises you made because you told me, and then what’s the deal???* It seems though this is happening, and this is happening, and this is happening, after everything you told me you were, and I even told my friends that’s who you were, and now you’re letting this happen in my life, it’s bad for your Rep.’ All of that, 13 times he says ***‘But LORD, you’ve done this, you’ve done this now, you’ve done this.’*** He’s saying in this Psalm ***‘LORD, you’re sovereign, you’re omnipotent, the first 37 verses prove that. You’ve established the sun, the moon, the stars, the rivers, all of this, that’s your sovereignty, it’s your omnipotence, it’s your wisdom, it’s your glory, you’ve done all of these things, and that’s established, we see all of that, that was then. But LORD, this is now. And now it seems like you’ve done this, you’ve done that, and you’ve done this, and you’ve done that, you’ve given the enemies victory, you’ve forgotten this...LORD, what’s the deal?’*** So that’s why in verse 46, now he asks this in faith, after 13 “thou hast”, so he says, ***“How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like a fire?”*** (verse 46) In other words, ***‘We took all this time to establish who you are, LORD, and yet in our present circumstance, it seems like you’ve given us over, you’ve cast us off, you’ve given victory to our enemies, you’ve done this, you’ve done that, 13 times. If you were sovereign then, LORD, you’re sovereign now, how long then, because we know who you are, how long now before you straighten out our present circumstance?’*** That should always be our question. ***‘How long? I know you’re going to turn this around, because of who you are, not because of what’s happening.’*** And if we determine who he is by our circumstances, we always lose, it defames his character and his nature. If we judge our circumstances by who he is, that’s stepping out of the boat onto the water, that’s faith, but it’s filled with promise. ***We live by promises, not by theological facts [and that is through a real relationship we develop with the LORD and God the Father through prayer, and yes, our Bible studies, but more importantly through our prayers and requests, and his promised personal answers to us].*** The human heart is

led on by promise, by hope [whether it be the ultimate promise for salvation, or promises for things we ask the LORD for, such as Abraham, asking for a son when he and Sarah were barren and very old]. He says **“How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever?”** questions now, **“shall thy wrath burn like fire? Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?”** (verses 46-47) *‘LORD, I just got here, I’m a pip-squeak, I just got here and I ain’t staying long.’* **“wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?”** is this just nothing? **“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.”** (verse 48) can man do that by himself? Selah, what do you think about that? And now in just complete honesty, **“LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?”** (verse 49) *‘LORD, you made covenant, you’re a God of covenant, where is that now, how long before I realize it?’* **“Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.”** (verses 50-51) This Psalmist, and we don’t have a name, whoever it is, is a remarkable individual, and whoever it is, is reflecting so much of God’s Son, you know, he stood over Jerusalem, in Luke 19, and he wept over the city. And this writer, so much the heart of God, he says *‘Remember LORD, the reproach of thy servants, how do I bear in my bosom, in my heart, the reproach of all the mighty people,’* **“wherewith thine enemies have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.”** (verse 51) Look, they have mocked, we’re living in a world like that now, aren’t we? The world, they have reproached, our enemies, they mock us, **“they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed”** that’s Christ. Are we living in a world where the news media and an entertainment industry has reproached the footsteps of God’s Anointed? Ya, if you’re alive, if you’re paying attention. But our hope is built on every one, on every thing he has been, who he has been is who he is, and our hope is built on the promises of God, he comes around to that.

In Closing

Now look, the last verse is not really part of this Psalm, the last verse summarizes Book III, this is the end of the 3rd Book in the Book of Psalms, there’s five books. So the last verse is, **“Blessed be the LORD forevermore. Amen, and Amen.”**

