

Where is God?

Psalm 13:1

June 12, 2017

Everton Hills

Two little boys, ages 3 and 5, are excessively mischievous. They are always getting into trouble and their parents know if any mischief occurs in their town, the two boys are probably involved. The boys' mother heard that a preacher in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The preacher agreed, but he asked to see them individually. The mother sent the 3 year old in the morning, with the older boy to see the preacher in the afternoon.

The preacher, a huge man with a deep booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "**Do you know where God is, son?**"

The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open.

So the preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "**Where is God?**"

Again, the boy made no attempt to answer.

The preacher raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "WHERE IS GOD?"

The boy screamed & bolted from the room, ran directly home & dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him.

When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "**What happened?**"

The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time!"

"GOD is missing, and they think WE did it!"

Have you ever gone through a time in your life when you asked yourself "**where is God?**"

Have you ever experienced a time where God has seemed so distant? Where inside, you have simply felt incredibly spiritually dry and empty?

Perhaps you have prayed; one of those prayers where you pour out your heart to God for days on end, and you end up with those prayer marks on your forehead... and God doesn't seem to answer.

Perhaps you have conscientiously read the bible, day after day, and looking for an answer, looking for hope, and it doesn't speak to you.

Perhaps you have earnestly sought to encounter God, and it seems as though God is hiding.

It's painful, isn't it, as you start to think that maybe God doesn't love you, believe in you, care for you?

How do you normally deal with that?

Do you just keep quiet? Or do you talk to someone about it? Being part of a community which believes that God has placed us here to "**live and share the grace of God so that our communities experience His transforming love and peace**" is about being able to share those profound and deep fears and hurts, so that together we can grow.

David, the man described in the bible as being after God's own heart, knew what it was like to be dry and empty.

Psalms 13 begins...

"O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?" (Psalm 13:1, NLT)

It's worthwhile noting that there is no indication here that David has sinned, or that he has simply bailed on God. If anything, David is a faithful as he has ever been, and yet God seems so distant!

Have you ever been there?

You know, this isn't the only time that David has felt as though God has abandoned him... In Psalm 42, David says

"Day and night I have only tears for food, while my enemies continually taunt me, saying, "Where is this God of yours?" (Psalm 42:3, NLT)

Even Jesus felt that way, while hanging on the cross... crying out "Eloi, eloi lema sabachthani... My God, my God, why have you abandoned me."

As we continue this series on the Psalms, I want you to know that the Psalms provide some of the most profound, honest, hurt-felt cries to God about God's faithfulness, his love and his presence. In that sense, these Psalms, roughly 1/3 of all the Psalms, are cries for help. As such, they give expression to the deepest moments of human pain. And so, if there is one thing that you take from today, it's this... if you are struggling with anything in your life, and you don't have the words to say, read the Psalms, pray the Psalms, speak the Psalms, because they are powerful expressions of anger, and confusion and questioning despair.

Notice how David continues...

"How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand?" (Psalm 13:2, NLT)

I don't know about you, but that speaks to me. It speaks to me when I hear of tragedies in people's lives. It speaks to me when I can't sense of my own life. It speaks to me when something that I have done wrong – you know that weight of shame and guilt – bears down on me and I feel that no punishment is enough. *"How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day?"*

Perhaps you have been there – or you are there.

And today I want you to know, that the thing about the Psalms, and the thing about God, is that God is not vengeful, in the sense that he will smite us down because we doubt, or because we hurt, or because we are afraid, or because we sin. The Psalms remind us that God is bigger than our hurts and our fears, our pain, our anger, our questions, our doubts, our sins. And like any good loving parent, he contains them for us, while we cry.

And that is why David then says...

"Turn and answer me, O LORD my God! Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die. Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, "We have defeated him!" Don't let them rejoice at my downfall." (Psalm 13:3–4, NLT)

This is a prayer of promise, of confession, of hope. In the midst of his grief, in the midst of sadness, David asks God for help. *"Restore the sparkle to my eyes"*.

That's an honest prayer. It's a humble prayer, a vulnerable prayer, a prayer that begins to acknowledge that God is God and I am not. It's a prayer that recognises that sometimes we need to simply wait on God let God do God's stuff.

And that's what David does. He concludes

***"But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me. I will sing to the LORD because he is good to me."* (Psalm 13:5–6, NLT)**

Do you know what's happening here? David isn't saying that this is resolved. He is not saying that somehow, in between verses 4 and 5, God has entered the scene and fixed everything up. What David is saying is that despite how he his feeling, despite his feeling lost and lonely and broken and hurt and forgotten, that he will trust in the past knowledge of God's faithfulness and commitment... and in doing so he will notice that God is good.

God is good. All the time.

To conclude.

There was an old man called John, who every day of his life, simply said, "God is Good".

When John got married, he said, "God is Good".

When John lost his job he said, "God is Good".

When John's father died he said, "God is Good".

When John's wallet got stolen he said, "God is Good".

One day, John was diagnosed with cancer. The disease spread rapidly and he was told by his doctor that he wouldn't have long to live. Yet, still on his death bed, John could be heard by everyone in the hospital repeating his famous line, "God is Good".

One of John's best friends was called Charles. Charles visited him everyday. And every night, when his friend left him, John would remind him, "God is Good".

Finally after weeks of watching his best friend get worse Charles just could not stand it any longer.

"John you are my best friend and I love you. I have listened to you say that God is Good your whole life. Through the good times. And the bad. But now, looking at you, how can you be so positive? How can you say 'God is good' when you know he is letting you die?"

John just looked at Charles and smiled.

"My dear friend. Don't you see all of those times I was saying God is Good, it was my way of praising him in the little way I could. I know I am dying. And I know it is sad. But you talking about God letting me die as a bad thing. You know. I see it as a Good thing. Because soon, God will call me home... and then I will be with Him. I can't imagine anything greater than that."

May you know that God is Good. All the time.