(verse 52) 'So be it, and so be it,' "Amen, and Amen." Close the 3rd Book, read ahead next week, next week the first Psalm is the Song of Moses. Good songwriter, right? So we come to the end of this. Look, some deep stuff. I read these things and I say *'Lord, can I take the correspondence course?'* You know I was listening to Damian this afternoon go through some of these things, and I love Damian, guys remember to pray for him, 4th stage lymphoma, leukemia, you know, he's on an experimental program in Stamford now. I listen to him going through these things, and I think *'He's visiting those things.'*...you hear that little girl read Psalm 40, you will fall on the floor, because she has gone there, cancer, the things she has gone through, the miracles that's happened in her life....this little girl knows much more about this than I do. But these deep places, still speak of his faithfulness, he put them here on purpose. He wants us to see, in the darkest hour, when human reason has completely failed, and there doesn't seem to be any hope, that he can still be cried out to, and he is still a covenant God. And in the final analysis, when we're going to judge our circumstances, we have to judge it in light **of who he is**, because he is, is who he will always be, he never changes. And that's hard for us to do, honestly. I don't ever want to be cavalier when I talk to someone whose going through deep pain or deep suffering, and just have some canned answer or something. That's not the way it's supposed to be. But the Word of God is alive and it's powerful, it's sharper than any two-edged sword, the Word of God cuts deeply into the heart of the person that needs his promise[s], needs light in the darkness. I am convinced and confident that the Word of God does that, it's a lamp unto our feet, and it's a light unto our path, it's like the rain and snow that comes down from heaven, it never returns void. It accomplishes what God sends it out to do, it takes our lives, it sanctifies our lives, **'Lord, sanctify them by thy truth, thy Word is truth.'** It is a wonder that we're able to come, just think of the days that we live in. It says **'Narrow is the way that leads to eternal life, and few there be that find it. Broad is the way that leads to destruction, many there be go thereon.'** And here we sit, Wednesdays and Sundays, we come together, we actually, most of us enjoy each other. Some of us won't sit in the same section, I understand. Most of us enjoy each other. We actually enjoy singing his praises, we actually enjoy studying his Word. Has there been a change, or has there not been a change? I mean, when I was a kid, I went to church because I was **made to go** to church. It was purgatory. My dad was Catholic, and I didn't like to go there in the summer, because there never was air-conditioning,

it was too hot. And in the winter there was never heat, it was too cold. And my mom was Lutheran, nothing was happening there either. And when I was 17 or 18 they got tired of fighting with me, they said *'Alright, you don't have to go anymore!'* And I thought, *'Free at last! Free at last, thank God almighty, I am free at last.'* Right into drugs, right into the world, and then you get saved, and your life changes, you think, *'How remarkable to look forward to church, to look forward to singing, to look forward to reading the Bible,'* what a dramatic change, what a remarkable thing he's done in us, for those things to be true. Isn't it wonderful? Something that we want to sing about. Isn't it? Let's stand, let's do that. *'Lord, we thank you, that even in the darkest places, Lord, you kind of take us on a fast tour of the darkest pit here, and we find your covenant name there, Lord we find a voice crying out to you, even in despair, even when the answer **Why?** doesn't seem to be answered Lord, then we hear of your great faithfulness, Lord, your great covenant Lord, that you'll never let your covenant be a lie, it's established forever. So that even when difficult things seem to be happening, Lord, our cry to you can be **'How long, Lord?'** We know this won't go on, Lord, because of who you are, because of your goodness. And Lord we ask now as we lift our voices, we sing your praise, even if it is by your Spirit Lord, you inhabit our praises, that this would be a sweet savour, rising off of Philmont Avenue, and coming before your throne, Lord. Lord, we do pray, all of us, for the most broken heart in this room. We can't see it, you can, Lord. There isn't anything hid from you here. We pray for those broken, we pray for those Lord that are holding back tears. We pray for those Lord maybe this evening came in so discouraged they just want to cast off restraint and just go sin, just go sin. Lord, we pray you'd take hold of their hearts. We pray Lord for those who feel betrayed tonight, Lord, those who feel they've entered into some dark place, Lord. And you stoop down from heaven, Lord. And you've talked about your faithfulness, even in those times. Take hold of their hearts, bring healing to tonight, and renewal, fresh vision. Stir our hearts, receive our praise, we pray in your name, amen.'*" [transcript of a connective expository sermon on Psalm 88:1-18 and Psalm 89:1-52, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]